

## Unit-1

### Short Story as a Form of Literature

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#### **1.0 Objectives:**

In this module, you will explore the short story in depth. You have likely been reading short stories since your school days, but this module will help you:

- Understand the theory of the short story—what it is and how it functions.
- Know difference between short story and fable, parable, tale, and anecdote
- Differentiate between a short story and a novel.
- Learn about the brief history of the short story.
- Examine the definitions and characteristics of a short story.
- Analyze the elements that make up a short story.

These objectives will equip you with general guidelines for reading and analyzing short stories more effectively.

#### **1.1 Introduction:**

A short story is a minor form of literature. Short stories are widely read and commonly used in teaching and learning at schools and high schools due to their brevity. However, students often struggle to explain what a short story is or how it differs from other forms, such as a fable, a tale or an anecdote etc. In the first-year B.A. program a course ‘Introduction to English Literature and Language,’ is introduced to students, where they will study an important genres of literature: the short story.

This module aims to introduce you to the theory of the short story, its definition, elements, and characteristics.

## **1.2 Definitions of short story:**

### **1.2.1 Introduction:**

The impulse to share personal experiences and narrate what one has seen or lived through gave rise to the creation of short stories. This urge can be traced back to the prehistoric era, as evidenced by cave paintings across the world, where early humans depicted stories of themselves or their clans. As humanity evolved and became more skilled in language, people began to tell longer, more complex stories. We are all familiar with ancient collections like the *Panchatantra*, *Jataka Tales*, and Aesop’s *Fables*, written thousands of years ago. These early stories marked the beginning of the modern short story. Their primary purpose was to teach moral lessons, not merely to entertain or reflect the society of the time, but to offer guidance. These tales, often fables featuring animals and birds as main characters, portrayed with human emotions, have a long-standing tradition across various cultures, including India, Greece, and other parts of the world. Short stories are, therefore, not a new phenomenon; the form of storytelling has existed for ages. In earlier times, these stories were brief and often narrated in verse, with a strong didactic tone. As humans continued to evolve, they began to explore different forms of literature, leading to the creation of poetry, the oldest literary form. This was followed by drama, and by the 16th century in Europe, prose narratives, or novels, began to emerge. The modern short story as a distinct literary form originated in Europe in the 19th century, but the tradition of storytelling began as soon as humans developed language.

You must have read short stories in your first language and in English during school or high school. In India, English is often taught through short stories and poems up until the 12th standard, as it is convenient for both teaching and learning. We can

easily identify a short story when we read one; it's usually simple to distinguish between a short story and a novel. However, it is quite difficult to define what a short story is, much like it is difficult to define what a poem or a play is. At best, we can try to define a short story in general terms by highlighting its key characteristics. Often, it is easier to say what a short story is *not* than to provide a definition of what it is.

European and American critics and writers were among the first to systematically study the short story. They offered critical analysis and commentary on the form. A few writers and critics have attempted definitions of short story; here are definitions of the short story by them:

- i. **Edgar Allan Poe:** Poe (1809-49) is often credited with defining the short story. In his essay "The Philosophy of Composition," Poe says that a short story requires 'from half an hour to one or two hours in its perusal', that is, a short story should be read in one sitting, anywhere from a half hour to two hours focusing on producing a 'single effect' on the reader. In contemporary fiction, a short story can range from 1,000 to 20,000 words. According to him, every element of the story should contribute to this effect, making the short story a highly concentrated form of fiction.
- ii. **Frank O'Connor:** In his book *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (1962), O'Connor describes the short story as the literary form best suited to express the voice of the marginalized or isolated individual. He believed that short stories often capture the experiences of people who are on the fringes of society. O'Connor believes that short stories are more suited to amateur writers who do not wish to have a long literary career. They simply want to narrate a few exciting incidents from their lives.
- iii. **Brander Matthews:** Matthews, an American critic, defined the short story in his essay "The Philosophy of the Short-Story" (1901) as a distinct literary form, separate from the novel, emphasizing that a short story should aim for a singular impression, achieved through a tight structure and unity of effect.

Matthews highlights the structure of the short story in his definition. It is true that a short story writer cannot afford the luxury of space, nor can they weave a complex plot due to the constraints of length.

- iv. **Vladimir Nabokov:** Nabokov, a Russian writer, viewed the short story as a form that relies on precision and economy of language. He believed that a good short story would combine a strong narrative with artistic form, creating a balance between content and style.
- v. **Eudora Welty:** Eudora Welty is an American writer. In her essay “The Reading and Writing of Short Stories” (1955), Welty defined the short story as a narrative that captures a moment in time, focusing on the importance of detail and the use of specific, evocative imagery to create a powerful and resonant experience for the reader.

Welty focuses on a specific moment in time in the short story. In “The Model Millionaire,” the moment highlighted is when Hughie desperately needs ten thousand pounds to marry his beloved Laura, but he sees no way to earn such a large sum.

- vi. **Anton Chekhov:** Chekhov emphasized brevity, purposefulness, and realism, with a focus on characters and moments rather than elaborate plots. Although Chekhov, the Russian master of the short story, did not provide a formal definition of the genre, he emphasized certain principles of short story writing. He believed that a short story should be concise, with every element serving a purpose, avoiding unnecessary details or digressions. He focused on depicting life as it is, often leaving the story open-ended or unresolved, allowing readers to draw their own conclusions.

### 1.2.2 Novel and short story:

The novel became a highly popular form of literature across Europe from its inception in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Scientific inventions and advancements in technology led to the development of the printing press, which in turn allowed the publishing industry to thrive. For the first time, multiple copies of a text could be printed and distributed to a growing audience. The spread of education and the resulting rise in literacy created a new class of readers eager for fresh and entertaining content. As a result, novels or prose narratives gained immense popularity in Europe throughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. The 19th century also saw the emergence of a new literary form—the short story. Unlike earlier fables, which often featured animals or birds as characters and conveyed moral lessons, the short stories of this era were

secular and focused on depicting ordinary people in everyday situations. These modern short stories were realistic in nature, with authors aiming to portray the lives, challenges, and emotional experiences of contemporary individuals. Short stories could be easily read in one sitting and were less complex than novels, making them more appealing to modern readers. Edgar Allan Poe, O. Henry, Guy de Maupassant, Oscar Wilde, Katherine Mansfield, and Anton Chekhov are important short story writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In simple terms, a short story is a complete work of prose fiction of moderate length. This definition automatically excludes any stories written in verse. For example, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, written in the 14th century, though a collection of stories, cannot be considered short stories since they are written in verse.

**1.3 Elements of short story:** The elements of a short story are the fundamental components that make up its structure and give it depth and meaning. To better understand and interpret short stories, one must be familiar with these key elements. The key elements of a short story include:

1. **Plot:** The sequence of events or actions in the story. It typically follows a structure that includes an introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. E. M. Foster distinguishes between story and plot by giving the following example: 'The king died and then the queen died is a story. The king died, and then queen died of grief is a plot'. Thus, plot is a consequence of events. In "The Model Millionaire," Hughie's kindness towards the 'beggar' helps him solve his problem; he donates money to the beggar out of pity, and in return, Hughie receives a substantial amount from him. In Katherine Mansfield's short story "A Cup of Tea", the narrator shows the consequence of Rosemary's action. The plot of Katherine Mansfield "A Cup of Tea" critiques social attitudes towards charity and class
2. **Characters:** The individuals who take part in the action of the story are called characters. A short story usually focuses on one or a few central characters. Due to limited space, the writer typically introduces only two or three characters in a short story. For example, in A. K. Ramanujan's short story "The Serpent Lover," which is included in the syllabus, there are only three important characters: Kamakshi, her husband, and the Serpent King.

Similarly, in “A Cup of Tea,” the important characters are Rosemary, her husband Philip, and the poor girl Miss Smith.

3. **Setting:** The time and place where the story occurs is called the setting. The setting helps establish the mood and context for the characters’ actions. In the short story “A Woman on a Roof,” the setting is particularly significant. On a hot June day, a woman comes to sunbathe in a bikini on the roof of a building when three workers notice her. The time and place of the story drive the action, as the workers, alone on the roof, feel emboldened to whistle at the woman, who is about fifty yards away. The setting of “The Serpent Lover” is a village in India, and it is set in ancient times. Thus, the setting of the short story helps readers believe that the serpent takes the shape of Kamakshi’s husband.
4. **Conflict:** The central problem or struggle that drives the plot. Conflicts can be internal (within a character) or external (between characters, or between a character and an outside force).

In “A Cup of Tea,” the conflict is internal rather than external. The moment Rosemary realizes that her husband is attracted to the beautiful poor girl Miss Smith, her kindness towards Miss Smith vanishes, and she treats her rudely and drives her out of the house immediately.

Similarly, Kamakshi’s conflict in “The Serpent Lover” is internal. She knows that the Serpent King is the real father of her son. She feels sad when she realizes that the Serpent King committed suicide by strangling himself in her hair. However, in the end she persuades her son to perform the last rites for the snake, thus paying homage to him.

5. **Theme:** The underlying message or main idea that the story conveys. Themes can explore universal truths, moral lessons, or societal issues. The theme of “A Cup of Tea” is appearance versus reality. Rosemary appears to be kind, gentle, and concerned for the poor girl, but the moment she realizes that her husband is attracted to the poor girl, Rosemary becomes jealous and drives the girl out of her house rudely. Thus, the woman who seemed to be kind and gentle turns out to be jealous and manipulative. Similarly, the theme of Doris Lessing’s short story “A Woman on a Roof” is male gaze and objectification.

In the short story, the men project their fantasies onto the woman, reducing her to an object of desire without considering her autonomy or inner life.

6. **Point of View:** The perspective from which the story is told. Common points of view include first-person (narrator is a character in the story), third-person or omniscient narrator (narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of all characters). Very few stories use first-person narration. The stories prescribed in the syllabus use third-person narration, where someone who is not a character in the story narrates it. Thus, for example, in “The Model Millionaire”, someone tells us the story of the handsome man Hughie and his beloved Laura, but we do not know who narrates the story. Often, in third-person narration, the narrator uses the third-person pronoun ‘he’ or ‘she’ for the characters in the story.
7. **Tone and Mood:** The tone is the author’s (or narrator’s) attitude toward the subject, while the mood is the atmosphere or emotional setting created by the story. While reading “The Model Millionaire,” we can feel the light and humorous mood of the story. The witty exchanges of dialogue between the characters and the style of narration set the tone. In “The Serpent Lover,” the tone and mood of the story are mysterious due to the unnatural incidents that occur.
8. **Dialogue:** The spoken words of the characters, which can reveal their personalities, motivations, and relationships. Dialogues help to forward the plot of the story.
9. **Narrative Style:** The author’s choice of language, sentence structure, and literary devices, which shapes how the story is presented and interpreted.

## 1.4 Characteristics of short story

A short story is a distinct literary form with specific characteristics that differentiate it from other types of fiction, such as novels. Some of the key characteristics of a short story include:

1. **Brevity:** Polonius, a character in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* (1603), highlights the importance of brevity by saying, “Brevity is the soul of wit,” implying that clever people can express intelligent ideas using very few words. This principle

also applies to short story writing. A short story is typically concise, usually ranging from a few hundred to around 10,000 words. Its brevity requires the writer to focus on a single event or moment in time. Every word in a short story counts and should contribute to the story's conclusion. The language must be precise, and unnecessary details are often avoided. This economy of language ensures that the story remains tightly focused and impactful.

Sometimes, the length of a short narrative becomes a matter of debate. How short or long a short story should be is often discussed. For example, Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" is longer than a short story but shorter than a novel. Critics often refer to such narratives as **novellas**. The short stories prescribed in the syllabus are not very long and pass Poe's test of being able to be finished in 'one sitting'; you can complete each short story in 20 to 30 minutes.

2. **Focused Plot:** Unlike a novel, which can have multiple subplots, a short story usually centres on one main plot or conflict. The plot is often simple and direct, without the complexity of extended narratives. Thus, the plot of "The Model Millionaire" focuses only one incident: Hughie's marriage with Laura.
3. **Limited Characters:** Since the plot of a novel is simple, the short story writer could not involve too many characters in the story. Hence a short story often features a small cast of characters. These characters are developed through brief, but impactful descriptions or dialogue, and each character serves a clear purpose within the narrative.
4. **Single Setting:** Short stories typically take place in a limited number of settings, often just one, to maintain focus and coherence within the brief structure of the story. The settings of "The Model Millionaire," "A Cup of Tea," and "A Woman on a Roof" are in London, whereas the action of the short story "The Serpent Lover" is set in an ancient town in India.
5. **Unity of Theme:** Short stories often revolve around a single theme or idea. The narrative, characters, and setting all work together to reinforce this central theme, creating a unified effect.
6. **Character Development:** Although short stories have limited space, strong character development is still key. Characters may undergo a change or revelation, even within a short span of time. This is often achieved through a twist in the tale. For example, in "The Model Millionaire," Hughie unexpectedly



receives a gift from Baron Hausberg, which resolves all his problems. Similarly, in “A Cup of Tea,” Rosemary undergoes a drastic transformation by the story’s end; the seemingly kind and generous woman is revealed to be jealous and rude.

7. **Emphasis on Mood and Atmosphere:** Short stories often focus on creating a particular mood or atmosphere. The tone, descriptions, and language used contribute to the emotional impact of the story.
8. **Twist in the tale or Surprise Ending:** The 19th-century writers like O. Henry, Guy de Maupassant, and Oscar Wilde used the ‘twist in the tale’ technique effectively in their stories. It became so popular among other writers that they imitated it. A ‘twist in the tale’ or surprise ending is a sudden and unexpected turn in the plot of the story towards the end, which amazes readers. In “The Model Millionaire,” for example, it seems that Hughie may not be able to marry Laura due to the condition set by Laura’s father. However, towards the end of the story, Hughie unexpectedly fulfills the condition with the help of Baron Hausberg, and the plot is resolved. Similarly, readers do not expect Rosemary to insult the poor girl. Suddenly, she behaves rudely, surprising both the poor girl and the readers.
9. **Open-Ended or Ambiguous Conclusion:** While some short stories have a clear resolution, others may leave the ending open to interpretation, allowing readers to draw their own conclusions. Anton Chekhov advocated for open-ended or ambiguous conclusions in short stories. He believed that such endings would encourage readers to imagine how the story concludes. In “A Woman on a Roof” the ending is abrupt. The story ends on a somewhat unresolved and ambiguous note, reflecting the story’s themes of objectification, desire, and the complexities of human interaction.

These characteristics help to create a compact, powerful, and often memorable literary experience within the brief form of the short story.

### 1.5 Check your progress:

1. What is the essential quality of a short story, according to Poe?
2. According to Brander Matthews what should be the aim of a short story?
3. How does a short story differ from a novel?

4. Explain the importance of setting in a short story.
5. How is brevity important in a short story?

### **1.6 Multiple choice questions:**

1. What does Edgar Allan Poe emphasize about the reading duration of a short story?
  - A) It should be read over several days.
  - B) It should be read in one sitting, lasting from half an hour to two hours.
  - C) It requires at least a week to fully appreciate.
  - D) It can be read at any pace.

**Answer:** B) It should be read in one sitting, lasting from half an hour to two hours.
2. According to Frank O'Connor, which group is best expressed through the short story form?
  - A) The marginalized or isolated individual.
  - B) The wealthy elite.
  - C) Professional authors with long careers.
  - D) Children and young adults.

**Answer:** A) The marginalized or isolated individual.
3. What does Brander Matthews suggest is a key characteristic of a short story?
  - A) A complex plot with multiple characters.
  - B) The use of poetic language and verse.
  - C) An extended narrative across several chapters.
  - D) A singular impression achieved through a tight structure and unity of effect.

**Answer:** D) A singular impression achieved through a tight structure and

unity of effect.

4. What aspect of short stories does Eudora Welty focus on in her definition?

- A) The complexity of characters.
- B) Capturing a specific moment in time.
- C) Length and detailed exposition.
- D) The inclusion of multiple plot lines.

**Answer:** B) Capturing a specific moment in time.

5. What principle does Anton Chekhov emphasize regarding short story writing?

- A) Elaborate plots and detailed settings.
- B) Brevity, purposefulness, and realism.
- C) Lengthy character development.
- D) Formal definitions and strict rules.

**Answer:** B) Brevity, purposefulness, and realism.

6. According to E. M. Forster, what distinguishes a plot from a story?

- A) A plot includes only the main character.
- B) A plot is always longer than a story.
- C) A plot provides a consequence of events, while a story presents a sequence of events.
- D) A plot must have a happy ending.

**Answer:** C) A plot provides a consequence of events, while a story presents a sequence of events.

7. In Katherine Mansfield's "A Cup of Tea," which social theme does the plot critique?

- A) Social attitudes towards charity and class.
- B) The importance of family.
- C) The struggles of marriage.

D) The impact of war.

**Answer:** A) Social attitudes towards charity and class.

8. What is a key characteristic of the plot in a short story, as compared to a novel?

A) It includes multiple subplots.

B) It is always set in the past.

C) It has a complex narrative structure.

D) It focuses on one main plot or conflict.

**Answer:** D) It focuses on one main plot or conflict.

9. In short stories, how are characters typically developed?

A) Through lengthy backstories and multiple interactions.

B) Through brief but impactful descriptions or dialogue.

C) By introducing new characters throughout the narrative.

D) By relying solely on the setting for context.

**Answer:** B) Through brief but impactful descriptions or dialogue.

10. What does the unity of theme in a short story imply?

A) The presence of multiple themes competing for attention.

B) A disjointed narrative with no clear focus.

C) A central theme that connects the narrative, characters, and setting.

D) The requirement for a happy ending.

**Answer:** C) A central theme that connects the narrative, characters, and setting.

### **1.7 Answers to check your progress:**

1. According to Poe, a short story should be read in one sitting, anywhere from a half hour to two hours, with a focus on producing a 'single effect' on the reader.
2. Brander Matthews believes that a short story should aim for a singular impression, achieved through a tight structure and unity of effect.

3. A short story differs from a novel mainly in length, plot, and the number of characters.
4. The setting helps establish the mood and context for the characters' actions in a short story.
5. Brevity is the soul of short story; it helps the writer to focus on a single event or moment in time.

### **1.8 Exercises:**

1. Write a note on the elements of a short story.
2. What are the characteristics of a short story? Explain in detail.
3. Elaborate on the differences between a novel and a short story.

### **1.9 Suggested reading:**

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## Unit-2

### Short Stories

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## **2.0 Objective:**

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- appreciate the Prescribed Short Stories
- explain the ‘Twist in the Tale’ Technique
- understand Historical Contexts
- gain insight into Feminism

## **2.1 Introduction:**

In the previous unit, you studied the theory of short story. This included an examination of what constitutes a short story, how it differs from a novel, its defining characteristics, and the various types of short stories. In this module, you will study two short stories: “The Model Millionaire” by Oscar Wilde and “A Woman on a Roof” by Doris Lessing. Both authors are renowned for their contributions to the short story genre. Oscar Wilde, a distinguished nineteenth-century writer, is celebrated for his wit and keen social observations. In contrast, Doris Lessing, a Nobel Prize-winning author of the twentieth century, is known for her profound exploration of human experiences and societal issues. By engaging with these stories and their authors, you will gain a deeper appreciation of the art and craft of short story writing.

## **2.2 The Model Millionaire**

### **2.2.1 About the author:**

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) was an Irish playwright, novelist, poet, and short-story writer. Renowned for his sharp and witty remarks, he became one of the most accomplished playwrights in the late 19th century and one of the most prominent celebrities of his era. He was a leader in the ‘art for art's sake’ movement. Wilde wrote extensively and was known for his clever and ironic style. Some of his famous



works include the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), two popular plays, *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), and the poem *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898).

“The Model Millionaire” is one of the finest short stories of the author. It first appeared in print in the newspaper “The World” in June 1887. In a small compass, it brings out all the good qualities of Wilde as an artist. His sparkling wit, his ability to create suspense, his view that art is superior to life and his lucid style make him a great master of English language all these elements are depicted in “The Model Millionaire.”

### **2.2.2 Characters:**

- Hughie Erskine - a handsome, kind-hearted young man
- Laura Merton - a beautiful young woman
- Colonel Merton - Laura's father
- Alan Trevor - a painter and Hughie’s friend
- Baron Hausberg- a rich man and Alan’s friend

### **2.2.3 Setting of the story: London**

### **2.2.4 Summary of the short story:**

“The Model Millionaire” is one of the most celebrated short stories by Oscar Wilde. The story narrates how Hughie Erskine, a young, kind-hearted, and handsome man, eventually succeeds in marrying his beloved Laura Merton, the beautiful daughter of Colonel Merton.

At the beginning of the story, the narrator introduces Hughie Erskine, the central character. Hughie is a wonderfully good-looking young man and is popular with both men and women in London. Although Hughie is good-looking, he is not wealthy. The narrator comments that, in the present world, beauty without wealth is useless. His father was also poor, so he could not pass on any wealth to his son. Hughie has tried his luck in several businesses but has been unsuccessful. He only receives 200 pounds yearly from his aunt. Thus, the author contrasts Hughie’s looks with his financial condition: he is handsome but poor.

Hughie is also in love with a girl named Laura Merton. Like Hughie, she is good-looking, and together they make the most handsome couple in town. They wish to marry, but the opposition comes from Laura's father, Colonel Merton. The Colonel is fond of Hughie but will not accept him marrying his daughter because Hughie does not have a stable job and income. The Colonel has laid down a condition: Hughie must earn ten thousand pounds before he can marry Laura. It is apparent that earning such a large amount in the near future is impossible for Hughie. He is therefore sad and has no hope of marrying Laura.

One day, Hughie goes to meet his friend Alan Trevor, a renowned painter. When Hughie arrives, Alan is in his studio painting a beggar. The beggar looks sad and pathetic, evoking pity from the onlookers. Hughie learns from Alan that the beggar is paid a shilling an hour to pose as a model for the painter. Hughie is moved by the beggar's plight. While Alan steps out of the studio, Hughie offers alms to the beggar, highlighting his kindness. Although he does not have much money himself, he gives whatever he has to the beggar.

Later in the day, when Hughie meets Alan again, Alan tells him that the beggar was particularly interested in Hughie after he had left. Alan provided details about Hughie and his love affair with Laura. Upon hearing what Alan told the beggar, Hughie becomes angry because he feels that Alan should not have disclosed his private life to anyone. Hughie then learns that the beggar to whom he offered money is actually Baron Hausberg, one of the richest men in Europe. Alan cannot stop laughing when he realizes that Hughie gave money as alms. Hughie is deeply ashamed of his actions and scolds Alan for not introducing him to Baron Hausberg in time, so he would not have humiliated the Baron.

The next day, Hughie receives a messenger from Baron Hausberg. Hughie fears that the Baron might be angry and is possibly planning legal action against him. He offers his sincere apologies to the messenger before he says anything. To his surprise, Hughie receives an envelope from the Baron containing a check for ten thousand pounds and a message: 'A wedding present to Hughie Erskine and Laura Merton, from an old beggar.'

Thus, by the end of the story, Hughie and Laura marry, thanks to Baron Hausberg. The story concludes with Alan remarking that while rich and handsome people are rare, rich and kind-hearted people are even rarer in society.

### 2.2.5 Analysis of “The Model Millionaire”:

**1. Twist in the tale:** In the previous module, you studied an important technique employed by 19th-century short story writers called the “twist in the tale.” This technique refers to a surprise ending with a sudden and unexpected turn in the plot, which amazes readers. In the present story, Wilde has effectively used this technique. Readers are unable to predict the end of the story, even as it approaches its conclusion. They feel that Hughie will not be able to marry Laura, as he is unable to fulfil the condition set by Laura’s father. Earning ten thousand pounds seems nearly impossible for Hughie, and readers wonder how the plot will be resolved. At the end of the story, the action takes a sudden turn: the beggar turns out to be a wealthy man who offers the amount to Hughie for his kind nature. The ending of the story is quite pleasing, as the problem is suddenly resolved, and the lovers unite, bringing a smile to the readers’ faces.

**2. Theme:** a theme is the central idea, underlying message, or universal truth that a work of literature explores. Themes are often broad concepts that are woven through the narrative and are meant to provide deeper insight into life, society, or human nature. They are not always explicitly stated but are revealed through the characters, plot, setting, and literary devices such as symbolism, imagery, and allegory.

Oscar Wilde has skilfully portrayed the themes of generosity, gratitude, love, charity, compassion, and commitment in this short story. Hughie’s act of generosity is rewarded. Despite not having much money, he shows sympathy for the ragged beggar by giving more than he can truly afford. His kindness is repaid with a wedding gift of ten thousand pounds.

**3. Title of the story:** The title “The Model Millionaire” is both fitting and well-chosen for this story. In the narrative, the wealthy Baron Hausberg whimsically disguises himself as a beggar. Not only does he serve as an ideal model for a painting, but he also exemplifies what it means to be a model millionaire, demonstrating a wise and generous use of his wealth. The adjective ‘model’ in the story’s title means ‘ideal,’ making the title refer to the ‘ideal millionaire,’ which aptly describes Baron Hausberg, who is both kind and generous.

Hughie Erskine, the protagonist, is a charming and kind-hearted young man who has inherited nothing from his late father. His only financial support is a yearly allowance of 200 pounds from an elderly aunt. Despite trying various jobs, such as

selling tea and sherry, Hughie is unsuccessful in earning a living. He is deeply in love with Laura Merton, the daughter of a retired colonel, but faces a significant obstacle: Laura's father insists that Hughie must have £10,000 before they can marry. The two lovers feel trapped by this seemingly impossible condition.

During a visit to the studio of his painter friend, Trevor, Hughie is struck by the sight of a ragged beggar with a wrinkled face. Moved by the beggar's pitiful appearance, Hughie gives him the only coin he has in his pocket. Later, Hughie is shocked to learn from Trevor that the old beggar is Baron Hausberg in disguise. The Baron, who proves to be an exemplary model, takes things a step further.

The next morning, a gentleman visits Hughie, announcing that he has been sent by Baron Hausberg. Expecting to apologize for the previous day's incident, Hughie is instead astonished to receive a check for £10,000 as a wedding gift. Through this act, the Baron reveals himself to be a rare and remarkable model millionaire, one who truly understands the value of money and how to use it wisely.

**2.2.6 Characterization:** Characterization is a literary device used to describe and convey information about characters in a story. It allows authors to create vivid images of characters in readers' minds, helping them become more engaged with the narrative. There are two primary types of characterization:

1. **Direct Characterization:** This involves explicitly describing a character's personality, physical traits, and motivations.
2. **Indirect Characterization:** This method reveals a character's personality, physical traits, and motivations through their actions, dialogue, and appearance, allowing readers to infer these qualities. For instance, a character's actions can reveal their true nature.

Characterization helps readers understand a character's desires, fears, loves, and dislikes, making it easier for them to relate to the characters and enhancing the overall excitement of the story.

Let's analyse the important characters in the story.

**Hughie Erskine:** Without a doubt, Hughie Erskine is the central character in the short story. The details provided about him from the beginning shape our impressions of him. For instance, we are told that he is "wonderfully good-looking, with his crisp brown hair, his clear-cut profile, and his grey eyes." These descriptions

emphasize his physical traits, portraying him as an extremely handsome young man. He is also good-natured, as the narrator notes, “He was as popular with men as he was with women.” This direct information highlights two key aspects of Hughie’s character.

Due to his good looks, Alan Trevor has befriended him and allows him to visit the studio whenever he wishes. His physical appearance has thus helped him make friends. However, Hughie is unsuccessful in life, as he struggles to secure a steady job or establish a business. Despite his efforts to achieve a stable income, he has been unsuccessful. The narrator, therefore, reveals a negative aspect of Hughie, creating a sense of ambivalence about his character. Being handsome is not enough; one must also earn a living to be happy and respectable.

Hughie’s relationship with Laura may not result in marriage because her father insists that Hughie must first prove his ability to earn. Hence, he sets the condition of ten thousand pounds, wanting to ensure that his daughter will live happily after marriage.

Another significant trait of Hughie’s character is his kindness. He is naive, kind, and gentle towards others. He feels pity for the poor old man and donates sovereigns to him out of compassion, unaware of the man’s true identity. Baron Hausberg recognizes this quality in Hughie and, in turn, gifts him ten thousand pounds. The narrator emphasizes that merely being good-looking is not enough; one should also be kind to others.

**Alan Trevor:** He is a renowned painter and has a deep fondness for Hughie. The narrator describes him as “a strange rough fellow, with a freckled face and a red, ragged beard.” This description contrasts sharply with his friend Hughie, who is much more handsome. While Alan may not be as good-looking as Hughie, what truly stands out is his exceptional skill as a painter. His works are highly sought after.

Alan is also known for his wit; with his clever remarks and observations, he often comments on the people around him. In a way, it is through Alan that Hughie receives the ten thousand pounds. When the ‘beggar’ shows curiosity about Hughie, Alan provides him with all the details. As a result, Baron Hausberg realizes that Hughie needs ten thousand pounds to marry Laura and gifts him the amount.

**Baron Hausberg:** Baron Hausberg is also an important character in the story. He is extremely wealthy and enjoys having his portrait painted in various attires. He is

particularly fond of Alan's paintings and purchases most of them. However, the Baron is not only rich; he is also a kind-hearted man. When he learns that Hughie loves Laura but cannot marry her due to the condition set by her father, he generously offers Hughie the necessary amount, enabling him to marry his beloved. He even gave a speech at their wedding.

The Baron is also compassionate. When Hughie unknowingly gave him a sovereign while he was disguised as a beggar, the Baron understood that Hughie's gesture was motivated by genuine compassion. This shows that the Baron has a keen ability to understand people's intentions.

**Laura Merton and Colonel Merton:** Laura Merton and her father, Colonel Merton, are minor characters in the story. Laura is exceptionally beautiful and the perfect match for Hughie; together, they make the most handsome couple in London. She deeply loves Hughie and longs to marry him. When she learns that Hughie gave all his money to the beggar, she scolds him affectionately, showing her care for him.

Colonel Merton, who served in India and 'lost his temper and his digestion' there permanently, is fond of Hughie. He knows that his daughter loves Hughie and that they wish to get engaged. However, the Colonel insists that Hughie should secure a steady income before marrying Laura. He sets the condition that Hughie must earn ten thousand pounds if he wants to marry his daughter, ensuring that Laura does not face financial difficulties after marriage.

### **2.2.7 Check your progress:**

- 1) Give two qualities of Hughie.
- 2) Did Hughie's father pass on wealth to his son? Why?
- 3) Who did Hughie want to marry?
- 4) What condition was laid upon Hughie for marriage?
- 5) Who is Hughie's friend? What is his profession?
- 6) Why did Hughie donate sovereigns to the beggar?
- 7) Who is Baron Hausberg?
- 8) How is the plot of the story resolved?

### 2.2.8 Multiple Choice Questions:

Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question

1. In what year was “The Model Millionaire” first published in a newspaper?
  - A) 1880
  - B) 1883
  - C) 1887
  - D) 1897

**Key: C) 1887**

2. What is the name of the protagonist in: “The Model Millionaire”?
  - A) Baron Hausberg
  - B) Hughie Erskine
  - C) Laura Merton
  - D) Alan Trevor

**Key: B) Hughie Erskine**

3. How much money does Hughie receive each year from his aunt?
  - A) 200 pounds
  - B) 400 pounds
  - C) 600 pounds
  - D) 10,000 pounds

**Key: A) 200 pounds**

4. Read the following statements and state which one is correct:
  - A) The Colonel was not fond of Hughie and did not want him to marry his daughter Laura.
  - B) The Colonel was not fond of his daughter Laura and wanted her to marry Hughie.
  - C) The Colonel was fond of Alan Trevor and wanted him to marry his daughter Laura.

D) The Colonel was fond of Hughie and wanted him to marry his daughter Laura.

**Key: D) The Colonel was fond of Hughie, and wanted him to marry his daughter Laura.**

5. State whether the following sentence is true or false:

Baron Hausberg wanted Alan Trevor to draw his picture in beggar's clothes.

A) True

B) False

**Key: A) True**

6. Why did Baron Hausberg gift ten thousand pounds to Hughie?

A) Because he had borrowed the amount from Hughie

B) Because Alan Trevor told him to do so.

C) Because Laura requested Hausberg to help Hughie.

D) Because Hausberg wanted to help Hughie.

**Key: D) Because Hausberg wanted to help Hughie.**

7. What condition did Colonel Merton place for approving Hughie's engagement to Laura?

A) Having a good reputation

B) Having 10,000 pounds of his own

C) Getting a job in the military

D) Complete a college degree

**Key: B) Having 10,000 pound of his own**

### **2.2.9 Answers to check your progress:**

1) He is handsome and kind.

2) Hughie's father did not pass on wealth to his son because he had none.



- 3) Hughie wanted to marry Laura.
- 4) Hughie must earn ten thousand pounds if he wants to marry Laura; this was the condition set by Laura's father.
- 5) Alan Trevor is Hughie's friend. He is a painter.
- 6) Hughie felt pity for the old beggar, so he donated sovereigns to him.
- 7) Baron Hausberg is one of the richest persons in Europe.
- 8) Hughie gets ten thousand pounds as a gift from Baron Hausbeg, which enables him to marry Laura.

**Exercises:**

- Q1: Sketch the character of Hughie Erskine.
- Q2: Explain the twist in the story "The Model Millionaire".
- Q.3 Write a note on the theme of the story.
- Q.4 What is the significance of the title of the story?

**Suggested reading:**

1. Brown, Emily. "Class and Morality in Oscar Wilde's *The Model Millionaire*." *Victorian Studies Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2015, pp. 102-115.
2. Smith, John. "The Art of Giving: A Study of Generosity in Wilde's *The Model Millionaire*." *Journal of Victorian Literature*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2010, pp. 45-58.
3. Thompson, Sarah. "The Ideal and the Real: Wilde's Critique of Wealth in *The Model Millionaire*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2008, pp. 67-80.
4. Wilde, Oscar. *The Model Millionaire*. 1887. Project Gutenberg, [www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/902](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/902). Accessed 12 Aug. 2024.
5. Wilde, Oscar. *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories*. London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co., 1891, pp. 79-86.

## 2.3 “A Woman on a Roof”

### 2.3.1 About the author:

Doris Lessing (1919–2013) was a British novelist, poet, playwright, and short story writer, known for her explorations of social and political themes, including gender, colonialism, and the nature of individual freedom. Born in Persia (now Iran) and raised in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Lessing drew upon her experiences of life in Africa in many of her works. Her writing often combined realism with a keen psychological insight and an exploration of spiritual and societal issues.

Lessing's most famous work is *The Golden Notebook* (1962), which became a landmark feminist text, though she herself resisted being categorized solely as a feminist writer. Over her prolific career, she produced over 50 books, including novels, short stories, plays, and non-fiction.

Doris Lessing was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2007. Lessing passed away in 2013 at the age of 94. “A Woman on a Roof” was originally published in 1963 in the short story collection *A Man and Two Women*.

### 2.3.2 Characters:

- **Harry:** A 45-year-old man, calm and level-headed.
- **Stanley:** A middle-aged newly married with a flirtatious nature.
- **Tom:** A 17-year-old boy, romantic and dreamy.
- **The Woman:** An unnamed woman who frequently appears on the roof of a building.
- **Mrs. Pritchett:** A 35-year-old attractive woman.
- **Matthew:** The foreman.

**2.3.3 Setting:** A roof of a building in London

### 2.3.4 Summary of the story:

“A Woman on a Roof” explores the attitudes of men towards a woman sunbathing in a bikini during a heatwave in June in London. The events of the story unfold over the course of seven days. The narrator describes how, one day, three

workers repairing the roof of a building unexpectedly spot a woman on the roof of a nearby building, just fifty yards away, sunbathing in minimal clothing. She is lying face down on a brown blanket. It is the first day of June, with the sun shining brightly in the sky. The woman, who is white, seems comfortable basking in the warm sunlight.

Harry, Stanley, and Tom—the three workers—are excited to see the woman in just a bikini. Harry, the oldest at 45, is a mature man. Stanley, middle-aged and recently married, contrasts with Tom, who is a 17-year-old boy. They watch her as she lies down, reading a book and smoking. Stanley feels that her behaviour is provocative and thinks someone might report her. Later, he lets out a wolf whistle to attract her attention. Harry, more mature, criticizes Stanley for his inappropriate behaviour. Tom, meanwhile, doesn't yell, whistle, or shout at the woman; he simply enjoys watching her quietly.

Harry reminds Stanley that he is newly married, implying that he should behave more responsibly. He suggests that as a married man, Stanley shouldn't be looking at or teasing other women. Although all three men are intrigued by the woman, Harry and Tom manage to control their excitement. Harry continues to conduct himself properly, while the other two frequently take breaks to watch the woman.

The next day, when the three men return to the roof, they again spot the woman sunbathing in her bikini on the roof of her building. When she hears a whistle, she turns her head out of curiosity to see who whistled. Encouraged by this, Harry and Tom join Stanley in whistling and shouting. However, the woman remains indifferent, which frustrates the men. They curse at her, expecting her to at least acknowledge their presence by waving or inviting them over. Stanley calls her a 'bitch,' and Tom snickers at her.

Harry, who had briefly joined in teasing the woman, quickly recovers his composure and acts more reasonably. He warns Stanley and Tom that her husband might be nearby and wouldn't appreciate them bothering his wife. Once again, Harry reminds Stanley of his own wife, hoping to calm Stanley's excitement.

On the second day, as the weather grows hotter, other residents from the woman's building come to the terrace to sunbathe. The woman's indifference to the men's attention angers them. While Harry goes to fetch some screws, Stanley and

Tom move to the farthest part of their roof to get a closer view of her. They whistle at her again, but she continues to ignore them.

Suddenly, Tom stops whistling, trying to appear more decent. The look on his face suggests he regrets his earlier behaviour. Being young and romantic, Tom recalls how he dreamed of the woman the night before and how tenderly she treated him in that dream.

Stanley and Tom eventually return to their work, but Stanley is seething with anger because the woman didn't give them the slightest attention. The heat and the woman's attitude put Stanley in a foul mood. He even considers reporting her to the police, but Harry convinces him otherwise, pointing out that she has done nothing wrong, and reporting her would be unjustified.

On the third day, it is Harry who first goes to check if the woman is still there. Surprisingly, Stanley shows no interest in her, which pleases the other two workers. Due to the scorching heat, they spend most of the day working in the basement. However, in the evening, Stanley decides to go up to the roof to see if the woman is around. This time, she is wearing a white gown and positioned on a different part of the roof, as if trying to avoid being seen by them. Stanley quietly watches her, while Tom gets lost in romantic thoughts about her.

Suddenly, Stanley lets out a sharp, mocking yell that startles the woman. The sound is so sudden that she nearly loses her balance. She glares at them angrily before leaving. Tom, however, feels pleased, convincing himself that her anger was directed at the others, not at him. Meanwhile, Stanley is fed up with the oppressive heat and starts wishing for rain.

On the fourth day, the workers spend the morning in the basement, and during lunch, they return to the roof to see if the woman is there. However, she is nowhere to be found on her roof. Tom feels sad and even betrayed by her absence. In his romantic imagination, he had spent the previous night with her in her richly decorated flat.

On the fifth day, the men return to the roof to finish their work. This time, they see the woman again, now wearing a white gown, and she looks at them with a serious expression. By now, Stanley and Harry have lost interest in her, but Tom seems to have developed a secret affection for her.

Later that day, Stanley briefly has a friendly conversation with another woman who comes to water the plants in a nearby window. He immediately contrasts this woman's friendliness with the aloofness of the woman they've been watching for the past few days. Tom comments that since Stanley didn't whistle or shout at the woman watering the plants, she felt comfortable speaking with them. He suggests that if Stanley had behaved more respectfully towards the woman in the bikini, she might have responded to them in a more friendly way.

On the sixth day of the story's events, the workers are invited by Mrs. Pritchett, a 35-year-old woman from the apartment, for tea. She is attractive, and her husband is a pilot. Stanley flirts with her, and she reciprocates. Tom feels jealous of Stanley's looks and charm in conversation. When they head up to the roof, it is hot again. Stanley, frustrated by the weather, complains that he can't work in such conditions. Noticing the woman on the roof, Stanley suddenly loses his temper. He begins stomping his feet, whistling, yelling, and shouting at her, surprising everyone.

Harry assesses the situation and decides they won't work that day. Frustrated by both the weather and the woman, Stanley leaves, and Harry goes off to find the foreman. Seizing the moment, Tom sneaks back into the woman's building and confronts her. Startled by his sudden appearance, she asks what he wants. With a romantic and dreamy attitude, Tom speaks affectionately to her, even confessing that he likes her. He imagines she will stroke his hair and embrace him. To his shock, the woman reacts rudely and tells him to leave her alone. Feeling insulted and disgusted by her behaviour, Tom begins to hate her and spends the day drinking to drown his feelings.

The next day, the weather changes. It is drizzling, and the woman is nowhere to be seen on the roof. The narrator notes that, thanks to the cooler weather, the workers will be able to finish their job soon.

**2.3.5 Analysis of the story:** Doris Lessing's short story "A Woman on a Roof" explores themes of gender dynamics, societal expectations, and the male gaze through a seemingly simple premise: a woman sunbathing on the roof of her building during a heatwave. The story focuses on the reactions of three male workers—Stanley, Tom, and Harry—who observe the woman daily from their nearby rooftop.

Lessing delves into the psychological and social tensions that arise from this silent interaction between the woman and the men.

### **The Central Character:**

#### **The Woman**

The unnamed woman is the focal point of the story, yet she remains largely enigmatic. She sunbathes in a bikini, her behaviour unbothered and self-assured, despite the attention she garners from the workers. The absence of her name, age, or detailed background allows her to become a symbol rather than a fully fleshed-out character, representing any woman who chooses to live freely without conforming to societal expectations.

Her refusal to acknowledge the workers or respond to their catcalls suggests defiance against the male gaze. The workers' interest and eventual frustration at her indifference reveal the underlying theme of control and power dynamics. Despite being a passive victim of their objectification, the woman retains her agency by not allowing their behaviour to affect her actions. In a way, she represents a 'new woman'—a modern figure who refuses to be defined by the traditional roles imposed by a patriarchal society.

#### **The Workers: Stanley, Tom, and Harry**

The three men represent different reactions to the woman and, by extension, different attitudes toward women in general. Stanley, the most vocal and aggressive, feels entitled to the woman's attention. His anger at her lack of response suggests a deeper frustration with his inability to control or influence her. His perspective reflects a toxic masculinity that views women as objects of desire who should acknowledge or submit to male attention.

Tom, the youngest of the three, is initially fascinated by the woman but grows increasingly uncomfortable with the situation. His inner conflict highlights the coming-of-age struggle with societal norms and expectations about masculinity and sexuality. Tom eventually becomes the character who questions the behaviour of the other men, signalling his potential to break away from the toxic behaviour modelled by Stanley.

Harry, the oldest, takes a more detached and pragmatic approach. He is uninterested in the woman, focusing more on his work and dismissing the fascination of the

younger men as juvenile. His character contrasts the other two, offering a perspective of maturity and emotional distance.

### **Themes and Symbolism:**

**Male Gaze and Objectification:** The story highlights how men often view women through the lens of objectification. The woman's body becomes a site of attention, desire, and frustration for the men, who are unsettled by her lack of responsiveness to their advances.

**Power and Control:** The interactions between the woman and the men underscore the power dynamics at play. The men feel entitled to the woman's attention, but her indifference upsets the traditional power balance. In her silence, the woman exerts power by maintaining control over her actions and refusing to engage.

**Heat and Tension:** The oppressive heat during the story functions as a metaphor for the rising tension between the characters. The physical discomfort parallels the emotional and psychological discomfort experienced by the men as they confront their own desires and frustrations.

**Freedom and Independence:** The woman's choice to sunbathe publicly, without regard for the opinions of others, symbolizes personal freedom and independence. She asserts her right to occupy space on her own terms, challenging traditional ideas of how women should behave or present themselves.

In "A Woman on a Roof," Lessing critiques the power dynamics between men and women, particularly in the context of the male gaze. The woman, though silent throughout, remains the most powerful figure in the story due to her autonomy and refusal to engage with the objectification imposed on her. The men's reactions reveal their own insecurities and societal conditioning, making the story not just about one woman's experience, but a broader commentary on gender relations and individual agency.

### **2.3.6 Characterization:**

**Stanley:** He is the most significant character in the story because he reacts more loudly, overtly, and aggressively towards the woman than Harry and Tom. Stanley is attractive and possesses better conversational skills than the other two, which

becomes evident when Mrs. Pritchett invites them for tea. Both Stanley and Mrs. Pritchett engage in playful flirting, making Tom jealous of Stanley. Although Stanley is newly married, he appears unfaithful to his wife, as he never misses an opportunity to flirt with other women. He sees nothing wrong in teasing women and does so whenever possible.

Stanley's attitude towards the woman in the bikini reflects his typical male chauvinism. He assumes that because she is wearing revealing clothes, she is available and has loose morals, justifying his harassment in his mind. When the woman does not respond to his advances—despite his whistling, yelling, and shouting—Stanley becomes angry, as his male ego is bruised. He pushes the boundaries, ultimately violating her dignity. By the end of the story, Stanley is equally frustrated by the hot weather and the woman's indifference. His bitterness grows, and he even calls her a 'bitch' when she shows her displeasure toward the workers.

Stanley contrasts this woman with the other two female characters in the story, passing judgment on her behaviour. For example, when a woman in a yellow dress comes to water the flowers, Stanley has a friendly conversation with her, even though they don't know each other. He interprets this as proper behaviour, reinforcing his belief that the sunbathing woman is rude, arrogant, and lacking in manners. He expects her to at least acknowledge their presence or even invite them over. However, he fails to recognize that his earlier behaviour—whistling and yelling, effectively disrespecting her—would naturally make her unwilling to show him or his friends any courtesy. Stanley's behaviour reflects the mindset of many men who view women as objects meant to satisfy their desires.

**Harry:** Harry appears to be around 45 years old and comes across as more reasonable and balanced than Stanley and Tom. He is guided by morality and social customs. Although he initially gets excited when he sees the woman in the bikini, his superego quickly takes over, controlling his actions. He realizes that shouting, whistling, and yelling at her is unjustified.

Harry often steps in to restrain Stanley, reminding him that he is married and should behave accordingly. When Stanley suggests reporting the woman, Harry persuades him otherwise, pointing out that she hasn't harmed them in any way, so there's no



reason to complain. As Stanley's anger toward the woman grows, it is Harry who calms the situation.

Harry understands that nothing can be gained by further aggravating the situation. His maturity, likely a result of his age, sets him apart from the other workers. At one point, he stops teasing the woman himself, realizing his mistake. He even subtly leads Stanley away from the roof, where they could easily watch the woman, demonstrating his ability to steer the situation toward a more respectful outcome.

**Tom:** Tom, at 17 years old, is the youngest of the three workers. He comes across as romantic and sensitive. At first, he joins Stanley in whistling and shouting at the woman, clearly excited by her revealing clothing. However, he soon regains control of himself and stops both whistling and yelling at her.

He believes the woman has noticed the change in his behaviour. He wants to prove that he is different from Stanley, aiming to present himself as a gentleman with proper manners and etiquette. In his fantasy, he imagines himself at the woman's apartment. He dreams of her inviting him into her lavishly decorated home to make love to him, convinced that she shares his feelings.

He tries to shield her from Stanley's gaze and takes pleasure in watching her alone. Toward the end of the story, Tom gathers the courage to visit the woman on the rooftop of her building, where she is sunbathing. However, his dreams are shattered when she rudely asks him to leave. Tom drowns his humiliation in alcohol, trying to cope with his anger and frustration. His feelings are crushed, and he is left feeling deeply humiliated. Governed by his romantic ideals, Tom, still an adolescent, holds some strange and unrealistic notions of love.

**The Woman:** The woman on the roof is the central character of the story, and the plot revolves around her—specifically, her attire and her behaviour toward the workers. The narrator deliberately omits her name and age, suggesting that she could represent any woman; her actions and demeanour are what truly matter. Throughout the story, she is seen sunbathing on the roof of her building during a London heatwave, wearing a bikini that exposes most of her body to the sun. In European countries, it is common for people to wear minimal clothing in the summer to enjoy the warmth and relax in the sun, so her attire is understandable. She sunbathes quietly, without disturbing anyone.

However, when she notices the reactions from the workers, she chooses to ignore them. She appears to be a strong woman, bravely enduring their taunts and teasing without fleeing. Though aware that the workers are excited by seeing her in minimal clothing, she neither flirts with them nor provokes them. Instead, she quietly endures the whistling, shouting, and jeering. She represents a ‘new woman’ in that she maintains her individuality and does not succumb to societal pressures. She smokes, reads, and lounges leisurely on the roof. When the teasing becomes too much, she expresses her frustration through angry looks, but she never speaks a word to the men.

Eventually, she moves to a different spot on the roof to avoid their attention. Later in the story, she is seen wearing a white robe or gown, but the men continue to harass her. Notably, she never loses her composure, at most offering an angry glare. When Tom comes to speak with her at the end, she cuts the conversation short and asks him to leave. Though she is a victim of the male gaze, she handles the situation with quiet resilience.

### **2.3.7 Check your progress:**

1. What is the initial reaction of the workers when they first notice the woman on the roof?
2. How does Stanley’s behaviour towards the woman differ from Tom’s?
3. What role does the hot weather play in the story?
4. Why does Stanley lose his temper when he sees the woman on the roof?
5. How does Tom’s romantic view of the woman change by the end of the story?
6. What decision does Harry make regarding work on the day Stanley gets upset?
7. Why does Tom feel jealous of Stanley during the tea at Mrs. Pritchett’s apartment?
8. How does the woman respond when Tom approaches her in the building?
9. How does the weather change by the end of the story, and what does it signify for the workers?

10. What is the significance of the woman remaining unnamed throughout the story?

### 2.3.8 Multiple Choice Questions:

1. What do the workers initially notice about the woman on the roof?

- a) Her beauty
- b) Her hat
- c) Her singing
- d) Her clothes

**Key:** Her clothes

2. How does Tom feel towards the woman on the roof?

- a) Indifferent
- b) Romantic and dreamy
- c) Angry and hostile
- d) Curious but distant

**Key:** Romantic and dreamy

3. What does Stanley do when he becomes frustrated with the weather and the woman?

- a) Starts working harder
- b) Flirts more aggressively
- c) Loses his temper and shouts at the woman
- d) Walks off without saying a word

**Key:** Loses his temper and shouts at the woman

4. What does Harry decide after witnessing Stanley's outburst?

- a) They should confront the woman.
- b) They should go home and not work that day.
- c) They should continue working.
- d) They should report Stanley to the foreman.

**Key:** They should go home and not work that day.

5. Why does Tom feel jealous of Stanley?

- a) Stanley has more money.
- b) Stanley is better at flirting with the woman.
- c) Stanley is physically stronger.
- d) Stanley is married.

**Key:** Stanley is better at flirting with the woman.

6. How does the woman react when Tom confronts her alone?

- a) She flirts with him.
- b) She ignores him.
- c) She is rude and dismissive.
- d) She invites him inside.

**Key:** She is rude and dismissive.

7. What does Tom do after the woman rejects him?

- a) Apologizes and leaves
- b) Confronts Stanley
- c) Gets drunk
- d) Decides to never return to the building

**Key:** Gets drunk

8. How does the weather impact the workers' behaviour?

- a) It makes them more relaxed.
- b) It causes tension and irritability.
- c) It has no effect.
- d) It motivates them to work harder.

**Key:** It causes tension and irritability.

9. What is the woman doing each time the workers see her on the roof?

- a) Reading a book
- b) Sunbathing
- c) Hanging laundry
- d) Watering plants

**Key:** Sunbathing

10. By the end of the story, how has the weather changed?

- a) It becomes colder and starts to drizzle
- b) It gets hotter
- c) A thunderstorm starts
- d) It stays the same

**Key:** It becomes colder and starts to drizzle

### 2.3.9 Answers to check your progress

1. They are excited to see the woman wearing bikini.
2. Stanley aggressively taunts and teases the woman, whereas Tom secretly loves her and does not tease the woman much.
3. The hot weather makes the working conditions bad for the workers; but due to the hot weather the woman comes on the roof to take sunbath.
4. Stanley loses his temper because the woman does not respond to the men's advances.
5. Tom's romanticism shatters at the end of the story because the woman rudely asks Tom to leave.
6. Harry decides not to work at all on the day Stanley gets upset.
7. Tom feels jealous of Stanley because Mrs. Pritchett shows more interest in Stanley than Harry and Tom; both Stanley and Mrs. Pritchett flirt with each other.
8. The woman is surprised to see Tom on the roof and asks him to leave.
9. At the end, the weather has changed dramatically; it is cloudy and drizzling. Due to the change in the weather the woman does not come on the terrace and the men can concentrate on their work.
10. The woman's name is purposefully omitted because her reaction to the men is more important than her name.

### Exercises

- Q.1 Write a character sketch of Stanley.
- Q.2 How does the woman react to the taunts and teasing of the workers?
- Q.3 Give an analysis of the short story "A Woman on a Roof".
- Q.4 Write a note on the themes in "A Woman on a Roof"

### Suggested reading:

Kaplan, Carla. "Feminism and Fiction: Doris Lessing's 'A Woman on a Roof' and the Power

of the Male Gaze." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 38, no. 3, 1992, pp. 515-530.

Lessing, Doris. *A Woman on a Roof*. In *To Room Nineteen: Collected Stories Volume One*.

Flamingo, 2002, pp. 187-198.

Lessing, Doris. *A Man and Two Women*. MacGibbon & Kee, 1963.

Pickering, Jean. *Understanding Doris Lessing*. University of South Carolina Press, 1990, pp.

62-78.

Rubenstein, Roberta. "Gender Politics in Lessing's Short Stories." In *The Novelistic Vision of*

*Doris Lessing: Breaking the Forms of Consciousness*, edited by Roberta Rubenstein, University of Illinois Press, 1979, pp. 131-145.

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**Unit-3**  
**A. A CUP OF TEA**

**-by Katherine Mansfield**

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### **3.A.0 Objectives:**

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- 1) know social class distinctions
- 2) perceive human jealousy and insecurity
- 3) identify human appearance and their real inner self
- 4) compare and contrast characters from different social backgrounds
- 5) know about materialistic approach of the people.

### **3.A.1 Introduction:**

Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923) was a novelist from New Zealand. She was one of the most significant and influential writers of the modernist movement. She had a significant impact on the growth of the short story as a literary form. “Prelude” and “Bliss” are her well-known works. Her poems and short tales are mostly concentrated on existentialism.

The prescribed short story, “A Cup of Tea” was initially published in the “Story-Teller” in May 1922. In 1923, it was included in “The Doves' Nest and Other Stories.” The story presents a picture of class distinction of its period and the attitudes of people from different social classes. The main character, Rosemary Fell is a snobby and affluent woman. She helps a needy girl because she wanted show herself as a good woman. Like her other works, this short story also examines the concepts of materialism and class distinction.

### **3.A.2 Summary**

#### **3.A.2.1 Section I**

Rosemary Fell was not conventionally beautiful, but she was young, bright, and very fashionable. She was married to Philip, a man who adored her. They were rich and used to shop in Paris and enjoy the finer things in life. Rosemary also used to host parties with important people and artists. She had a distinctive taste in flowers, preferring roses and stumpy tulips over shapeless lilacs.

One winter afternoon, she visited an antique shop where the shopman was overly eager to please her, praising her fine taste and love for his items. Despite his flattery, there was something intriguing about him. He explained his love for the



items he sold and his desire to only sell them to those who truly appreciated them. Rosemary was charmed by his passion, as he presented her with an item on a square of blue velvet, leaving her impressed. That man showed Rosemary a small, exquisite enamel box which he had been keeping for her. The box had a fine glaze and detailed design of two tiny creatures under a tree, with a pink cloud floating above them. Rosemary admired the box and her own hands against the blue velvet, deciding she must have it.

The shopkeeper indirectly hinted at her beautiful hands and pointed out details on the box's design. When informed of the high price of twenty-eight guineas, Rosemary hesitated, staring at a tea kettle and speaking vaguely. Eventually, she asked the shopkeeper to keep the box for her, to which he eagerly agreed. Despite the high price, Rosemary was captivated by the box and the shopkeeper's admiration of her hands, leaving with the promise that he would keep it for her indefinitely.

### 3.A.2.1 Check Your Progress:

#### A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:

- i) Rosemary had been married for .....years.  
a) two                      b) three                      c) seven                      d) four
- ii) Rosemary would buy flowers at the perfect shop in.....  
a) Wall Street    b) Old Street    c) Avenue Street    d) Regent Street
- iii) Rosemary noticed that her hands were charming against the ..... velvet.  
a) red                      b) yellow                      c) blue                      d) black
- iv) .....was dreadfully shapeless.  
a) Tulip                      b) Lilac                      c) Rose                      d) Daisy

#### B) Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence:

- a) Where was the little antique shop?
- b) What was price of the little box?
- c) What did the shopman promise to keep for Rosemary?

### 3.A.2.2 Section - II

A discreet door clicked shut behind her, as Rosemary stood outside, staring at the winter afternoon. The rain fell, bringing darkness with it, making the new lamps look sad. The lights in the houses burned dimly, as if regretting something. People rushed by, hidden under umbrellas, while Rosemary felt a strange pang in her heart. She wished she had something to cling to, like a little box. Despite the car being nearby, she hesitated. At this moment, a thin, dark girl suddenly appeared beside her, asking for money for a cup of tea. Rosemary was intrigued by the girl's presence and suggested taking her home for tea. The girl was hesitant, fearing she would be taken to the police station. Rosemary reassured her and insisted she come home with her. The girl was grateful and surprised by Rosemary's kindness. Rosemary felt a thrill at the unexpected adventure she found herself in, like something out of a novel. The simple act of inviting a stranger home for tea brought a sense of connection and kindness to both of them. It was a moment that Rosemary knew she would remember and share with her friends.

Rosemary laughed at her idea of taking her to police station, as she only wanted to help the girl feel warm and comfortable. The footman opened the car door, and they drove off into the dusk. Rosemary felt triumphant, thinking she had captured the girl. She wanted to show her that good things happen in life and that women should stick together. As they arrived at Rosemary's home, she welcomed the girl warmly, wanting to spare her from the servants' stares. Rosemary led her to her beautiful bedroom, urging her to sit by the fire and get warm. However, the girl seemed unsure and scared, not responding to Rosemary's attempts to reassure her. Despite the girl appearing confused and hesitant, Rosemary insisted on making her feel comfortable and cozy. She pushed the girl into a comfortable chair and tried to get her to relax. Despite the girl's silence and seeming stupidity, Rosemary remained kind and persistent in her efforts to help and comfort her.

Rosemary noticed that the girl's wet hair and encouraged her to take off her hat and coat for comfort. The girl struggled to stand up, making Rosemary realize that helping someone who doesn't respond is difficult. When the girl mentioned fainting, Rosemary quickly called for tea and brandy, but the girl tearfully insisted on tea only. Overwhelmed, the girl burst into tears. Rosemary comforted her, offering support and promising to help. The girl opened up, expressing her unbearable pain and desire to end her suffering. Rosemary reassured her, promising to take care of her and listen to her story. She distracted the girl with food and tea, trying to provide nourishment and comfort. Despite her own needs, Rosemary focused on the girl,

showing empathy and understanding. The situation was intense and emotional, but Rosemary's kindness and support made a difference for the girl in distress.

### 3.A.2.2 Check Your Progress:

#### A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:

- i) The girl never drank .....
- a) brandy      b) whisky      c) vodka      d) wine
- ii) ..... was going to faint because of hunger.
- a) Rosemary      b) The girl      c) Philip      d) Shopman
- iii) People always said that ..... was so nourishing.
- a) honey      b) jaggery      c) salt      d) sugar

#### B) Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence:

- a) What did the girl ask Rosemary for?
- b) Where did Rosemary take the girl for tea?
- c) What was Rosemary going to prove to the girl?

### 3.A.2.3 Section III

After a light meal, Rosemary and Miss Smith sit by the fire. Miss Smith was relaxed and content. Philip interrupted them. He was intrigued by the mysterious new arrival. Rosemary invited him in her room. He then took her to discuss about Miss Smith in the library for a private chat. Philip is confused and questions Rosemary's intentions about the stranger. Rosemary explained that she met Miss Smith on the street and brought her home out of kindness. She was determined to take care of her and show her compassion. Philip tried to reason with Rosemary, saying it's not practical, but she was determined to prove him wrong. She believed in being kind and helping those in need, despite the challenges. Their conversation highlights the contrast between Rosemary's idealism and Philip's practicality, as they navigate the complexities of compassion and generosity towards a stranger in their midst.

During their discussion, Philip admired Miss Smith's astonishing beauty and suggested she should dine with them which caused Rosemary to feel insecure. Then, she gave Miss Smith money to leave, then seduced Philip, asking if she's pretty. She asked for an expensive box and Philip allowed her to have it, not realizing her meaning her question.

### 3.A.2.3 Check Your Progress:

#### A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:

- i) The name of the girl was .....  
a) Miss Sasha    b) Miss Jean    c) Miss Smith    d) Miss Rosy
- ii) ..... was Rosemary's husband.  
a) Smith    b) Paul    c) Philip    d) Shopman
- iii) Rosemary gave ..... pound notes to the girl.  
a) three    b) two    c) five    d) one

#### B) Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence:

- a) Where did Rosemary pick the girl from?
- b) Who found Miss Smith as astonishingly pretty?
- c) What was Rosemary last question to Philip?

### 3.A.3 Analysis:

#### 3.A.3.A Plot:

Rosemary Fell is the protagonist of the story. She is a highly affluent woman. She has married to a wealthy person named Phillip Fell for last two years. She enjoys an opulent lifestyle. She frequently visits stores and purchases anything that pleases her. Once, she goes to an antique store. The shop owner is also curious to sell her special items. He displays her a little box made of shining velvet. Rosemary likes it but she doesn't buy it because it costs twenty-eight guineas. She asks the shop man to keep it on hold for her.

Outside the store, it is raining. Rosemary is furious as she can't get the box. A girl approaches her and asks for the price of a cup of tea. Instead of giving her

money, Rosemary takes that girl to her house. She wants to show to that girl that wealthy people have hearts for people like her. The girl gets initially terrified and astonished by being treated in this manner.

At her house, Rosemary forces the girl to sit in a chair next to the fire to get some warmth. She helps her to remove her coat and hat but leaves them on the ground. The girl demands food, as she is too exhausted and likely to fall unconscious. Rosemary, offers tea along with some food offers to the girl. When the girl starts eating, and Rosemary smokes a cigarette. The girl feels better after it. When Rosemary is about to enquire about the girl's life, her husband, Philip, enters the room and interrupts her. Then, he takes Rosemary with him in the library for private conversation. He asks about the girl and her ideas about her. She tells him about her charitable endeavours. Philip isn't happy to have a stranger in the house. During their discussion, he comments that the girl is incredibly nice and attractive. By his such remark, Rosemary feels uneasy. She leaves the library and goes to her bedroom. She collects three pounds which she pays to Miss Smith, and asks her to leave the house. Rosemary gets ready, makes her hair, and puts on her pearls goes back in the library to meet her husband. She tells him that Miss Smith has gone back to her place. Then she gets down on his knees and asks him whether he likes her. He responds positively. She then expresses her desire to buy the velvet box from the antique shop. Phillip also allows her to buy it. Then the story ends with Rosemary, unanswered last question, "Am I pretty?"

### **3.A.3.B Characters**

#### **a) Rosemary Fell**

Rosemary Fell is the protagonist of the story. She is a complex and multifaceted character. Her seemingly charitable actions have a deeper sense of insecurity, superficiality, and hypocrisy. Though she is married to a rich person, she feels unfulfilled and empty. She lacks purpose or meaning in her life. She wants to help needy people, not out of genuine empathy or kindness, but to validate her own existence and boost her ego. Her encounter with Miss Smith, a poor and lonely girl reveals her true self. It also serves as a catalyst for Rosemary's own introspection and self-discovery. She also feels insecure when her husband finds Miss Smith as attractive person. She realises her own emptiness and the futility of her relationships. Then she pays some money to that girl and asks her to leave the house.

Through Rosemary's character, Mansfield masterfully exposes the flaws and hypocrisy of the upper class. The story highlights that wealth and privilege can be accompanied by a deeper sense of inner emptiness and disconnection. Thus, Rosemary Fell's character represents the emptiness and superficiality that comes with wealth and material comfort. Her character confirms the saying that money can't buy happiness.

### **B) Philip Fell**

Philip Fell, Rosemary's husband, is a wealthy and successful man. He is depicted as a calm, collected, and rational person, who is untroubled by the existential crises by which his wife suffers. He embodies the values of the upper class. His character serves as a perfect foil to Rosemary's character. While Rosemary is drawn to the idea of helping others to overcome her emptiness, Philip is happy with his own life. He does not need external validation. He is also portrayed as unresponsive person to Rosemary's needs. It gives the reason of her isolation and disconnection from others. When he says Miss Smith is as an attractive person, it creates a sense of jealousy and insecurity to his wife, Rosemary.

Katherine Mansfield, through Philip's character, criticises the societal expectations placed on men and women. It highlights the ways in which gender roles can lead to emotional disconnection and stifled human relationships.

### **C) Miss Smith**

Miss Smith is a poor, lonely, and vulnerable girl who is struggling to survive in a harsh world. She meets Rosemary Fell and asks for the price of a cup of tea. Rosemary instead of giving money to her, takes her to her house. She wants to show her that rich people have hearts and they also think about people like her. But her act of charity is superficial. So, Miss Smith's character serves as perfect contrast to the wealthy and privileged Rosemary Fell. Her character highlights the vast social and economic disparities of the time. Though, she is going through tough time, Miss Smith maintains a sense of dignity and pride. Her quiet desperation and longing for human connection are deeply poignant in this story.

Through Miss Smith's character, Mansfield sheds a light on the struggles of the working class and the cruel realities of poverty and its devastating effects on the human spirit. Miss Smith's encounter with Rosemary also reveals themes of class, privilege and the human need for genuine connection.

#### **D) The Shop-man:**

He is the owner of an antique shop which was one of Rosemary's favourite shops. He always looks forward to having Rosemary at his shop and always keeps a special piece of art for her. One of them is the eye-catching blue velvet box. He promises to keep it hold as per Rosemary's request.

#### **3.A.3.C Themes:**

##### **A) Human Appearance versus Reality**

The story, "A Cup of Tea" acutely depicts human appearance in contrast to reality. On the surface, the person seems helping others or have sympathy for others but his/her intentions are something else. In this way, Mansfield portrays this hypocrisy in New Zealand's society. In the story, Miss Smith asks Rosemary Fell for price of a cup of tea. Rosemary instead of giving money to her, takes her to her house. She wants to show her that rich people have hearts and they also think about people like her. In her house, Rosemary shows herself as taking care of Miss. Smith. But her intentions are full of hypocrisy. She helps that girl not out of kindness or cares but to show herself as a good person and wants to use this incident to upgrade her status and boast her action. She feels that she is doing something that one can find in the fiction of Dostoevsky.

Katherine Mansfield here pinpoints her society in which upper classes use generous acts for their own benefits. They help the poor to gain praise from others and material objects.

##### **B) Jealousy and Insecurity**

Katherine Mansfield, in the story, "A Cup of Tea" portrays jealousy and insecurity felt by Rosemary Fell. She presents herself as a generous and caring woman. When Miss Smith asks Rosemary Fell for price of a cup of tea, she takes her to her house. There she shows herself as taking care of Miss. Smith but her intentions are full of hypocrisy. She helps that girl not out of kindness or cares but to show herself as a good person and give herself a chance of upgrading her status and boasting her action. She feels that she is doing something extra-ordinary. But Rosemary makes herself a prototype of jealousy and insecurity by this act. When her husband, Philip praises Miss. Smith for her attractiveness, she becomes jealous and insecure. So she gives three pounds to Miss Smith and gets rid of her. After that she

does some makeup and tries to attract the attention of her husband by her charming looks. This part of the story marks the futility of her relationships, as her husband finds another woman more attractive than her.

### **C) Materialism**

Katherine Mansfield portrays the apparent materialism of her time in this short story. The protagonist, Rosemary Fell is a highly affluent woman. She enjoys an opulent lifestyle. She frequently visits stores and purchases anything that pleases her. She buys flowers and special items from specific stores. Once, she goes to an antique store. The owner of the shop is also curious to sell her a special items. He keeps rare pieces for customers like her. According to him, he sells such item to customers who have the proper taste of such items. On that day, he displays her a little box made of shining velvet. Rosemary likes it but she doesn't buy it because it costs twenty-eight guineas and she asks the shop man to keep it on hold for her. At end of the story also, she expresses her desire to buy this item to her husband. So, we see, Rosemary chasing material objects throughout the story. First she wants an enamel box. Then she helps Miss Smith just to pose herself as a generous woman and gain praise from others. As a result, she appears as a mean character. Through Rosemary's character, Mansfield elaborates how true emotions are fading from society and people are running after material objects.

### **D) Class Distinction**

Katherine Mansfield portrays social classes of her time in this short story. Rosemary Fell and her husband belong to the upper or affluent class of the society. Miss. Smith belongs to the lower class of the society. She is hungry and shivering with cold. She is so poor that she doesn't have enough money for a cup of tea. So she begs Rosemary for the price of a cup of tea. On the other hand, Rosemary is a rich woman enjoying every luxury of life. She buys flowers and rare items only to please herself. These two characters from the story draw a difference between both classes. On one hand, the wealthy people like Rosemary are enjoying everything in their life. On the other hand, lower class people like Miss Smith are exposed to hunger and experiencing humiliation at the hands of the upper classes.

### **3.A.4 Terms to Remember:**



**Antique Shop:** Antique shops are a place where one-of-a-kind items from the past are kept for sale

**Cozy:** warm and comfortable

**Dostoevsky:** A renowned Russian novelist, journalist, and military engineer, Dostoevsky is regarded as one of the greatest novelists of all time.

**Engagement:** A commitment to a promise or a pledge

**Materialism:** A philosophical and cultural perspective that prioritizes the physical world and material possessions

**Stagger:** Walk or move unsteadily

**The Modernist Movement:** The Modernist Movement was a cultural and art movement that emerged in the late 19th century and flourished until the mid-20th century.

### **3.A.5 Answers to check your progress**

#### **3.B.2.1 Check Your Progress:**

**A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:**

- i) a) two
- ii) d) Regent Street
- iii) c) blue
- iv) a) Tulip

**B) Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence:**

- a) in Curzon Street
- b) Twenty-eight guineas
- c) A little enamel box

#### **3.B.2.2 Check Your Progress:**

**A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:**

- i) a) brandy

- ii) b) The girl
- iii) d) sugar

**B) Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence:**

- a) The girl asked Rosemary for the price of a cup of tea.
- b) Rosemary took the girl to her house.
- c) Rosemary was going to prove to the girl that rich people had hearts.

**3.B.2.3 Check Your Progress:**

**A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:**

- i) c) Miss Smith
- ii) c) Philip
- iii) a) three

**B) Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence:**

- a) in Curzon Street
- b) Rosemary's husband, Philip
- c) Rosemary's last question was "am I pretty?"

**3.A.6 Exercises:**

**A) Answer the following questions in detail:**

- 1) Write a detailed note on Rosemary Fell's character.
- 2) How does Katherine Mansfield explore the theme of 'class difference' in "A Cup of Tea"?
- 3) Discuss in detail the materialism as depicted in the short story, "A Cup of Tea".
- 4) Comment on the relationship between Rosemary Fell and Philip Fell.

**B) Write short notes on the following:**

- 1) Title of the short story
- 2) Miss Smith

- 3) Mr. Philip Fell
- 4) The Enamel Box
- 5) The Shopman

### **3.A.7 References for further study:**

Barnet, Sylvan, et al., *Literature for Composition* (Essays, Fiction, Poetry, and Drama). Fourth. New York: Harper Collins, 1996. Print.

Mansfield, Katherine. "A Cup of Tea." *Worthy Words* (An Anthology of Prose, One-Act Plays and Poetry for College Students). Ed. Praveen Kumar. First. New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Ltd., 2005. 42-49. Print.

## B. THE SERPENT LOVER

- A . K. Ramanujan

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### 3.B.0 Objectives:

After studying this unit you will be able to know:

- 1) Indian folk-tales and their adaptation in literature.
- 2) subversion of gender roles.
- 3) male patriarchy of the Indian society.
- 4) correlation between man and nature.
- 5) the complexities of human emotion.

### **3.B.1 Introduction:**

A.K. Ramanujan (1929-1993) was a renowned poet, translator, folklorist, philologist, and also a scholar of linguistics and Indian literature. His published works include “The Collected Poems,” “The Interior Landscape,” “Folktales from India,” and “Is There an Indian Way of Thinking?” His poems are considered as works of originality, sophistication, and artistry. His work in cultural essays, folklore studies, and translations span several disciplinary areas. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award, the Padma Shri, and the MacArthur.

The short story, “The Serpent Lover” by A.K. Ramanujan, is a masterful blend of myth, folklore, and psychological insight. It explores themes of love, desire, and transformation. The narrative of story revolves around a young woman, Kamakshi and her complex and intense relationship with a mysterious lover, who happens to be a serpent in human form. The story probes the complex human emotions. It sheds light on the darker aspects of love and desire that intersects myth, culture, and human experience.

### **3.B.2 Summary**

#### **3.B.2.1 Section I**

Kamakshi, a patient young wife, endured her husband's infatuation with a concubine for years, believing it to be God's will. An old woman suggested a love potion to control her husband, but Kamakshi feared the consequences and poured it into a snake hole. The potion worked on the snake who transformed itself into a man who resembled her husband, and they spent passionate nights together. She was initially startled by change in her man but eventually welcomed him, finding happiness in their encounters. This strange love affair led to an unexpected pregnancy, leaving Kamakshi to ponder the complexities of her situation and the consequences of her actions.

When Kamakshi discovered the truth about the snake who had taken her husband's form, she learned that he was actually the king of snakes who had fallen in love with her and impregnated her. Despite her initial shock and fear, the king of snakes assured her that he would ensure the safety of her pregnancy and even make her husband to return to her. Meanwhile, Kamakshi's husband accused her of infidelity and brought the matter to her father, who was sceptical of her innocence. With snake king's advice, Kamakshi decided to prove her loyalty by attending the

king's court the next day and offering to undergo a test of truth by holding a king cobra in the Siva temple.

The next day, the court gathered to address the husband's suspicion regarding his wife's pregnancy. The husband, claiming he had not slept with his wife for years, questioned how she could be pregnant. The wife, shocked by her husband's accusations, defended herself by stating he visited her every night, leading to her pregnancy. To prove her chastity, the elders agreed to a test at the Siva temple, where a five-headed snake coiled around the Siva-linga. The wife, Kamakshi, prayed to the Lord, declaring the child was her husband's and allowing the snake to bite her if she is infidel to her husband. The snake did nothing to her. Witnessing the snake's actions, the court praised Kamakshi for her unparalleled virtue and readiness to undergo such a test. The husband, feeling foolish and astounded, realized his mistake in doubting his faithful wife.

### 3.B.2.1 Check Your Progress:

#### A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:

- i) ..... gave medicine to Kamakshi.
  - a) An old woman
  - b) A Brahmin
  - c) The King
  - d) Elderly people
- ii) The whole court adjourned to the .....temple.
  - a) Rama
  - b) Krishna
  - c) Shiva
  - d) Kali
- iii) There was an awesome ..... headed snake coiled round the Siva-linga.
  - a) three
  - b) one
  - c) eleven
  - d) five
- iv) Kamakshi mixed the medicine in .....
  - a) porridge
  - b) milk
  - c) water
  - d) rice

#### B) Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence:

- a) Who drank the love potion?
- b) Where did Kamakshi pour the blood-red porridge?
- c) Who was Kamakshi's lover and father of her child?



- a) Kamakshi
- b) The King
- c) Kamakshi's son
- d) Kamakshi's neighbour
- iv) ..... performed all the proper funeral rites
  - a) Kamakshi's son
  - b) The King
  - c) Kamakshi
  - d) Kamakshi's husband

**B) Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence:**

- a) Who summoned concubine and ordered her to haul water to Kamakshi's house?
- b) Who gave up the concubine's company?
- c) How did Kamakshi repay her debt to the snake king?
- d) How did the snake king die?

**3.B.3 Analysis:**

**3.B.3.1 Plot:**

The story is a story about a woman named Kamakshi, her cruel husband and her serpent lover. Kamakshi's husband was infatuated with a harlot. Kamakshi had accepted her ill-fate. One day an old woman from the neighbourhood offered her a magical love potion that had the power of taming the unruly husband. She mixed that medicine with some sweet porridge, but it turned red. She feared that it would make her husband angry and might kill him. So, she poured that mixture into a snake's hole behind her house. A king cobra, living in that hole, drank that mixture. The love potion acted on it and it fell madly in love with Kamakshi. In her husband's absence, it took form of her husband and spent nights with her. Kamakshi was unaware about the fact that the husband with whom she slept every night was a snake.

After some days, Kamakshi became pregnant. The snake revealed its identity and narrated all about the effect of love potion. When her husband came to know Kamakshi's pregnancy, he became furious as he never slept with her. He also complained about it to his father-in-law. Then his father-in-law summoned her and interrogated her, but he was not satisfied with her answer. In the meantime, Kamakshi made some plans with her serpent lover. The snake king asked her to take the test of truth and chastity at the Shiva temple next morning. The woman went to



the court and asserted to the king and elderly people that the son in her womb belonged to her husband. She also made clear that she will go through a chastity test by handling a cobra at the Shiva temple. The king's court agreed to her proposal and on the next day, the court assembled at the Shiva temple. There was a huge five headed snake coiled round the Shivalinga. Kamakshi took it in her hands and it hung around her neck and as planned, her serpent lover did nothing to her. All the villagers were awestruck and condemned her husband. They all worshipped her as pious woman. She was considered as a paragon of wives, a *pativrata*.

After nine months, Kamaskshi gave birth to a divine looking son. Her husband accepted that child and had no more in doubts about the child. He also stopped visiting the harlot. When the harlot wanted to see the child, Kamakshi tricked her too with help of the snake king. She deceived her in weight of jewellery of the child and enslaved her through the order of the king. After that, Kamakshi started her happy life with her husband and son. She, in her happiness, forgot about the snake king.

One night, her serpent lover came to visit her. He found her sleeping peacefully in the arms of her husband. It felt jealousy and hung itself from her loose tresses which fell downwards from the edge of her cot. Next morning Kamakshi found the dead snake fell to the floor from her hair. She felt sad for him. To repay its debts, she performed the funeral rites for the dead snake at the hands of her son. She, then, lived happily with her husband and son.

### **3.B.3.2 Characters:**

#### **a) Kamakshi:**

Kamakshi is the protagonist of the story, a complex and intense woman who is involved with a mysterious lover. Her husband is infatuated with a harlot and avoids her. On the advice of an old woman, she tries to give him the love potion mixed in porridge. But the colour of porridge fears her and she pours that mixer in the hole behind her house. The cobra living in that hole drinks it and falls in love with her. It visits her daily in the form of her husband. When she becomes pregnant, she comes to know about its real identity. With its help she goes through the chastity test in the court. She also takes its help to enslave the harlot. When her husband stops visiting that harlot, she lives a happy life with her son and husband.

#### **b) The Snake King/Cobra:**

The Snake King is the mysterious lover, a serpent in human form, who is presented as Kamakshi's lover and father of her child. When Kamakashi pours mixture of the love potion in its hole, it falls in her love. It visits her daily in the form of her husband every night. When she becomes pregnant, it discloses its real identity. When Kamakshi's husband becomes furious about her pregnancy, it plans her chastity test and proves her purity. It also helps her to enslave the harlot by tricking her. At end of the story, it dies by hanging to Kamakshi's loose tresses.

**c) The Husband:**

The husband is the unnamed character in the story. He has an illicit relationship with a harlot. Even after marriage with Kamakhi, he continues to visit that harlot. He never sleeps with his wife. In his absence the serpent visits his wife every night. When she becomes pregnant, he interrogates her and takes her to the court. There kamakshi with help of her serpent lover proves him wrong. He then accepts the child as his and lives happily with Kamakshi. He also stops visiting the harlot.

**d) The Harlot:**

The harlot is also an unnamed character from the story. She has a limited role in the story. The readers only know that Kamakhi's husband visits her daily. When Kamakshi proves her chastity, he stops visiting her and lives happily with his son and wife. The harlot becomes curious to see the child which has stopped him to visit her. She then expresses her desire to see the child of them. Here Kamakshi tricks her in the weight of jewellery put on the boy and enslaves her by the order of the king.

**3.B.3.4 Themes**

**a) Love and Desire:**

Love and desire are central themes that drive the narrative in the short story "The Serpent Lover". Kamaksi's intense and all-consuming passion for her serpent lover is portrayed as a force that goes beyond conventional boundaries and societal expectations. A. K. Ramanujan has explored these themes of love and desire in several ways.

The story challenges traditional notions of love and relationships. Usually man and woman love stories are presented but this story depicts romantic and sexual relationship between a human (Kamakshi) and a non-human entity (The Serpent). The story also touches on the taboo nature of the protagonist's relationship. It

challenges the set society rules. So it encompasses the tension between societal norms and individual desires.

Another thing, the serpent lover can be seen as a metaphor for the protagonist's desires. It represents the untamed and uncontrolled aspects of human passion. Kamakshi's love and desire for the serpent lover also leads her to an exploration of her own identity. So, the story highlights the complex interplay between love, desire, and self-discovery. The portrayal of love and desire in "The Serpent Lover" is also characterized by complexity and nuance. It challenges conventional norms and expectations of a society.

#### **b) Transformation and Metamorphosis:**

The Snake King, a serpent in human form, is presented as Kamakshi's lover and father of her child. It visits her daily in the form of her husband every night. Its ability to change form raises questions about the fluidity of identity and the boundaries between human and animal. So the themes of transformation and metamorphosis are significant in this short story. These themes are woven throughout the narrative. The story explores them in various ways.

The serpent lover's physical transformation ability i.e. to change form from a snake to a human represents a literal transformation. It blurs the lines between species and challenges set society norms. On the other hand Kamakshi's love for the serpent lover transforms her emotionally. It leads her to question her own identity and desires. This leads to her psychological transformation. She is able to navigate her complex emotions and desires which leads her to deeper understanding of herself.

The serpent lover can be seen as a symbol of transformation. It represents the shedding of old skin and the emergence of new life. The story is based on Indian mythology and folklore. It transforms and reinterprets traditional symbols and narratives in a modern context.

Thus, A. K. Ramanujan's exploration of transformation and metamorphosis in "The Serpent Lover" highlights the fluidity of identity, desire, and human experience. It creates a rich and complex narrative that is difficult to categorise.

#### **c) Cultural Heritage and Mythology:**

In the story, “The Serpent Lover”, A. K. Ramanujan has masterfully woven together elements of Indian mythology, folklore, and philosophy. It compels readers to contemplate the complexities of human experience.

The narrative of the short story revolves around a young woman who falls in love with a serpent. It symbolises the blurred lines between human and animal, and the transformative power of love. The story highlights the interconnectedness of human and natural worlds. It echoes ancient Indian respect and beliefs in the unity of all living beings. The mythological significance of the story can be seen in the Hindu beliefs of rebirth or life after death. The serpent in the story symbolizes renewal, rebirth, and spiritual growth. The story also showcases Ramanujan's unique ability to blend traditional Indian narratives with modern storytelling techniques. It honours India's rich cultural heritage and encourages readers to reflect on their own relationships with nature and the divine.

Thus, A.K. Ramanujan's "The Serpent Lover" is a captivating tale that invites readers to explore the depths of human experience, love, and transformation. Through its rich cultural and mythological references, the story contemplates us to think about our place within the natural world and the mysteries of the human heart.

**d) Taboo and Transgression:**

“The Serpent Lover” by A.K. Ramanujan explores the themes of taboo and transgression. It challenges societal norms and conventions. The story focuses on a romantic and sexual relationship between a human (Kamakshi) and a non-human entity (a snake). So, it transgresses traditional boundaries of love and relationships. Kamakshi’s desire for the serpent lover is also a taboo that goes against societal expectations and norms. Their relationship also crosses the boundary between species. It also creates sense of discomfort and unease among the reader.

The story also subverts traditional gender roles. The female protagonist Kamakshi has dominant and more assertive role in the relationship. She takes the chastity test in the court. She also enslaves the harlot with help of her serpent lover. Besides, all other characters from the story are unnamed. Only Kamakshi has her proper name in the story.

Thus, Ramanujan has created a narrative that is thought-provoking, unsettling, and ultimately transformative. It challenges readers to question their assumptions and biases.

### 3.B.4 Terms to Remember:

**Bewildered:** confused

**Chastity:** refers to the state of being chaste, which means abstaining from sexual activity or behaviour, often for moral or religious reasons. It can also refer to the quality of being pure and virtuous.

**Concubine:** a woman who is in a long-term sexual relationship with a man

**Errant:** straying from the right path or behaving in a way that is wrong or faulty.

**Funeral Rites:** ceremonial activities performed to honour and pay respects to a deceased person, often according to cultural, religious, or personal traditions.

**Harlot:** a derogatory term for a prostitute or a person who engages in promiscuous sexual behaviour.

**Potion:** a potion is a liquid concoction made from a mixture of ingredients, often used in fantasy and fiction to achieve a specific effect or grant a particular power.

### 3.B.5 Answers to check your progress:

**A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:**

- i) a) An old woman
- ii) c) Shiva
- iii) d) five
- iv) a) porridge

**B) Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence:**

- a) The cobra, the snake king drank the love potion.
- b) Kamakshi poured the blood-red porridge into a snake hole behind her house.
- c) The cobra, the snake king was Kamakshi's lover and father of her child.
- d) Kamakshi was considered as a paragon of wives, a *pativrata*.

**A) Rewrite following sentences by choosing the most correct alternative:**

- i) c) The dead snake
- ii) d) A snake
- iii) a) Kamakshi
- iv) a) Kamakshi's son

**B) Answer the following questions in one word/phrase/sentence:**

- a) The King summoned concubine and ordered her to haul water to Kamakshi's house.
- b) Kamakshi's husband gave up the concubine's company.
- c) Kamakshi repaid her debt to the snake king by performing all the proper funeral rites through her son.
- d) The snake king twisted himself into Kamakshi's loose tresses, which hung down from the edge of the cot, and hanged himself with them.

**3.B.6 Exercises**

**A) Answer the following questions in detail:**

1. How does Kamakshi's relationship with the serpent lover challenge traditional notions of love and relationships?
2. What role do cultural and mythological references play in the story, "The Serpent Lover"? How do they enhance the narrative?
3. Explore the theme of taboo and transgression in the story, "The Serpent Lover".
4. Transformation and metamorphosis are significant themes in "The Serpent Lover". Discuss.

**B) Write Short Notes on the following:**

- a) Kamakshi
- b) The Snake King
- c) The Love Potion
- d) The Title of the Story

### **3.B.7 References for further study:**

Clarke, Kenneth W. and Mary W. Clarke. *Introducing Folklore*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. Print.

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## **Unit-4**

### **Words**

#### **i) Open and closed word classes ii) The open word classes iii) The closed word classes**

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## 4.0 Objectives

This module aims to:-

- introduce students to the grammatical unit called ‘words’.
- explain to students the difference between the simple and complex words.
- acquaint students with the classes of word in English.
- familiarize students with the function of words.
- make students learn about form of words in English.
- explain to students the meaning of words.

## 4.1 Introduction

Hello students, in the previous modules you learned about short story as a form of literature. Literature and language have a complimentary relationship. In fact, it can be said that language creates literature. Moreover, literature enriches language. Students, you are studying English as a foreign language and you do not get enough exposure to English language outside the English classroom. Therefore, the study or reading of English literature provides you a sure source to exposure to the English language. English literature can be used tactfully to enrich your vocabulary of English and enable you to understand English clearly and communicate in it effectively.

Language is a compositional system. It is a system made of subsystems like Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics and others. Phonology studies the speech sounds of a language. Morphology is the study of the ways the words in a language are formed. Words come under syntax which means grammar. As far as the grammar of English is concerned, it is of two kinds: Traditional or Old grammar and Modern or New Grammar. A word is a unit of language. It is made of one or more morphemes which are the smallest meaningful grammatical units of language. As per the traditional English grammar, the words are the ‘Parts of Speech’. There are eight parts of speech (Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Verbs, Adverbs, Conjunctions, Prepositions, and Interjections).

There are two types of words: simple and complex. The simple words are made of only one morpheme. They have a root or stem but no affixes. *Ask, banana, must,*

*good, too* and several others are simple words. The complex words are made of two or more morphemes. They can have one or more roots or stems or a root or stem and one or more affixes. *Unhappiness, laptops, irregularity, encouragement* and many other such words are complex.

The complex words show that language has units which are made of smaller units. Sentence, clause, phrase, word, and morpheme are the grammatical units of English. These units can be ordered in terms of 'high' and 'low' grammatical ranks. A unit of the higher rank consists of one or more of the units of the next lower rank. This means a sentence is made of one or more clauses. A clause is made of one or more phrases. A phrase is made of one or more words. Similarly, a word is made of one or more morphemes. The following figure shows the hierarchy of the grammatical units:

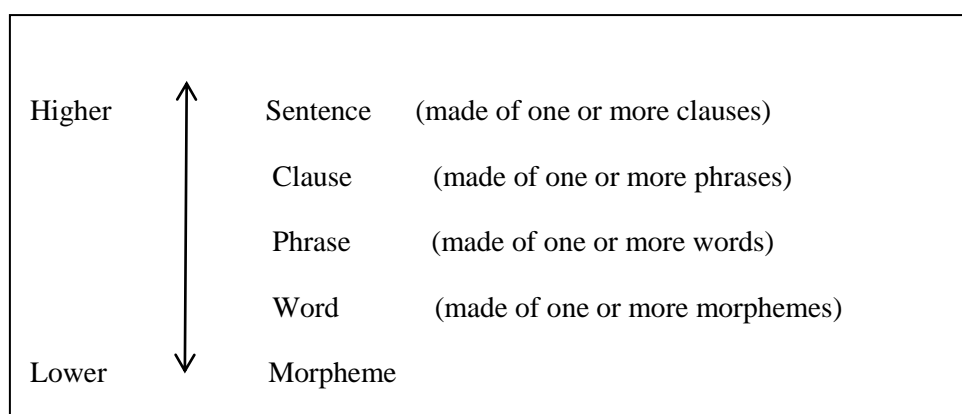


Figure No. 4.1

The figure gives the rank scale of the grammatical units. Sentence is the highest unit of grammar and morpheme is the smallest unit of grammar. The focus of the present unit is word. And it is discussed in detail in following parts of the unit.

## 4.2 Presentation of Subject Matter

Students, we cannot imagine a language without word. Subsequently, there cannot be a human world without word. The words in this unit refer to words in English. There are different types of words. They are categorized according to the role they perform in grammar. Traditionally the types of words are called 'parts of speech'. English, as you know, has eight parts of speech: Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Adverbs, Verbs, Prepositions, Conjunctions and Interjections. These are

classified into content words and structure words. Noun, Adjective, Verb and Adverb are content words. On the other hand, pronoun, preposition, conjunction and interjection are structure words. But Modern Grammar treats words in a different way. Instead of referring to words as parts of speech, they are understood as different classes. The traditional approach to grammar is chiefly semantic. It means it gives importance to the meaning of the grammatical units. On the contrary, the modern approach to grammar is mainly functional. It considers the position of the grammatical item rather important than its meaning. It distinguishes the words according to the way they are used.

#### 4.2.1 Open and closed word classes

The constituent structure grammar or modern grammar puts English words into two major word classes: OPEN WORD CLASSES and CLOSED WORD CLASSES. There are four open word classes in English as shown in the following table:

Sr. No.	Open word class	Symbol for form label	Examples
1.	Noun	N	cat, book, girl, thing, hall, dream
2.	Verb (Full-verb)	V	apply, stand, go, look, cut, meet
3.	Adjective	Aj	fine, creamy, happy, calm, inactive
4.	Adverb	Av	there, now, yesterday, rather, rarely, often

**Table 4.1**

Open word classes are called so because new members (words) can be freely invented and added to their existing list. At present under the influence of globalization and information technology, the English language has been continually evolving. New words and expressions are being invented or reinvented. The words like ‘whatsapp’, ‘google’, ‘jeggings’, ‘listicle’, ‘Locavore’, ‘screenager’, ‘snackable’, ‘rage-quit’, ‘Youtuber’, and many others are some of the 21<sup>st</sup> century words. In the beginning ‘Google’ was a nonsense word.

The membership of the open word classes is fairly open-ended. For example, the word, ‘whatsapp’ is a noun which came into existence in 2009. It refers to a smartphone application. The word is the belnding of the colloquial greeting ‘what’s up’ and ‘app’, the clipping of ‘application’. Presently, it is a noun but it would not be surprising, if someone says, ‘I whatsapped you the photos’. In this sentences

‘whatsapp’ is used as a verb, which means ‘to send on whatsapp’. This small and simple example shows that to fulfill new requirements, English vocabulary is constantly developed.

Further, a member of one class may be similar in spelling as well as pronunciation with a member of another class. See for instance the following examples:

1. ‘Plant’ can be a noun or a verb as in:
  - a. We water plants (noun).
  - b. Farmers plant (verb) wheat.
2. ‘Fast’ can be an adjective, adverb, a noun or a verb.
  - a. The fast (adjective) car was sold.
  - b. The car went fast (adverb).
  - c. Most Hindus observe fast (noun) during the Navratri.
  - d. Most Muslims fast (verb) during Ramadan.

Now it’s time to see the closed word classes. Determiners, pronouns, propositions, conjunctions, operator verbs, interjections and enumerators are closed word classes in English. Unlike the open word classes, the closed word classes have a fairly fixed membership and not open-ended and that is why they are called closed word classes. It is not possible to develop new words like ‘the’ (determiner), ‘we’ (pronoun), ‘or’ (conjunction), ‘may’ (operator verb) and ‘in’ (preposition). Therefore, it is possible to give a full list of each closed word class practically. However, in some ways interjections and enumerators are like open classes but for the sake of convenience they are considered under the closed word classes. The following Table (4.2) gives some common members of each closed word class.

Sr. No.	Open word class	Symbol for form label	Examples
1.	Determiner	d	a, the, this, that, these, those, some, many
2.	Pronoun	pn	i, we, you, he, she, it they one, some
3.	Preposition	p	at, before, by, for, from, in, of, on, past, to, under
4.	Conjunction	cj	and, or, but, if, when, that, because, so, though
5.	Operator-verb	v	be, have, do, shall, will, can, may

6.	Interjection	ij	ah, oh, gee, hell, hey, gee, OMG, shoo, ugh
7.	Enumerator	e	one, two, three, first, third, last, seventh

**Table 4.2**

Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 clearly show that the open word class symbols are capital letters while the symbols used for the closed word classes are small letters.

But it must be noted that the closed word classes are not as simple as they appear. They too have some confusing qualities. Firstly, the prepositions, for example, can be made of a single word (at, by, in, to, with), two words (into, inside, within, instead of, away from, up to) or a sequence of words (according to, with a view to, by virtue of, with reference to). The two words prepositions or double prepositions and the prepositions made of a sequence of words or phrase prepositions sometimes act like a single preposition and sometimes like a sequence of words.

Secondly, there is an overlap between the members of the closed word classes. They have members which are similar in spelling and pronunciation to members of other classes, for instance, ‘this’, ‘that’, ‘these’, ‘those’ can be determiners or pronouns. Similarly ‘as’ and ‘than’ can be either prepositions or conjunctions. In addition to this there can also be the overlap between a closed class word and an open class word: for example, ‘in’ can be either a preposition or an adverb. Similarly, ‘round’ can be an adjective, a noun, a verb, or a preposition.

Besides, it must also be noted that the traditional part of speech namely ‘Verbs’ is included separately under the open word classes and the closed word classes. The verbs under the open word classes become the full-verbs which are large in number. On the other hand, the verbs under the closed word classes are auxiliary, operator, or helping verbs which make a small closed class with a fixed number of members. The full-verbs are labeled with the capital ‘V’ and the operator verbs are labeled with the small ‘v’.

#### **4.2.2 Three types of criterion or test:**

Traditionally, the part of speech of a word is mostly defined by its meaning. However, the constituent structure approach uses three types of test or criterion to define the class of a word. The three types of test or criterion are Function, Form and Meaning.

1. **Function:** The class of a word can be identified by the way it comes in certain positions or structural contexts. The function of a word means the position taken by it in a phrase and subsequently indirectly in a clause or sentence. For example,

‘They drink only the lemon drink.’ It can be easily recognized that the first ‘drink’ is a verb and the second ‘drink’ is a noun according to their function.

2. **Form:** The class of a word can be recognized partly from its form which means the affixes attached to the word. Affixes are prefixes and suffixes new words are derived by adding derivational affixes. For example, *-al* (proposal), *-ation* (examination), *-cy* (delicacy), *-dom* (kingdom, freedom), *-ee* (employee), *-er* (worker), *-ess* (poetess), *-ette* (kitchenette), *-hood* (childhood, falsehood), *-ism* (Marxism), *-ist* (socialist), *-let* (flatlet), *-ling* (duckling), *-ment* (enjoyment), *-ness* (happiness), *-scape* (landscape), *-ship* (friendship) *-th* (warmth) and others are noun forming suffixes. It means the class of a word can easily be recognized by its form.

Similarly, *-ify*, *-ize* and *-en* are verb forming suffixes and *-ly*, *-ward(s)* and *-wise* are adverb forming suffixes. In this way the class of the words belonging to open classes can be identified by their form.

3. **Meaning:** As pointed out earlier, traditionally the class of a word is recognized by its meaning. Meaning of a word means the thing or idea that it represents. However, with the constituent structural approach in grammar meaning is a less reliable criterion.

In this way, the position of the word plays a very important role in recognizing its class. Next to function, the affixes attached to the word also help in identifying its class. Accordingly, the above three criteria can be arranged in the following order of importance:

- Function is the most important.
- Form is the next important.
- Meaning is the least important.

It is necessary to understand the above order of importance. Meaning is always not useful in defining word classes. Let’s see the following nonsense verse, “The Faulty Bagnose” by John Lennon

The Munglepilgriffs far away  
Religeorge too thee worlded.  
Sam fells on the waysock-side  
And somforbe on a gurlled,  
With all her faulty bagnose!

You will see that the words ‘Mungle’, ‘somforbe’, ‘gurlled’, ‘bagnose’ are unfamiliar to us. We do not know their meanings. Still we can identify their word class with the help of the function (position the words have), that they are all nouns. ‘Mungle’ comes between the determiner, ‘the’ and the verb, ‘pilgriffs’ which is in Vs form. Similarly, ‘bagnose’ comes after the adjective, ‘faulty’. In this way class of all the nonsense words can be identified by considering their function. That is why meaning is a less reliable test or criterion to identify the class of a word.

As far as form is concerned, it can be partly useful in identifying the class of a word. As discussed earlier form refers to the affixes added to a word. But there are so many words containing no affixes such as answer, stand, fast, early, work, too, seldom and many others. Such words may belong to more than one word class. For example, in ‘The passengers fast<sub>1</sub> in the fast<sub>2</sub> train that do not go fast<sub>3</sub>.’ fast<sub>1</sub> is a noun; fast<sub>2</sub> is an adjective; and fast<sub>3</sub> is an adverb.

Similarly it would be misleading to suppose that all the words ending in ‘-ly’ are adverb and all the words ending in ‘-ed’ and ‘-ing’ are verbs. For example, lovely and womanly are adjectives and ‘tired’ in ‘a tired horse’ and ‘approved’ in ‘the approved proposal’ are adjectives. So the criterion of form is less important than the criterion of function. All this shows that the criteria of form and meaning have limitations in defining the class of a word, so as it is pointed out by Leech, Deuchar and Hoogenraad (2015) we chiefly rely on the function of a word as a criterion of identifying its class. Now let us consider the four open word classes:

### **4.2.3 The open classes**

As mentioned earlier, there are four open word classes. Let us discuss nouns as per the criteria discussed above:

#### **4.2.3.1 Nouns (N)**

It is the most abundant class.

## I) Function:

Nouns can function as :

i) **Head (H)** of a noun phrase (NP):

NP(<sup>H</sup><sub>N</sub> flowers), NP(<sup>M</sup>a<sub>N</sub> <sup>H</sup>man), NP(<sup>M</sup>the<sup>M</sup>best<sub>N</sub> <sup>H</sup>friend<sup>M</sup>ever),

ii) **Premodifier (M)** in an NP:

NP (<sup>M</sup>a<sub>N</sub> <sup>M</sup>gold<sub>N</sub> <sup>H</sup>necklace), NP (<sup>M</sup>the<sub>N</sub> <sup>M</sup>noun<sub>N</sub> <sup>H</sup>phrase),

NP (<sup>M</sup>the<sub>N</sub> <sup>M</sup>marriage function)

iii) **Head of a prepositional phrase (PP)**

PP(<sub>P</sub>On<sup>M</sup>a<sub>N</sub> <sup>H</sup>table), PP(<sub>P</sub>to<sub>N</sub> <sup>H</sup>Kolhapur), PP(<sub>P</sub>inside<sup>M</sup>the<sub>N</sub> <sup>H</sup>haveli)

It must be noted that Head (H) is the chief or main word of a phrase. It is the compulsory element of the noun phrases, prepositional phrases, genitive phrases, adjective phrases and adverb phrases. A single head makes one phrase. On the other hand, modifiers (M) are optional elements of these phrases. Premodifiers (M) come before the Head and the post-modifiers (M) come after the Head.

## II) Form:

i) Usually count nouns have two forms: singular and plural. Most count nouns can be changed from singular to plural form by adding the plural inflectional suffix -s (apples, books, bags, teachers), -es (buses, churches, judges) or -ies (babies, mangoes, spies) These are called regular plural nouns. Irregular plural nouns are formed by some other change of form. They are unpredictable. For example, *wife: wives /waivz/, man~men, child~children, stimulus~stimuli.*

ii) The following derivational suffixes are characteristic noun suffixes:

a) **Suffixes Forming Nouns from Nouns:**

-dom (king ~ kingdom), -ess (poet ~ poetess), -er (London ~ Londoner), -ette(kitchen ~ kitchenette), -hood (child ~ childhood), -ism



(Marx ~ Marxism), *-let* (flat ~ flatlet), *-ling* (duck ~ duckling), *-scape* (land ~ landscape), *-ship* (friend ~ friendship), and others.

b) **Suffixes forming Nouns from Verbs:**

*-ation* (examine ~ examination), *-ee* (employ ~ employee), *-al* (propose ~ proposal), *-ary* (dispense ~ dispensary), *-er* (work ~ worker), *-ment* (enjoy ~ enjoyment), and many others.

c) **Suffixes Forming Nouns from Adjectives:**

*-cy* (delicate ~ delicacy), *-dom* (free ~ freedom), *-er* (ten ~ tenner), *-hood* (false ~ falsehood), *-ist* (social ~ socialist), *-ness* (happy ~ happiness), *-th* (warm ~ warmth), and others

### III) Meaning:

As far as meaning is concerned nouns can be sub classified into proper/ common nouns, concrete/abstract nouns, count/mass nouns and collective nouns. It must be noted that nouns indicate physical things, objects, places, substances, events, states, activities, processes, times, occasions, etc.

- A) Proper vs Common Nouns: Proper nouns are used refer to a specific individual person, things, etc. Normally a proper noun begins with a capital letter (e.g. Virat, India, Shivaji University, Sangli, etc.). Furthermore, a proper noun does not have a plural form (e.g. Virats\*, Indias\*, or Sanglis\*), therefore it cannot generally come after 'a/an' or 'the' (e.g. a Rohan\*, the Sangli\*). On the other hand, common nouns are used to refer to animals, persons, things, places in general (horse, boy, woman, book, village, city, etc.). A common noun can have a plural form (men, boys, matches, trees). Hence, common nouns can come after the determiners, 'a/an' or 'the'. But occasionally, proper nouns are treated like common nouns as in 'There is a Gandhinagar in Kolhapur.' And 'I have seen such many Patils.'
- B) Concrete vs Abstract Nouns: Concrete nouns refer to everything that can be seen, touched, heard, tasted, and/or smelled. It means a concrete noun is used to identify whatever that is tangible. It represents actual substance, living- non-living things animals and places such as lion, sugar, water, air, plant, tiger, officer, stone, book, school, hospital, etc. On the other hand, abstract nouns

refer to everything which is fictional and non-tangible. For example, happiness, joy, bliss, ecstasy, pleasure, delight, gladness, and many others.

C) Count vs Mass Nouns: Count nouns refer to countable things that can have a plural form. For example, book~books, star~stars, joy~joys, litre~litres, and many more. On the other hand, mass nouns refer to things that cannot be counted. They refer to substances, qualities, etc. Mass nouns normally have no plural forms. For example, milk~\*milks, sugar~\*sugars, happiness~\*happinesses, gold~\*gold, etc. However, it must be noticed that a noun can be both count (countable) and mass (uncountable). For example, chicken, hair, room, etc. as used in the following examples:

1. She likes to eat **chicken**. (Mass)
  - 1a. She has kept five **chickens**. (Count)
2. She has long **hair**. (Mass)
  - 2a. She found two long **hairs**. (Count)
3. He has no **room** in her life. (Mass)
  - 3a. He owns two big **rooms**. (Count)

In addition, a good indicator of count nouns is the use of the indefinite article, a or an and numbers which normally premodify the count nouns. For example, 'a girl', 'a book', 'an eagle', 'an umbrella', 'two men', 'one pen', 'four fans', etc. On the other hand, the mass nouns do not take such premodifiers. For example, '\*a sugar', '\*one happiness' and '\*ten cheeses' are not approved.

D) Collective Nouns: Normally the collective nouns are count nouns. Even in their singular form they refer to groups of people, animals or things (heard, crowd, family, government, committee) but grammatically they can take a plural verb. For example, 1. The crowd enters/enter the park. 2. The committee visits/visit Kolhapur. 3. The pride has/have left the area.

#### 4.2.3.2 Verbs (V)

There are two types of verbs in English. One belongs to the open classes. It is called Full verbs which can come independently. And when they come with other operator verbs, they always come after all the operator verbs in a verb phrase. The

other belongs to the closed classes. It is called operator verbs. Here we will discuss the full verbs.

### I) Function:

The full verb always functions as the MAIN VERB (Mv) in a verb phrase. They can come independently as a predicator. In a verb phrase a full verb can either come on its own or come after other operator verbs. For example, [ <sup>S</sup> (They) <sup>P</sup> <sub>VP</sub> ( <sup>Mv</sup> <sub>V</sub> dance)],

[ <sup>S</sup> (Birds) <sup>P</sup> <sub>VP</sub> (can <sup>Mv</sup> <sub>V</sub> sing)], [ <sup>S</sup> (She) <sup>P</sup> <sub>VP</sub> (was <sup>Mv</sup> <sub>V</sub> walking)],

[ <sup>S</sup> (The tree) <sup>P</sup> <sub>VP</sub> (has been <sup>Mv</sup> <sub>V</sub> watered)], [ <sup>S</sup> (That room) <sup>P</sup> <sub>VP</sub> (might have been being <sup>Mv</sup> <sub>V</sub> painted)].

### II) Form:

There are some affixes that help in identifying verbs. There are a few verb forming prefixes in English. For example, *be-* in *befriend*, *bemoan*; *en-* in *encode*, *enjoy*; *de-* in *derail*, *denude*; *un-* in *unhorse* and others.

Likewise, English has only three suffixes to form verbs: *-ify* in *classify*, *beautify*; *-ize/-ise* in *realize*, *civilize*, *energise*, *modernise*; and *-en* in *brighten*, *hasten*, and *soften*.

Besides, English full verbs also take different inflectional suffixes. Accordingly they have six forms which express tense and aspects. The inflectional forms of English verbs are Vo, Vs, Ved, Vi, Ving and Ven. They are presented in Table 4.3. It must be noticed that Vo and Vi forms look identical. However, Vo shows present tense and is used if the Subject is not third person singular. On the other hand Vi is infinitive form. It is a tenseless verb form. It comes without subject in imperative clauses. Normally Vi follows the particle, 'to' in subordinate clauses. It must also be noticed that the Ved and Ven forms of the REGULAR VERBS like *agree*, *call*, and others are identical. They are formed by adding *-ed* suffix. The Ven form is the past participle form of the verb. It is called so because some verbs take *-en*, inflectional suffix for the past participle form. The past participle is also called the passive participle (are taken, is written, was connected) and perfect participle (has taken, have written, had collected). The verbs that do not have identical Ved and Ven forms

formed by adding -ed are IRREGULAR VERBS (come, cut, buy, take). There are around 200 IRREGULAR VERBS in English.

Verb type	Verb	Tensed			Tenseless		
		Present Tense		Past Tense	Infinitive	Progressive	Perfect/Passive
		Vo	Vs	Ved	Vi	Ving	Ven
<b>Regular</b>	ACCEPT	accept	accepts	accepted	to accept	accepting	accepted
	CALL	call	calls	called	to call	calling	called
	MOVE	move	moves	moved	to move	moving	moved
	WAIT	wait	waits	waited	to wait	waiting	waited
<b>Irregular</b>	BUY	buy	buys	bought	to buy	buying	bought
	CUT	cut	cuts	cut	to cut	cutting	cut
	WRITE	write	writes	wrote	to write	writing	written
	SHAKE	shake	shakes	shook	to shake	shaking	shaken

**Table 4.3**

It must be noticed that the Vo form of a verb is the plain or base verb form. It is without any suffix. The Vo, Vs and Ved forms are tensed. They show tense. The Vo and Vs forms show the present tense. On the other hand, the Ved form shows the past tense. On the contrary, the Vi, Ving, and Ven forms are tenseless. The Ving form shows the continuous or progressive aspect. It is call the present participle. The Ven form shows the passive aspect when it comes after a form of 'BE' and the perfect aspect when it comes after a form of 'HAVE'. That is why it also called 'the passive and perfect participle'.

**III) Meaning:** As far as meaning is concerned, full verbs show happenings. They express actions, events, processes, activities, states. Accordingly, there are verbs of action/dynamic verbs (eat, cut, run, walk) and verbs of emotions/ static verbs (enjoy, think, worry, meditate). Further, the full verbs show the actions which are physical (dance, jump, bend); mental (agree, think, wonder); perceptual (see, feel, taste, hear, sense); social (buy, sell, work); and others.

#### 4.2.3.3 Adjectives (Aj)

Traditionally, adjectives are the words that give additional information about a noun. Let us see the function, form and meaning of adjectives.

## I) Function:

Adjectives can function as:

- a) Head of an Adjective Phrase (AjP):

[She is <sub>AjP</sub> (<sub>Av</sub> <sup>M</sup>very <sub>Aj</sub> <sup>H</sup>clever)], [The tea was <sub>AjP</sub> (<sub>Av</sub> <sup>M</sup>too <sub>Aj</sub> <sup>H</sup>hot)]

- b) Premodifier (M) in a Noun Phrase (NP):

[They met <sub>NP</sub> (<sub>d</sub> <sup>M</sup>a <sup>M</sup>beautiful <sub>N</sub> <sup>H</sup>lady)], [She likes <sub>NP</sub> (<sub>d</sub> <sup>M</sup>those <sup>M</sup>good <sub>N</sub> <sup>H</sup>guys)]

- c) Postmodifier (M) in a Noun Phrase (NP):

[He saw <sub>NP</sub> (<sub>Pn</sub> <sup>H</sup>something <sub>Aj</sub> <sup>M</sup>horrible)], [She needs <sub>NP</sub> (<sub>Pn</sub> <sup>H</sup>someone <sub>Aj</sub> <sup>M</sup>scholarly)]

- d) Head of a Noun Phrase:

[<sub>NP</sub> (<sub>d</sub> <sup>M</sup>The <sub>Aj</sub> <sup>H</sup>greedy) ate everything.] [She met <sub>NP</sub> (<sub>d</sub> <sup>M</sup>the <sub>Aj</sub> <sup>H</sup>haunted).]

## II) Form:

Adjectives are formed by adding suffixes to Nouns. For example, *-al* (nation ~ national), *-ate* (passion ~ passionate), *-en* (gold ~ golden), *-ese* (Pekin ~ Pekinese), *-esque* (picture ~ picturesque), *-ful* (colour ~ colourful), *-ic* (artist ~ artistic), *-ly* (friend ~ friendly), *-ous* (courage ~ courageous), *-y* (luck ~ lucky) and others.

Further, some adjectives are also formed by adding suffixes to Verbs. For example, *-able* (walk ~ walkable), *-ant/-ent* (ignore ~ ignorant), *-atory* (affirm ~ affirmatory), *-ful* (scorn ~ scornful), *-ive* (possess ~ possessive), *-less* (help ~ helpless), and others.

Grammatically, gradable adjectives have degree forms. They can occur in positive/plain, comparative or superlative degree forms. For comparative and superlative degree gradable adjectives take *-er* and *-est* inflectional suffixes respectively: *tall~taller~tallest*, *heavy~heavier~heaviest*.

### III) Meaning

Usually adjectives refer to the qualities or properties of nouns. They are used to delimit or define specifically the meaning of nouns. Adjective express different types of meanings, such as:

- Physical qualities like colour (blue, green), size (huge, tiny), shape (oval, short);
- Psychological qualities of emotion such as happy, sad, angry, serene, joyful;
- Evaluative qualities: nice, right, childish, lovely, intelligent;
- Temporal (time-based) qualities: recent, modern, present, new, old, early, late;

Besides, adjectives can be attributive and/or predicative. The attributive adjective typically modify the meaning of a noun as in (a good girl), (those tall trees), (something energetic), etc. On the other hand, the predicative adjectives come as a part of the predicate of a sentence and modify the meaning of the subject or object. For example, in the sentence [That boy is happy] the adjective, ‘happy’ describes some quality of the subject, ‘that boy’. In this way it is SUBJECT COMPLEMENT (Cs). Similarly, in the sentence [That boy made the king happy] the adjective ‘happy’ attributes some quality to the Object, ‘the king’. Hence, in a way it is OBJECT COMPLEMENT (Co).

However, to function as COMPLEMENT an adjective has to be the HEAD of an Adjective phrase. As the Cs an adjective typically come after the so-called COPULA verb *to be*. Hence, it becomes a good test to identify an adjective if there is a form of BE as the Main Verb in a sentence. For example, [She is lucky.], [They were fine] and many more.

Notice should be taken of GRADABLE and NON-GRADABLE adjectives. Gradable adjectives refer to the qualities like size, age, weight, emotion, etc.: *big/tiny, young/old, heavy/light, happy/sad*. They can be modified by degree adverbs like *very, too, extremely, utterly, rather*. They can have comparative and superlative forms too. The shorter and more common gradable adjectives take *-er* and *-est* suffixes, while the longer and less common gradable adjectives are modified by a separate comparative or superlative adverb: *more* or *most*.

Non-gradable adjectives describe ‘all-or-nothing’ qualities, such as sex/gender and nationality: female, Indian, chemical, golden. They do not have comparative and superlative forms.

Furthermore, adjectives can also be REGULAR and IRREGULAR. The former take either *-er* and *-est* or *more* and *most* respectively for their comparative and superlative forms. The latter, the irregular adjectives have special comparative and superlative forms like *bad/worse/worst*. Table 4.4 shows the classification of Adjectives:

Type of Adjective		Plain	Comparative	Superlative	Degree adverb
Gradable	Regular	wise	wiser	wisest	very wise
		marvellous	more marvellous	most marvellous	quite marvellous
		easy	easier	easiest	rather easy
	Irregular	good	better	best	very good
		little	less	least	too little
Non-gradable		male	*maler	*malest	*very male
		Indian	*Indianer	*Indianest	*very Indian

It can be seen from the above table that non-gradable adjectives can only come in the plain construction.

#### 4.2.3.4 Adverbs (Av)

An adverb is a word that gives additional information about the action. It modifies an adjective, a noun or an adverb. There are three chief kinds of Adverb.

i) **Circumstance Adverbs:** They add some kind of circumstantial information such as time, place, manner, etc. to the action expressed in the clause:

<sup>S</sup> (She) <sup>P</sup> (came) <sup>A</sup> (home) <sup>A</sup> (<sub>Av</sub> quickly) <sup>A</sup> (<sub>Av</sub> yesterday)].

(A= Adverbial, an element of clause)

ii) **Degree Adverbs** give additional information about adjectives and other words in terms of gradability. For example, *very* happy, *too* hot, *rather* fast, *etc.*

iii) **Sentence Adverbs:** Usually these adverbs come in the beginning of a sentence or clause. They are semantically applicable to the whole clause or sentence.

They express an attitude to the sentence. They can also show a connection between two clauses or sentences. For example, [<sup>A</sup> (Av Thus), we reached at the place], [<sup>A</sup> (Av Actually), she knows the secret] It must be noticed that there is considerable overlap between adverbs of different kinds.

**I) Function:** At the level of phrase, an adverb can function as:

**a) Head of an Adverb Phrase (AvP):** <sub>AvP</sub> (<sup>H</sup>Av happily), <sub>AvP</sub> (<sup>H</sup>Av very slowly)

**b) Premodifier in Adjective Phrases (AjP), Adverb phrases (AvP) and Noun Phrases (NP):** <sub>AjP</sub> (<sup>M</sup>Av too <sup>H</sup>Aj easy), <sub>AjP</sub> (<sup>M</sup>Av rather <sup>M</sup>Av quite <sup>H</sup>Aj simple), <sub>AvP</sub> (<sup>M</sup>Av too <sup>H</sup>Av fast), <sub>AvP</sub> (<sup>M</sup>Av very <sup>H</sup>Av luckily) <sub>NP</sub> (<sup>M</sup>Av quite a quiet queue), <sub>NP</sub> (<sup>M</sup>Av rather a rosy row)

**c) Postmodifier in Noun Phrases, Adjective phrases and Adverb phrases:**

<sub>NP</sub> (<sup>M</sup>the <sub>N</sub> girls <sup>M</sup>Av upstairs), <sub>NP</sub> (<sup>M</sup>the <sub>N</sub> people <sup>M</sup>Av there); <sub>AjP</sub> (<sup>M</sup>Av too <sup>H</sup>Aj tall <sup>M</sup>Av indeed), <sub>AjP</sub> (<sup>H</sup>Aj useful <sup>M</sup>Av enough); <sub>AvP</sub> (<sup>H</sup>Av happily <sup>M</sup>Av indeed)

**II) Form:** Normally *-ly*, *-ward(s)*, and *-wise* are adverb-forming suffixes of English. Out of these, *-ly* is very productive and is added to adjectives to form adverbs. For example, *happy ~ happily*, *slow~slowly*, *careful~carefully*. The suffixes *-ward(s)*, and *-wise* are added to nouns to produce adverbs. For example, *home ~ homeward(s)*, and *student ~ studentwise*.

Besides, a few adverbs have comparative and superlative forms like adjectives: *fast ~faster~fastest*; *well~better~best*; etc.

**III) Meaning:** As far as meaning is concerned, adverbs play a very important role. They can express several types of meaning, especially as Adverbial (A) in the clause. Accordingly, there are adverbs expressing manner (well, happily, skillfully); place (here, there, everywhere); direction (up, back, forward); time-when (now, then, soon, yesterday); frequency (daily, always, often, seldom); and degree (very, rather, much, more, pretty).



In addition, there are sentence adverbs which are either ATTITUDE ADVERBS (fortunately, actually, oddly, perhaps, surely, actually and others) or CONNECTIVE ADVERBS (so, yet, however, therefore, secondly, though, etc.) Sentence adverbs modify the meaning of a sentence or a clause.

### I. Check Your Progress-I

#### 1. Classify the following nouns into count nouns, mass nouns, and nouns being both count and mass nouns?

airplane, paper, weed, room, silver, cake, happiness, laugh, grass, rubbish, employer, music, steam, month, rope

#### 2. Identify the word classes of the repeated words in the following sentences:

- i. The <sup>1</sup>early bus came <sup>2</sup>early.
- ii. The <sup>1</sup>daily exercise is done <sup>2</sup>daily.
- iii. She <sup>1</sup>left him at the <sup>2</sup>left side of the bus-stop.
- iv. The soldiers <sup>1</sup>point towards the lowest <sup>2</sup>point.

### 4.2.4 Closed word classes

As pointed out earlier, seven word classes come under the closed word classes. They have relatively few members so that they can be listed. As they are structure words their function within the higher units is a key to identify their class. The closed word classes tend to come at or towards the beginning of the larger units of which they are part. In this way they become the MARKERS OF IDENTITY of the units they introduce. Let us consider the closed word classes one by one:

#### 4.2.4.1 Determiners (d)

Normally determiners come at the beginning of noun phrases. When there is a singular count noun, a determiner becomes a compulsory part of the noun phrase.

**Function:** Determiners function as premodifiers in a noun phrase. For example,

NP ( <sup>M</sup><sub>d</sub> <sup>H</sup><sub>N</sub> this book), NP ( <sup>M</sup><sub>d</sub> <sup>H</sup><sub>N</sub> those eyes), NP ( <sup>M</sup><sub>d</sub> <sup>M</sup><sub>Aj</sub> a beautiful <sup>H</sup><sub>N</sub> girl), NP ( <sup>M</sup><sub>d</sub> <sup>H</sup><sub>N</sub> less money)

The list of the determiners is as follows:

*the, a/an; this, that, these, those; all, some, any, no, every, each, either, neither, one, several, enough, such; many, much, more, most; (a) few, fewer, fewest; (a) little, less, least; what, which, whatever, whichever, half, my, our, your, his, her, its, their, you.*

The articles *a* and *the* are the most common determiners and *you* is the least used determiner.

#### 4.2.4.2 Pronouns (pn)

Pronouns are words which are used in the place of nouns. So they are in a sense ‘dummy’ nouns or noun phrases. They are meaningful only contextually.

**Function:** Pronouns always function as the Head of noun phrases. For example,

$\text{NP}(\text{Pn } \overset{\text{H}}{\text{I}})$ ,  $\text{NP}(\text{Pn } \overset{\text{H}}{\text{them}})$ ,  $\text{NP}(\text{Pn } \overset{\text{H}}{\text{everybody}})$ ,  $\text{NP}(\text{Pn } \overset{\text{H}}{\text{who}})$

List of pronouns is as below:

*I, me, mine, myself; we, us, ourselves, ours; you, yourself, yourselves, your, yours; he, him, himself, his; she, her, herself, hers; it itself; they, them, themselves, theirs; this, that these, those; all, some, any, none, each, either, neither, one, oneself, several enough; everybody, everyone, everything; somebody, someone, something; anybody, anyone, anything; nobody, no one, nothing; many, much, more, most; (a) few, fewer, fewest; (a) little, less, least; who, whom, whose; what, which; whoever, whichever, whatever; each other, one another.*

There is a great overlap between pronouns and determiners. *This, that, these, those, all, some,* and *which* can be both pronouns and determiners. It is their function that helps us to identify their class. For instance,

1) [ $\overset{\text{M}}{\text{d}}$  That book) (is) (readable).]

1a) [ $\overset{\text{H}}{\text{Pn}}$  That) (is) (a readable book).]

2) [ $\overset{\text{M}}{\text{d}}$  Many books) (were) (interesting).]

2a) [ $\overset{\text{H}}{\text{Pn}}$  Many (of the books)) (were) (not interesting).]

#### 4.2.4.3 Enumerators (e)

Enumerators are number words. There are three types of enumerators:

1. **CARDINAL NUMBERS:** They are natural numbers used in counting to show quantity. They are :*one, two, three, ... twenty, .... hundred, ....*
2. **ORDINAL NUMBERS:** They are numbers that show the position or order of something in relation other numbers. They are: *first, second, third, ..., twentieth, ...hundredth...*
3. **GENERAL ORDINALS:** They indicate the position of the something in general. They are: *next, last, other, further, etc.*

**Function:** Enumerators can function as:

- i) premodifier in a noun phrase:  $NP (e \overset{M}{\text{three}} \overset{H}{N} \text{thieves})$ ,  $NP (e \overset{M}{\text{five}} \overset{H}{N} \text{figures})$ ,  $NP (d \overset{M}{\text{those}} \overset{H}{e} \overset{M}{\text{ten}} \overset{H}{N} \text{tall trees})$ ,  $NP (d \overset{M}{\text{the}} \overset{M}{e} \overset{H}{\text{next}} \overset{H}{N} \text{question})$ ,  $NP (e \overset{M}{\text{fifth}} \overset{H}{N} \text{fairy})$
- ii) Head of a noun phrase: [(He) (ate)  $NP (d \overset{M}{\text{all}} \overset{H}{e} \overset{H}{\text{ten}})$ ], [ $NP (d \overset{M}{\text{The}} \overset{H}{e} \overset{H}{\text{nine}})$  (could pass) (the test)]

You should that in a noun phrase enumerators come after determiners.

#### 4.2.4.4 Prepositions (p)

Prepositions are words used to show relations about place and time with the event. They play various semantic roles. They do not have any function label as such like determiners, pronouns and enumerators.

Prepositions do not have a function label. They come in the beginning of prepositional phrases (PP). The PPs are Noun Phrase that begin with a preposition. They express relations of place, time, direction, possession, agency, instrument and many other meanings. For example,

- $PP (p \overset{M}{\text{at}} \overset{H}{d} \overset{M}{\text{the}} \overset{H}{N} \text{room})$ ,  $PP (p \overset{H}{\text{by}} \overset{H}{Pn} \text{them})$ ,  $PP (p \overset{H}{\text{to}} \overset{H}{N} \text{Pune})$ ,  $PP (p \overset{M}{\text{with}} \overset{H}{d} \overset{M}{\text{a}} \overset{H}{N} \text{knife})$ ,  $PP (p \overset{H}{\text{to}} \overset{H}{Pn} \text{me})$ ,
- $PP (p \overset{M}{\text{of}} \overset{H}{d} \overset{M}{\text{a}} \overset{H}{N} \text{girl})$ ,  $PP (p \overset{M}{\text{in}} \overset{H}{d} \overset{M}{\text{the}} \overset{H}{N} \text{afternoon})$

English prepositions are: *about\**, *above\**, *across\**, *after\**, *against*, *along\**, *alongside\**, *amid*, *among*, *around\**, *as*, *at*, *before\**, *behind\**, *below\**, *beneath\**, *beside*, *besides\**, *between\**, *beyond\**, *by\**, *despite*, *down\**, *during*, *for*, *from*, *in\**, *inside\**, *into*, *of*, *off\**, *on\**, *opposite\**, *outside\**, *over\**, *past\**, *round\**, *since\**, *than*, *through\**, *throughout\**, *till*, *to*, *toward(s)*, *under\**, *underneath\**, *until*, *up\**, *via*, *with*, *within\**, *without\**.

The words marked \* in the above list can also be adverbs. This means there is a large overlap between prepositions and adverbs, especially adverbs of place or direction:

1. [ (The actress)<sup>S</sup> (ran)<sup>P</sup> <sub>PP</sub>(<sub>p</sub>about<sup>A</sup> <sub>d</sub>the<sup>M</sup> <sub>N</sub>courtyard)<sup>H</sup>].

1a. [ (The actress)<sup>S</sup> (ran)<sup>P</sup> <sub>AvP</sub>(<sub>Av</sub>about)<sup>A H</sup>].

2. [ (She)<sup>S</sup> (goes)<sup>P</sup> <sub>PP</sub>(<sub>p</sub>down<sup>A</sup> <sub>d</sub>the<sup>M</sup> <sub>N</sub>town)<sup>H</sup>].

2a. [ (She)<sup>S</sup> (goes)<sup>P</sup> <sub>AvP</sub>(<sub>Av</sub>down)<sup>A H</sup>].

#### 4.2.4.5 Conjunctions (cj):

Conjunctions are used to join words, phrases, clauses and/or sentences together. They allow us to join together the grammatical units of equal as well as unequal status. Like prepositions, conjunctions also do not have a function label.

Conjunctions are linking words which have two main types:

##### I) Coordinating conjunctions:

These conjunctions connect two or more units of equal grammatical rank (i.e. two or more words, phrases, and clauses). *And*, *or*, *but*, *nor*, *neither* are the coordinating conjunctions of English.

e.g. 1. <sub>NP</sub>(the<sup>H</sup> <<sub>Aj</sub>beautiful<sup>H</sup> <sub>cj</sub>and<sup>H</sup> <sub>Aj</sub>bold><sub>N</sub>girls),

2. <sub>NP</sub>(<sub>d</sub>those<sup>M</sup> <sub>Aj</sub>nice<sup>M</sup> <<sub>N</sub>stories<sup>H</sup> <sub>cj</sub>and<sup>H</sup> <sub>N</sub>poems>)

3. [ (They)<sup>S</sup> (will come)<sup>P</sup> <<sub>PP</sub>(in car) or <sub>PP</sub>(on motorcycle)>]

4. [ (They)<sup>S</sup> (know)<sup>P</sup> <<sub>NCI</sub>[what she learns] and <sub>NCI</sub>[how she learns]>]

5. Se <<sub>MCI</sub>[She will come here] or <sub>MCI</sub>[she will send us a message]>

**II) Subordinating conjunctions:** The subordinating conjunctions join Subordinate clauses (SCI) to Main clauses (MCI). They come in the beginning of a subordinate clause. They are as follows:

*after, although, as, because, before, but, if, how, however, like, once, since, than, that, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, whereas, whereby, whereupon, while; in that, so that, in order that, except that; as far as, as soon as; rather than, as if, as though, in case.*

For example, 1. [Most people cannot speak English <sub>SCI</sub> [<sub>cj</sub> because they do not speak it.]]

2. [He knows <sub>SCI</sub> [<sub>cj</sub> that English is very easy.]]

**III) Correlative Conjunctions:** They are pairs of conjunctions that work together. Out of the two one comes before one construction and another comes before the other. They are two types:

A) **Subordinating correlative conjunctions:** *if...then, although...yet, hardly...when, no sooner...than.*

B) **Coordinating correlative conjunctions:** *both ... and, either...or, neither...nor, not only...but also.*

#### 4.2.4.6 Operator-verbs

The operator verbs are called so because they perform various grammatical operations. They are also called helping verbs. The operator verbs have two chief types: Modal verbs and Primary verbs.

A) **Modal verbs:** *can, will, may, shall; could, would, might, should; must* are the modal verbs. They cannot be used independently. Whenever they are used, they come at the beginning of a verb phrase and are followed by the Vi form of a verb. For example,

1. [They<sub>VP</sub> (<sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Aux</sup> can <sup>Mv</sup> <sub>v</sub> learn) English.]
2. [He<sub>VP</sub> (<sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Aux</sup> might <sup>Aux</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Aux</sup> have <sup>Aux</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Mv</sup> been <sup>Mv</sup> <sub>v</sub> offered) the job]

*Ought to, need to, have to, and dare to* are called semi-modal verbs. The modal verbs express modality meanings like ability, possibility, permission, compulsion, probability, certainty, surety, etc.

**Function:** The modal verbs function as only ‘Auxiliary’ (Aux) in a verb phrase.

B) **Primary verbs:** They are the three most important verbs in English. They are called primary verbs because each of them can function either as auxiliary or as main verb (Mv) in a verb phrase. They are so irregular that they have an irregular Vs form. Like full verbs primary verbs have six forms:

Primary verb	Vo	Vs	Ved	Vi	Ving	Ven
<b>BE</b>	am, are	is	was, were	to be	being	Been
<b>HAVE</b>	have	has	had	to have	having	Had
<b>DO</b>	do	does	did	to do	doing	done

The primary verb ‘be’ as an operator verb shows either progressive aspect or passive aspect. When a form of ‘be’ is followed by the Ving form of a verb, it is the progressive aspect. And when a form of ‘be’ is followed by the Ven form of a verb, it is the passive aspect. For example,

1. [He<sub>VP</sub> (<sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Aux</sup> is <sup>Mv</sup> <sub>v</sub> dancing)] = progressive
2. [She<sub>VP</sub> (<sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Aux</sup> was <sup>Mv</sup> <sub>v</sub> selected)] = passive

The primary verb, ‘have’ as an operator verb expresses the perfect aspect. When a form of ‘have’ is followed by the Ven form of a verb, it is the perfect aspect. For example,

1. [She<sub>VP</sub> (<sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Aux</sup> has <sup>Mv</sup> <sub>v</sub> collected) funds.] = perfect

2. [They<sub>VP</sub> (<sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Aux</sup> had <sup>Mv</sup> had) tea] = perfect

The primary verb, 'do' as an operator is used as a 'DUMMY' verb. It is used while making negative and interrogative sentences, if the verb phrase of the basic sentence does not have any operator verb. For example,

1. They gathered books.
  - 1a. They did not gather books. = Negative
  - 1b. Did they gather books? = Interrogative
  - 1c. What did they gather? = Interrogative

Function: Primary verbs can functions as:

A) **Main verb (Mv) in a verb phrase:** <sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Mv</sup> am), <sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Mv</sup> had), <sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Mv</sup> do)

B) **Auxiliary (Aux) in a verb phrase:** <sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Aux</sup> am <sup>Mv</sup> reading), <sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Aux</sup> had <sup>Aux</sup> been  
<sup>Mv</sup> studying), <sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Aux</sup> had <sup>Mv</sup> had), <sup>P</sup> <sub>v</sub> <sup>Aux</sup> don't <sup>Mv</sup> know)

#### 4.2.4.7 Interjections (ij)

Interjections have fairly a minor status in language. They are spontaneous words or expressions that express spontaneous feelings or reactions. They include words like 'ah', 'oh', 'ouch', 'phew', 'ugh', 'wow' and many others. Interjections also include swear words like 'damn', 'hell', 'Jesus', 'OMG', 'shit' and others; greetings such as 'good morning', 'hello', 'Hi' and others; and other signaling words like 'goodbye', 'gee', 'yes', 'no', 'okay', 'shoo', etc.

Like prepositions and conjunctions, interjections too do not have any function label. They are particles. For example, 1. [<sub>ij</sub> Ugh, She lost my key]. 2. [<sub>ij</sub> Wow, the mangoes are ripe].

#### 4.2.4.8 Particles

The closed class words are further classified into the words having a function in phrases and the words having no function in phrases. Determiners, enumerators, pronouns, operator verbs have a function in phrases. On the other hand, prepositions,

conjunctions and interjections have no function labels. They are simply ‘markers’. For instance, prepositions are introductory markers in prepositional phrases. These marker words are called ‘particles’ which literally means ‘little parts’. It means prepositions, conjunctions and interjections are ‘little parts of sentences. However, they do have meaning and importance but they do not come in the structure of phrases. The following sentence is an example:

[<sub>cj</sub> And <sub>ij</sub> alas he could not buy the book].

Furthermore, there are words which cannot be included in any of the word classes we have discussed so far. They are unique in function. For example, the word ‘to’ which comes before the infinitive verb form (‘to read’, ‘to be’, ‘to write’) and the negative word ‘not’. These words do not have any special label in the constituent structure grammar.

### Check Your Progress - II

#### 1. Identify the class of the underlined words in the following examples:

- i. She went out.
- ii. The students love English.
- iii. Lubana has been reading a book.
- iv. The players need a solid support.
- v. She could see that boy in the canteen.
- vi. She made him social.
- vii. The first girl was tall.
- viii. She will attend the class or go to the library.
- ix. We live with one another.
- x. We are having fun.
- xi. Hey!, come here.
- xii. This book may help you.



### 4.3 Terms to Remember

1. Word : a unit of grammar bigger than morpheme and smaller than phrase
2. Open word classes: open ended word classes
3. Closes word classes: word classes with fixed number of members
4. Form labels: labels given at the foot of the unit and showing its grammatical class
5. Function labels: labels showing the position the unit and given at the top of the unit
6. Function: the position taken by the unit in a large unit.
7. Form: structure of the unit
8. Particles: word classes without any function labels

### 4.4 Summary

The Module ‘Words’ introduces you to the constituent structure grammar. In this module we have discussed word classes which are traditionally called parts of speech. Now you are familiar with the following word classes:

- A) Open word classes: nouns (N), verbs (i.e. full-verb) (V), adjectives (Aj), adverbs (Av)
- B) Closed word classes: determiners (d), pronouns (pn), enumerators (e), prepositions (p), conjunctions (cj), operator-verbs (v) and interjections (ij)

### 4.5 Answers to Check Your Progress

- I) 1. Count nouns: airplane, weed, laugh, employer, month,  
Mass nouns: silver, happiness, rubbish, music, steam  
Nouns both count and mass: paper, grass, cake, room, rope
2. i. <sup>1</sup>early (Aj), <sup>2</sup>early (Av); ii. <sup>1</sup>daily(Aj), <sup>2</sup>daily(Av); iii. <sup>1</sup>left (V), <sup>2</sup>left(Aj);  
iv. <sup>1</sup>point(V), <sup>2</sup>point(N).
- II) 1. i. out (Av);ii. love (V); iii.Lubana (N); iv. solid (Aj); v. that (d); vi. him (pn); vii. first (e); viii. or (cj); ix. with (p); x. having (v); xi. Hey!(ij); xii. may (v)

## 4.6 Exercises

### I. Write short notes:

a) Three criteria b) Open word classes c) Closed word classes d) Meaning of Nouns, e) Functions of Nouns, f) Functions of Adjectives, g) Full verbs, h) Primary verbs.

### II. Distinguish between:

a) Form and function b) count nouns and mass nouns c) concrete nouns and abstract nouns d) proper nouns and common nouns e) gradable adjectives and non-gradable adjectives f) regular verbs and irregular verbs g) full verbs and operator verbs h) primary verbs and modal verbs i) determiners and pronouns j) prepositions and adverbs

### III. Give the plural forms of the following nouns:

a) child b) woman c) foot d) radius

### IV. Give the Ved and Ven forms of the following verbs:

a) come b) sit c) be d) see e) write f) cut

## 4.7 Further Readings:

Leech, Geoffrey N. (1969), Margarete Deuchar and Robert Hoogenrood.(1982). *English Grammar for Today A New Introduction*. London: MacMillan Press Ltd.

Quirk, Randolph., Greenbaum, S., Leech, N., and Svartvik, J. (1972). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. England: Longman.

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