CHAPTER 1

Towards New Horizons

THEMATICS AND STYLISTICS IN FICTION

Thematics and Stylistics have emerged as major disciplines in recent times. In its early stages, Thematics had virtually been an offshoot of the ancient discipline, Classical Aesthetics. Stylistics, on the other hand, has emerged from Classical Rhetoric. This chapter traces the evolution, growth and later developments in Thematics and Stylistics under the influence of allied disciplines which have given rise to new critical theories and practice. The focus of this chapter, nevertheless, is on the potential of these two disciplines and the range and scope of its application in the analysis of prose fiction.

1.0. THEMATICS: HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS

Thematics, as a branch of Comparative Literature, that deals with the study of themes and motifs. As the subject matter of literature or as ‘the aesthetic texture of the work’, Thematics or Thematisation is, perhaps, the most widely practised contemporary interpretative manoeuvre in the study of narrative (Gibson 108). "Theme”, the key word in Thematics, is from the Greco-Roman word "Thema", which belongs to the field of Rhetoric. The noun "theme" points to a technique and the adjective "thematics" is concerned with meaning (Levin 128). Today all the themes and thematics -- technique and meaning, are gathered under the wider term "Thematology".

The term "Thematology" is a neologism coined by Harry Levin. Thematology or Thematics is a pseudoscientific appropriation of the German stoffgeschichte, literally the history of stuff or fabric (Demetz 129). Modern thematic study of literature is greatly influenced by Structuralism which views themes as structures. Narrative is intimately allied by its structure which aligns disparate forces and elements into productive
configurations of difference and oppositions. Classical narrative aesthetics which is based on Aristotelian mode of difference, acts as a system of categorisation chiefly through "definite forms" as they take the shape of themes. Structuralist narratology attempts to explain narrative figuration or thematics in terms of perceived textual grammar where figures or images produced by the text act as a code or key that shows how the text works. But the code by itself cannot reveal the inner workings of the narrative; it can only express an idea of its working.

Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) discusses the ‘Theory of Modes’, where he makes a distinction between thematic modes and fictional modes. He compares thematic modes to what Aristotle called ‘dianoia’ or 'thought'. In novels where the internal elements are usually of primary interest, the focus is on an idea or a poetic thought that the reader gets from the writer. According to Frye, the best translation of dianoia is perhaps "theme" and literature with this ideal or conceptual interest may be called thematics (52). Frye further asserts that in every work of literature there is both a fictional mode and a thematic mode.

Culture provides the writer with a sequence of themes to which he responds according to his imaginative bent. Trousson claims that “Themes are the indices of humanity” (Weisstein 132). Thematics implies decisions leading to judgement and valuation. Therefore, the first thing to look for in interpretation is repetitions or oppositions that emerge at the manifest level of the text (Scholes 1985: 32). The two terms most frequently used for repetition in narrative are: Themes and Motifs. A great writer uses various combinations of types, themes, motifs, situations, myths as well as symbols. The modern predilection for mythological motifs in fiction is related to the technique of ‘prefiguration’ which is used as a literary device for discovering kinds of patterning in the
presentation of characters and plot. Elizabeth Frenzel (1962) suggests that themes are primarily the raw materials of the writer’s craft, while motifs are the basic situations as the writer begins to shape them. Motifs signify what is depicted, while theme means the manner of treatment. Motif sets the plot in motion and holds it together (Levin 135).

Jonathan Culler in *Structuralist Poetics*, however, claims that plot is but the temporal projection of thematic structure (1975: 224). He further states that theme is the name given to those forms of unity which one discerns in the text or to the ways in which one succeeds in making various codes come together and cohere, so that the ultimate structures of the code are thematic. The plot as the temporal projection of thematic structures brings into play a kind of intelligibility, which is essential to the working of a novel. To grasp the theme of a novel is to have followed the story. Following a story is to make sense of the main bond of logical continuity that makes the elements intelligible and which can be extrapolated from the elements of the text. But thematic extrapolation is closely related to symbolic reading. The formal device on which the symbolic code is based is characters, situations, objects, and actions arranged in a way that suggests opposition, so that ‘a whole space of substitution and variation’ is opened to the reader (Barthes 1982: 24). The presentation of anti-thesis sets in motion extrapolation in which the reader correlates this opposition with thematic oppositions so that it might manifest to larger thematic structures that encompass other anti-theses present in the text. To interpret an opposition is, of course, to produce what Greimas calls the ‘elementary structure of meaning’ (Culler 226).

Robert Scholes presents a classical defence of Thematics in *Textual Power*. He claims that the two principal operations involved in thematisation are characteristically Aristotelian and that ‘interpretation proper’ is the thematising of a text (1985:29). But for
James Phelan, thematics is not ‘a totalising mode of thought’ (Gibson 110). In Reading People, Reading Plots (1989), he propounds that themes are not something to be grasped and described once for all but rather they are to be understood as emerging gradually through a given narrative and hence, are themselves affected by their own linear emergence. The 'instabilities' found in the text are, therefore, always variants on or 'twists' to a theme that has actually been decided from the start. Thus, textual 'instabilities' and the play of thematic elements are ultimately structures of oppositions.

In narratology, the universal forms of narrative are taken to be geometric in nature and are presented as 'levels', 'frames', 'embedding' and 'Chinese box' narration. According to Greimas, “...narrative structures present characteristics which are remarkably recurrent…” (794). Geometrisation of narrative of this kind, nevertheless, has been present in narratology from the beginning. In fact, it virtually constitutes one of the basic principles of narratology and as such is implicit in narratological approaches to thematics. The geometric theme is thus often interwined with that of narrative architectonics. In postmodern approach to thematics, critique and thematisation have always been intimately involved with one another.

Ronald Barthes’ critique on a thematisation of the text depends entirely on 'Symbolic' code, which stimulates the readers through ‘antitheses’ or ‘mirror image’ or ‘reflection’ to extrapolate themes. To Jean-Pierre Richard (1961), “themes...tend to organise themselves as in any living structure into ‘flexible groupings’ in a search for the best possible equilibrium or they arrange themselves into antithetical pairs (Gibson 116). Richard, thus, perceives thematics as a dualism with a vertical dimension as well as horizontal dimension. The text is seen as a geometrical figure constructed along an axis to pacify the oppositions generated by the thematic divide.
Derrida (1981), however, feels that in a text, the theme is no longer available in 'an imaginary', intentional or lived domain beyond all textual instances. He therefore deconstructs Richard’s geometry of textual dimension into textual laterality. It is here that his conception of the ‘hymen’ gets linked to an interrogation of thematics. The Hymen bridges a gap, seals a bond, connects, fuses, confuses, or confounds opposites, or unites and differentiates (Gibson 117). For the geometric image of the text as pyramid or box, or the architectonic image of the text as storeyed house of fiction, Derrida substitutes the image of the text as a fan, where the text institutes themes, not as a presence established and guaranteed by antithetical pairing, but as a play of 'meaning' or 'theme-effect' with writing constantly 'setting them up in relations of difference and resemblance’. Richard sees thematics as organising the 'polysema' of the text within a unitary resumption of meaning. In contrast, Derrida shows how deconstruction works as an interrogation of thematics.

If in Orthodox thematics, the theological assumption is that themes some how exist as wholes, outside and independent of their successive textual manifestations, in Postmodern approach to thematics, the most crucial concern of all is the phenomenological structure of the critical act itself, as critique can hardly proceed without that abstraction from the particular and that separation out of opposed abstractions which are characteristic of thematics. Feminist narratology has given a powerful boost to narratological geometrics and thematics by insisting on rethinking relations between the 'central' and the 'marginal' to represent 'the other side of the story' or suppressed stories 'of the other’ (Gibson 119).

The speculative area of thematics, therefore, enables us to know if a writer’s choice
of a subject is an aesthetic decision. At the same time it also shows that whatever the
writer undertakes to describe becomes a contributing feature of the final arrangement for it
ermanates in larger part from a common store of associations and memories which, vast
and varying as they are, tend nonetheless to assume familiar guises and to display
recurrent characteristics.

1.1. THE CONCEPT OF THEME

A theme is a recurrent element in a work of art and is related to the subject matter.
It is indirectly expressed through the repetition of identifying phrases, events, images or
symbols. According to Boris Tomachevsky, a theme has a certain unity and (is) composed
of small thematic elements arranged in a definite order. The idea expressed by the theme is
the idea that summarizes and unifies the verbal material in the work. The work as a whole
may have a theme, and at the same time each part of a work has its own theme. The
development of a work is a process of diversification unified by a single theme. In a novel,
the novelist focusses his attention on some central idea, which makes everything converge
on one point. This central idea, which may be called the 'theme' of the novel, is the
unifying factor in the organization of his/her material. Besides, it forms the very nucleus
of the whole design and is the all-pervading and controlling essence of the whole novel.
All the other components of the novel--plot, characterization, narrative, techniques are,
therefore, subject to its shaping pressure. The theme is thus the avenue for a progression of
ideas in literature.

H. Porter Abbott states that when one has trouble interpreting a text, the one thing
that can be of help is to look for what repeats itself (2002: 88). The two terms most
frequently used for repetition in narrative are: Themes and Motifs. As technical terms,
they are often used interchangeably. A theme is abstract but a motif is concrete. Themes
are implicit in motifs, but not the other way round.

Eugene H. Falk (1967) in *Types of Thematic Structure*, claims that the term ‘theme’ is sometimes applied to the topic that indicates the material. It may be the hero’s dominant characteristic or it may be the main event or situation, or it may be the complex of features and situations associated with certain figures. He further adds that the term ‘theme’ may also be assigned to the ideas that emerge from the particular structure of such textual elements as actions, statements, revealing states of mind or feelings, gestures, or meaningful environmental settings. Such textual elements he designates by the term ‘motif’ and the idea that emerges from motifs by means of an abstraction as ‘theme’. He further establishes a distinction between a theme as topic and a theme emerging from a topic (2-3). Themes as topics are generalizations drawn from dominant motifs; on the other hand, themes emerging from motifs are ideas with which textual elements are pregnant within their contextual, structural coherence, or the meaning from the context.

Motifs are in Gerald’s words, the "minimal thematic unit" (Abbott 2002:88). The word "motif" is derived from *movere* (to move) (Weisstein 145). Goethe speaks of the universality of motifs. But in discussing themes and motifs, the universality of motifs is, however, subject to certain limitation imposed by the temporal, geographical and idiosyncratic condition of a nation. E.M. Forster speaks of ‘patterns’ and ‘rhythms’ present in a literary text that appeal to our aesthetic sense and helps to see the book as a whole. The use of a recurrent composition feature is called in English ‘design’ or ‘pattern’. Design relates to a content category, and pattern to a structural ingredient, which roughly correspond to the leitmotif in music.

A motif, like a theme, is a recurring element in a work of art. It often appears as an incident or device or a formula. The nature of a theme is decided by the combination of
motifs. Several motifs combine to form a theme. One can identify a theme by breaking it into its constituent motifs (White 3). If themes are linked to characters, motifs are segments of plot that provide the structural support to the story. Thus, the study of themes, situations and motifs, like all literary study, takes into account not only individual variations but also wider cross connections, like the links between literature and folklore, which are valuable contributions in the study of comparative literature.

1. 2. THEMATIC ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES

The smallest thematric units are the ‘traits’ (Zug), the ‘image’, and the ‘topos’ (Weisstein 148). Both trait and image are addictive or decorative elements. They become objects of thematological interest only through conscious repetition or subtle linkage. The trait is an incidental attribute and by itself hardly significant. No human personality is reducible to a single trait. A trait can be raised to the level of motif when it becomes characteristic or symptomatic. The image, like trait, is in itself inconsequential. It may be too slight to constitute a theme, but as a verbal and visual unit it can carry a theme by association (Levin 139). Derived from classical rhetoric, the ‘topoi’ originally have been arguments that appeal either to the hearer's mind or heart. According to Levin, a ‘topos’ is a theme in the most expressly rhetorical sense (Demetz 140). Within the thematological hierarchy 'topos' has the same value as the trait and the image. Though modest in scope, it yields food for thought. It also serves as a mnemonic aid. A topos may be a purple passage, a standardized description of a locality, or an elaborately protracted metaphor. Both motifs and themes are extended topoi. To Troussan, ‘types’ are the embodiment of a motif or a character trait (Weisstein 141 - 149). They are characters in the formative stages, who never attain individuation and intervene only between themes.
Frenzel defines ‘Leitmotifs’ as "repetition of the same word sequence, at least by way of allusion, or slight variations at different points of a poetic work" (Weisstein 148). The ‘linking image’ like the ‘linking phrase’ are leitmotifs which relate themes in situations scattered in the text, but the manner in which the linking occurs differs. Although both the linking phrase and the linking image relate to thematic materials, they differ in one significant respect: the linking image reflects in a perceptual manner, the themes it relate. It is also placed focally so that themes carried by these situations reflect upon it. As thematic links, both these leitmotifs are structural devices (Falk 15). They are also theme carriers and as such they contribute to the total thematic fabric. According to Falk, the simplest and most obvious recurring motif, often called a leitmotif, is the ‘repetitions label’, which consists of a gesture, a word or a phrase used to underscore some particular trait of a character (9). The primary function of the repetitious label is to emphasize the theme it itself carries, but unlike linking image and linking phrase, the repetitious label is not a thematic link (12).

A great writer uses various combinations of types, themes, motifs, situations, myths as well as symbols. John J. White in *Mythology in the Modern Novel*, (1971), speaks of the modern predilection for mythological motifs. In fiction, it is related to the technique of ‘prefiguration’ which is used as a literary device for discovering kinds of patterning in the presentation of characters and plot. A motif pattern is more complex and it alerts readers to the archetypal patterns present in the novel's plot and about what is going to happen to the fictive characters. Another thematic device is the technique of ‘juxtaposition’, where two mythological plots are compared or one mythological and one realistic plot are put side by side, instead of one after the other as a kind of literary montage. Two other techniques are ‘fusion’ or ‘condensation’ and ‘fragmentation’. According to White, the
term ‘condensation’ refers to a pattern where a number of separate prefigurations relate to one modern event or a single character; in contrast, ‘fragmentation’ describes the situation where a single figuration is refracted across a number of modern figures. The distinguishing characteristic of this process is the repeated use of a single motif in various contexts, and the comparison of more than one character with a single figure from mythology. By using mythological plots and prefigurative techniques, writers invite their readers to make comparisons (Prawer 105).

Indian literature is a rich storehouse for comparative thematic study and many writers have made use of Indian Thematology or ‘Vastutattva’. Amiya Dev in *Literary Themes and Comparative Literature* refers to Indian thematology or ‘Vastutattva’, which makes an inquiry into how vastu/stoff becomes text. ‘Vastu’ or theme (stoff, subject matter) has a place between author and text. ‘Vastuttava’, however, goes beyond mere indexing or identification of vastu/stoff. A literary study makes sense only when the texts built around the same vastu/stoff within one culture is open to the literatures fed by that culture, and also to the literatures from other cultures.

1.3. RELEVANCE OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS IN THE STUDY OF FICTION

A study of themes and motifs present in a literary text enables one to see how the same material is dealt with at various times. But identifying themes and motifs cannot in itself produce an interpretation, though it can help enormously in establishing what a work is about and where its focus lies. Themes can be discovered by using various methods. A thematic analysis of a novel can be done: 1) By applying Lexical Stylistics, which enables one to find out the most dominant theme in the novel. This analysis is based on the elements, which constitutes the theme, that is, the motifs in the form of lexical items. The most dominant theme has the most recurring motifs. 2) Themes can be found out by using
the semantic point of view. 3) Themes can be found by making a study of characters, plot and setting. 4) Themes can be found by looking for a crisis in the novel. A crisis is a place where there is a sudden event, sudden action or change, which shakes up the life of the text, so that feelings, ideas, and important issues are thrown into sharp relief. So, crises in the text are places where the themes and everything else in the text are brought out into the open. Crisis or ‘turning point’ changes the plot and the characters. Therefore, finding out the crisis in a novel can help in giving a correct interpretation of the text.

The novel, as a literary genre, incarnates a structural principle and thematic analysis helps to distinguish the linear relatedness of themes in the story and the causal coherence of theme in the plot, based on their affinity and similarity or contrast. Although the novel may appear formless, it is a network of associations and responses that has functional significance. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in their influential Theory of Literature (1948) present the dichotomy between form and content or what is 'intrinsic' (style and structure) and ‘extrinsic’ (the social, the psychological and the philosophical aspects). However, the notion of the content, which has its parallel to the German ‘Gehalt’, presupposes ‘form’ as a sort of container for holding emotions or ideas. Thus content gets metamorphosed into form, and the selection and disposition of themes become an organic part of the artistic process.

In examining the thematic fabric of a text, awareness of its structural coherence intensifies the pleasure of reading a text. The structural coherence of the thematic fabric may be conceived as a linear or sequential coherence between themes or as a generative or causal coherence between themes that exhibits a certain affinity, and thus a structural relatedness (Falk 2-3). The two terms of prime importance are ‘story’ and ‘plot’. According to E.M. Forster in his Aspects of the Novel (1927), story is defined as "a
narrative of events arranged in their time sequence” and the plot as "a narrative of events with emphasis on causality". The story more than the plot can be divided into segments or sets of incident. An incident when analysed, is easily perceived and affords a ready perception of order.

In the course of an analysis, there is a shift in one’s perception from linear coherence and causal coherence to the perception of meanings—of themes emerging from them. Motifs are supposed to effect an association of ideas from one theme to another. In studying about ‘Themes’ and 'Motif' in story and plot, one must take into consideration the meaning too. In thematic interpretation, the motif is the concrete manifestation of general characteristics of human experience within the world of the work itself. Ideas appear in the garb of images and only when the reader learns about the thematic materials can he really penetrate and enjoy its musical association of ideas. The leitmotifs by effecting an association of ideas from one theme to another perform an important function in the composition of the thematic fabric, and one’s awareness of its structural coherence depends upon grasping the relationship between theme and leitmotifs. Themes, according to Levin, are polysemous, for they can be endowed with different meanings in the face of differing situations. One’s knowledge of literature can be enriched by finding out why certain themes have been chosen at certain period or in certain localities or by certain authors. This enquiry into their permutations makes an exciting adventure in the history of ideas (144).

Thematics teaches the reader how to recognize and discriminate creative embodiments. Thus, one is able to understand what the imagination is, how it works; how by selecting and arranging it modifies and transforms; how it enhances life by endowing it with meaning and value. Similarly, whatever the writer undertakes to describe, whether it
is the scenery or the ideology, they are no less basic to the main design than are plot and character, all of which become a contributing feature of the final arrangement. The writer’s decision is determined by his/her power of observation and experience which to a large extent stem from a common store of associations and memories, even though vast and varying, tend to assume familiar guises and to display recurrent characteristics. Thematic studies, thus, enable one to examine and contrast the spirit of different societies and epochs as well as those of individual talents. In fact, thematic studies aid in the study of literary genre and literary styles, as different motifs and different themes have different stylistic casts.

1.2.0. STYLISTICS: HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS

Stylistics is the deviant, unorthodox and creative use of language (Koul 147). The academic discipline of Stylistics is, in a sense, a modern version of the ancient discipline known as ‘Rhetoric’. Stylistics has traditionally been concerned pre-eminently with the differences between or within texts. Modern Stylistics can be defined as the analysis of the language of literary texts, usually taking its theoretical models from Linguistics or it can be considered as the systematic study of patterns of ‘language use’ in a variety of texts.

Modern Stylistics has been inaugurated by Charles Bally in his Traite de Stylistique Francaise (Taylor 20), and addresses itself to clarify the concept of style and to establish for 'style' a central place in the study of literature (Lodge 1966:52). Further, it seeks to develop objective methods of describing style by taking theoretical models from linguistics rather than depend on the impressionistic generalizations used in traditional criticism. The study of literary language is the domain of Stylistics and as a branch of Applied Linguistics, Modern Stylistics is concerned with ‘language structure’. Hence, the
use of linguistic methodology allows Stylistics to move beyond earlier normative and prescriptive descriptions of "correct" styles to a fuller analysis of language itself.

Mick Short defines Stylistics as a linguistic approach to the study of literary texts (183), whereas Turner defines Stylistics as the study of style (18). Bally holds the view that Stylistics is the study of those verbal expressions with an ‘affective’ dominant (Taylor 27), or it is the study of ‘expressivity’ in language. But Roman Jakobson affirms that Stylistics is the study of the verbal message as a work of art. Riffaterre, whose theory of style is based on behaviourism, proposes that these two studies are really one and the same; that is, the study of verbal (or literary style) only investigates a more complex form of the same phenomenon: linguistic expressivity. Noam Chomsky maintains that a man’s linguistic performance on a large part depends on his linguistic competence and claims that Stylistics lays stress on mentalism. (Taylor 64-87). H.G. Widdowson proposes Stylistics to be the study of the social function of language and claims it to be a branch of sociolinguistics that aims to characterize texts as pieces of communication (Weber 138). Hassan defines Stylistics as the study of literary language for the purpose of showing how it is related to the internal organization of literary texts, and how the text is made to cohere into one unity and how the elements of this unity are brought to one’s notice. (Chatman 1971:322)

Works of literature are representative of verbal art and literary stylistics has traditionally been associated with the study of only literary texts. But Modern Stylistics studies verbal art on linguistic principles, where the verbal aspect is amenable to linguistic analysis and the artistic aspect falls within the purview of aesthetics. Thus, Stylistics forms a link or represents a synthesis of the two disciplines: Linguistics and Aesthetics, which, however, are relatively independent of each other, or in other words, Stylistics might
perhaps be considered as the link between the scientific study of language and the literary study of style, for style is the element which connects language with literature and it is Stylistics that connects linguistics with literary criticism.

It has been Roger Fowler (1975) who coined the term ‘New Stylistics’ to allude to the pragmatic considerations in the language of literature (4). Leo Spitzer is usually considered as the father of ‘New Stylistics’ (Lodge 53). In contrast to the ‘Stylistique’ of Bally, Leo Spitzer insists upon a more philologically based tradition of textual (and often literary-textual) analysis. Style, thus is seen as an expression of a particular psychological, social or historical sensibility or moment rather than as a general property of a particular language. The tension in Linguistics between general linguistic descriptions and less formal socio-cultural interpretations is clearly mirrored in the early separation in Stylistics between linguistic stylistic descriptions and literary stylistic interpretations. This separation and tension, even today, remains at the heart of Modern Stylistics. Stanley E. Fish states that Stylistics was born out of a reaction to the subjectivity and impression of literary studies (Freeman 53).

It was the Transformational Generative Grammar of Noam Chomsky (Syntactic Structures 1957) that, nevertheless, signalled the arrival of Stylistics as an independent discipline. Practical Criticism and New Criticism, which have been receptive to the influence of broader network of interdisciplinary practices like Structuralism, Post Structuralism, and New Historicisms along with the growing influence of Feminism and Psychoanalysis on Linguistics and Literary Criticism, have exerted tremendous influence on Modern Stylistics. At the turn of the twentieth century, Stylistics while maintaining its autonomous status, continue to draw upon all the related disciplines of Literary Criticism. It is now experiencing a strong rebirth, both for its goals and its methods. Stylistics
assuredly has come to stay as a humanistic branch in the field of Linguistics and as 'new rhetoric' in the field of Literary Criticism.

Sanskrit Criticism shows a well-developed linguistic approach to literature. The four major concepts that dominated the critical scene in ancient India are ‘Alamkaara’ (figuration or poetry as figurative or deviant speech), ‘Riti’ (style, poetry as structured expression), ‘Dhvani’ (suggestion, or poetry as indirect expression), and ‘Rasa’ (emotions or poetry as emotive expression). But it is ‘Vakrokti’ (deviant expression), that differentiates poetry from ordinary language. Vamana is the first important critic who developed the concept of Riti/style, which emphasised arrangement and patterning, rather than figuration as the basic principle of poetry. Of these chief schools of Sanskrit Poetics, the Riti School is most useful for stylistic analysis, as it uses the analytic method. Since Sanskrit Criticism does not have a single term to express all that is implied by the term 'style' according to western criticism, the only two terms that would cover the traditional sense of 'style' as the manner of writing are ‘Alamkaara’ and ‘Riti’.

1.2.1. THE CONCEPT OF STYLE

The concept of style is one of the most vexed terms in the vocabulary of Literary Criticism and of Aesthetics. It has divided critics into adversary camps regarding its meaning and literary effect. The only thing they all agree on is that in literature, style is a quality most closely associated with the text and that its most basic effect is a certain impression on the part of the reader which helps in better understanding and evaluation of a text. Literary style today is often associated with a language that differs from the norm and concerns itself with the study of the style of individual authors.

Middleton Murray differentiates styles as, personal idiosyncrasy, as technique of exposition, and as the highest achievement (Lodge 1966:49). But the most famous and
familiar definition of style is of course, Buffon’s ‘the style is the man'. Another definition that has satisfied many is Swift’s “Proper words in proper places” (Turner 21), a statement that makes it clear that an element of choice seems to be basic to all conceptions of style. Although, Swift’s definition can be used to justify the sociological theorists of style, for the linguists who study the socially selected varieties of language, Buffon’s definition stands behind the statistician who identifies an author by means of word count. In fact, it is clear that while one approach is explanatory, the other is descriptive. Still, both approaches, as Turner asserts, have their places in a total view of style (1974: 24-25).

Crystal and Davy have distinguished four senses in which style has been used, including an evaluative one (1969: 9-10). Halliday et al., treat style as a dimension of what they call ‘register classification’ (1964:92). Ohmann calls it ‘epistemic choices’ (Leech 1981:20-21), and Epstein distinguishes between the ‘what’ and ‘how’, present in literary style that correspond to content and form respectively. Thus, while Ohmann and Epstein take a dualistic position, Leech and Short, refer to the Monistic and Pluralistic conceptions of style. They insist that style is a relational term and it is a way in which language is ‘used’. Besides they claim that it belongs to ‘parole’ rather than to ‘langue’ (1981:38). At the same time, Akhmanova, upholds the view that the concept of style presupposes the existence of objects that are essentially identical, but which differ in some secondary, subservient feature or features.

A generally held view is that every writer displays his own unique 'Signature' in the way he uses language which distinguishes them from the works of any other writer. Modern Linguistics ascribes to every individual speaker an 'idiolect' or way of using language which is unique. David Lodge feels that ‘style’ in novel criticism is a useful
approach to study the novelist’s use of language and this can be done with the aid of a concept of style.

The concept of style in language refers to purposeful language variation in a given social situation or it refers to all possible uses of language in some kind of situational context in the wider non-linguistic activity of man. A theory of style is a theory of communication and linguistic theories in general, explain verbal communication in terms of an abstract system linking expression and meaning. Consequently, in verbal communication, there is much more involved than a simple transmission of meanings. It is at the nexus of this relation that the concept of style takes place.

G.N. Leech in Linguistics and the Figures of Rhetoric states that ‘Literature, by popular definition, is the creative use of language, or it can be equated with the use of unorthodox or deviant forms of language which are foregrounded (Fowler1966:136). Chapman annunciates that literature uses language as an artistic medium and not simply for communication or expression (13), but it is Roman Jakobson, who revolutionized the language oriented study of literature with his Theory of Poetic Function. In his Linguistics and Poetics, he speaks of the Principle of Equivalence, where verbal behaviour is characterized by two modes of arrangements: selection and combination, or in other words, ‘syntagma’ (combination) and ‘paradigma’ (selection). These two complementary aspects of linguistic patterning foreground the deviant or foregrounded features of literary language. In Jakobson’s words it is this that projects the ‘the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination (1960:358).

A writer, when he creates fiction, has to make choices between facts and fiction. To give the illusion of direct experience, a writer often turns to the affective language of simile and metaphor. Language through choices of meaning represents a particular view of
the fictional world. Studying the language of literary text can, therefore enhance our appreciation of aspects of the different systems of language organisation.

Literary style is the domain of Stylistics. It is a special form of verbal style because it deviates from the norm. Literature uses language as an artistic medium which makes creative or deviant use of language based on patterns of selection and arrangement of items that are foregrounded and contribute to the total effect. Every work of literature is a verbal structure with a ‘verbal’ and ‘aesthetic’ dimension which can be explicated properly only with the help of ‘codes’ that govern the production and interpretation of texts. Hence, the interpretation (meaning) of a text cannot be separated from its linguistic patterning (form).

In a literary construct like the novel, language has various functions. Since Stylistics concerns itself with ‘language structure’ and ‘language use’, the study of style is the study of patterns or linguistic variables found in a literary text. So, linguistic interactions at all levels of language involve choices. A difference in style is a difference in choice of content. The style of language, in short, is determined by the environment and the purpose of the speaker.

Leech and Short in Style in Fiction (1981) contends that style is a matter of how it is rendered, rather than what it is. According to them, there are three functions of stylistic choice --- the interpersonal (use of language to interact with others; it is the cluster of grammatical structures and words); textual (it gives meaning and continuity to a text); and ideational (it represents things, ideas and relations). Michael J. Toolan in The Stylistics of Fiction (1990) refers to the Bi-planar system of language. He propounds that the two essential levels in language production and description are those of surface linguistic forms and underlying semantic contents.
Roman Jakobson in his seminal ‘Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics’ avers that language must be investigated in all the variety of its function. He assigns six functions of verbal communication – Emotive, Referential, Poetic, Phatic, Conative and Metalingual (16). In contrast, the traditional model of language elucidated by Buhler (1933:19-20), is confined to three functions- Emotive, Conative and Referential. Although Jakobson places emphasis on the poetic function as the dominant and determining function for the scrutiny of language, he accedes that it is not the sole function of verbal art. Halliday also speaks of three basic functions of language- ideational, interpersonal and textual functions (Weber 58-59). Accordingly, language performs three functions- informational (representational) expressive (emotive), and persuasive (conative).

One of the obvious use of language is for communication and for sharing experiences. Communication, as the act of transferring messages from one system to another, invariably involves the sender, the receiver, the code, and the message itself. The messages are transferred by means of a communication channel using signals. Signals are physical realizations of signs or symbols that can be detected and interpreted. The study of signals provides an objective way of looking at the communication channel. For instance, in a literary text, the words, sentences, paragraphs, chapter headings, and page numbers can be isolated, set apart from their immediate surroundings and then examined, sorted out, analysed and compared.

Language, for Buhler, is at once symbol, symptom and signal. Symbol is information and text-centred, symptom is self-expression and speaker-centred, and signal is persuasion and hearer–centred. Style being a deviation from norm, the deviation is a linguistic matter and, therefore, can be explained only in linguistic terms. The more the
language use is separated from the immediate situation that calls it forth, the greater is the stylistic interest, and the greater is the need for stylistic interpretation.

1.2.2. STYLISTIC ELEMENTS AND TECHNIQUES

‘Style’ and ‘Technique’ are two key concepts in stylistic analysis. Earlier the word ‘craft’ was used in place of ‘technique’ to refer to the method. Stylistics is concerned with language in relation to all the various levels of meaning that a work may have. Every analysis of style, according to Leech and Short, is an attempt to find the artistic principles underlying a writer’s choice of language (1981: 74). Therefore the various stylistic devices used by a writer, which Riffaterre refers to as ‘SD’s’, although Leech and Short prefer to use the term ‘style markers’ (1981:69), enhance the aesthetic and artistic quality of his/her works. Style markers are elements in the linguistic structure of the text that signal features of style and hence are also called ‘style feature’. Since it results from a deliberate choice or deviation from the norm of linguistic structure and use, it is especially helpful in making the text appealing as it represents variation in the language of the text. Therefore, it is this deviation from norm that forms the basis of Stylistics study.

Stylistic (or rhetorical) devices are usually found where an author tries to stress (or underline, emphasize) an idea or to make an impression on his reader by using language that is in some way extraordinary. Some of the most important Stylistic devices operate on the level of choice of words (lexical) and at the level of sentence construction (syntactic). But for the sake of convenience, the stylistic elements/ categories are placed under three general headings: lexical, syntactical / grammatical, and rhetorical. The graphological level, the lowest level of style is also considered for it concerns such matters as spelling, capitalization, hyphenation, italicization and paragraphing.
In Fiction, the primary texture of a text is its language; therefore, this is where stylistic analysis is primarily applied. This is done by finding out how and how often a given linguistic feature is used in a given text. So, style is the way in which language is used in a given text which is determined by the frequency of occurrence of particular linguistic features in that text. Technique, or literary technique, to be more specific, is the way in which language is used in a given text and is determined by its artistic function. Norman Page asseverates in The Language of Literature, that one of the most obvious features of a writer’s individual style is his fondness for certain words or types of words, which provides a clue to the predominant attitudes of the writer (1984:15-17). Diction is sometimes used as a synonym for lexis or vocabulary. Roger Fowler expresses the view, that lexis is perhaps that level of linguistic form at which variables can be treated with the greatest freedom and hence is of greater significance for stylistic study (1966: 16). At the level of form, one finds the vocabulary of the language (lexis) and the combinations into which they may be arranged. The vocabulary itself is divided into two classes of words: lexical items and grammatical items.

Lexical items are words (sometimes groups of words behaving like one word) that have a labelling function oriented towards what is being referred to or interpersonally expressed. Grammatical words, on the other hand, provide the syntactic framework of a sentence. Consequently, lexical words are those which carry the major meaning of a sentence. As open groups of words their number can be expanded indefinitely (Blake 51). Nouns, descriptive adjectives, adverbs and verbs are classes of words that are characteristically classified as lexical items. In contrast, the grammatical items like pronoun and articles are associated with more abstract categories and are more oriented towards the relations among words themselves, and hence they form closed sets or items.
F.S. Scott is of the view that ‘A writer’s style is often expressed as much by the grammatical clauses and structures he prefers as by his choice of words’ (Chapman 44). In analysing the language of a literary text, it is important to have a point of entry into that text, and the best place to start, is with the syntax, since this leads straight to the heart of a text by exposing its structure. Grammar and lexis comprise form (Haynes 51). The grammar of a language represents its conventional structuring. The differences in the kinds of sentence patterns reflect different attitudes to experience, for syntax is, as Tony Tanner claims, ‘vision in action’. Accordingly, the study of syntax helps to detect and analyse ambiguity. Thus, patterns of syntactic prominence may reflect thesis or theme or ‘other aspects’ of the meaning of a work. The role of syntax in language as Halliday avers, is to weave into a single fabric the different threads of meaning (Weber 69). At the level of form, grammar is structured hierarchically in ranks starting with words, word phrases, clauses, and sentence. Sometimes the text itself is regarded as a rank, hierarchically above the sentence.

In Rhetoric, figures of speech have traditionally been classified into two types: Trope and figures/scheme. Tropes depend essentially on paradigmatic relationships, while Schemes depend primarily on syntagmatic relationships. David Lodge in his *Language of Fiction* (1966) stresses the importance of imagery in literature as do many other critics. In novels, imagery is used for both local effect and as a structuring device. Imagery is a concrete representation of sense impression, a feeling or an idea which appeals to one or more of our senses like Tactile (sense of touch), Aural (sense of hearing), Olfactory (sense of smell), Visual (sense of sight), Gustatory (sense of taste). In short, a trope is a device that involves meaning and scheme is one that involves expression (Freeborn 61).
Most of the familiar ‘figures of rhetoric’ are tropes. Tropes are the result of unusual choices from the items of which grammar makes available in a given pattern (Chapman 75). Some of the most common forms of imagery are: Simile, Metaphor, Synecdoche, Metonymy, Hyperbole, Oxymoron, Paradox, Irony, Satire, and Symbols. Schemes are used to effect foregrounding by the development of normal syntactic patterns through repetition and juxtaposition.

1.2.3. RELEVANCE OF STYLISTIC ANALYSIS IN THE STUDY OF FICTION

Mick Short enunciates that stylistic analysis is used as an analytical tool to see textual patterns and its significance (1992:1-8). As a device, it helps in understanding relatively complex texts, for it provides a descriptive analytical vocabulary that enables one to see and appreciate features of literary texts which would otherwise be overlooked. Further, it helps to determine interpretation through the examination of what a text contains by describing the linguistic devices an author has used, and the effects produced by such devices. Taylor, on the other hand, claims that stylistic analysis shows how a language may be used to produce stylistic effects (1980:17).

Stylistic analysis implies comparison, a fact authenticated by Halliday who insists that stylistic studies are essentially comparative in nature (1976: 65). To compare and contrast texts is to notice which stylistic features are foregrounded in one text and to see how they figure in another text. This is done by exploring the similar and different effects produced in different literary contexts by the same linguistic procedures. Literary effects come from different factors like grammatical structure, discourse structure, word-choice, and imagery. Literary meaning thus, goes down to the very roots of language and is reflected at the level of grammar and sentence structure. Such a study aims not just to examine the similarities and differences between the structure of the different texts but
also involves the examination of how readers build up meaning in their interaction with
the text, so that the search for a meaning fits with the rest of the text. A difference in
style is a difference in choice of content.

Analysis in terms of style involves identifying general characteristics of the prose
involved. In stylistic analysis, straight textual interpretation of a literary work is supported
by hard concrete quantifiable linguistic data that is objective and scientific and applied in a
systematic way. Statistical methods may explain details of style in relation to the inner
coherence of a whole text, especially literary texts which are usually treated as whole text
independent of the circumstances of their production (Turner 240). Therefore, statistical
methods have remained an important technique in attempts to identify individual styles.

Roland Carter professes that texts are usually compared on the basis of related or
contrasting themes; and there is little doubt that particular features of a text are placed in
sharper relief through a process of comparison. Thus a new dimension is added when two
texts that are constructionally and formally related, are compared. A stylistic
examination of a text can provide a systematic and principled basis for grading texts for
comparison or further analysis (Short 171-172). Literary works can be enhanced by such
comparison. This helps in exploring the similar and different effects produced in different
literary contexts by the same linguistic procedures which provide a useful network of
connections. Comparative Stylistics thus leads to further exploration of plurality of
meanings in literary texts.

Carter emphasizes that in Stylistics, close verbal analysis is of paramount
importance as stylistics analysis involves selection (1982:14). Among the possible
strategies of selectivity, two have been most commonly adopted. One is to select a small
number of passages (randomly or of importance), the other is to identify a small number of
linguistic features and to chart their occurrence throughout the text. In the case of literary text, it can be said that there are as many interpretations as there are readers to interpret. It is here that stylistic analysis has a major role for it uses a text-immanent model of meaning.

H.G. Widdowson contends that, the purpose of stylistic analysis is to investigate how the resources of language are put to use in the production of actual messages. Since it is concerned with patterns of use in a given text, the focus is always on one or more of the following: patterns, repetition, recurrent structures, ungrammatical or 'language stretching' structures, large internal contrasts of content or presentation, looking out for lexical congruities and incongruities and by noticing where and on which subject its vocabulary (or lexis) tends to cluster. It further makes a distinction between content words and grammatical words such as prepositions in terms of spatial orientation, frequency of clauses, genuine oddities or excess grammar. According to Toolan (1998), transitivity patterns, pronominalisation, deictic word or deixis, tenses, modality (term for expressing opinion or attitude), generic sentences are all of stylistic significance.

Style, is a matter of tendencies in a text (Haynes 9). Creative writers betray their verbal habits in their preference for certain structures, phrases, words, the accumulation of which gives the text a 'feel' and reflects different attitudes to experience. Leech and Short refer to these features that are very frequently used by the writer as the writer’s linguistic habit or ‘linguistic thumb-print’, which makes it easy to identify the author (Leech and Short 12). Ohmann clearly demonstrates how an author’s style can be related to his predilection for certain grammatical structures (Freeman 1981: 45).

In making an analysis of literary style in fiction, the primary focus is on vocabulary and diction (lexis), grammar and syntax, and imagery (figures of rhetoric). But a stylistic
analysis of sentence structures is a necessary foundation for understanding a text. A convenient measure of sentence complexity is the average number of words per sentence. Most sentences differ from one another not in their form but in their content. Although stylistics analysis studies the relationship between sentences in an organized structure, it operates on greater than sentence level too and establishes compatibility with the totality of the work of art. Similarly, the use of imagery or figurative language as a structuring device and for studying local effect is also of great importance in a novel. Thus, stylistic analysis studies language at the phonological, lexicological, syntactical, rhetorical and greater than sentence level from the point of view of its expressive and evocative values.

The core in any stylistic analysis is for the analyst to provide verifiable ‘quantitative evidence’ of the analyzed text for the reader’s observations and evaluation. A better understanding of the significance of the quantitative stylistic analysis can be gained by looking “at the inter-relation of three concepts of Deviance, Prominence and Literary Relevance” (Leech and Short 48). Psychological prominence corresponds to the reader’s ability to perceive style and is of crucial importance in stylistic analysis.

A work becomes art only when it undergoes transformation. Transformation takes place when the author using his higher level of perception transfers the raw materials into an aesthetic work, whereby the readers are made all the more enriched in being able to better perceive what would otherwise not have been possible. So also artistic perception and transformation to be an art and not a craft must be absolutely idiosyncratic, i.e. it must bear the unmistakable mark of the artist. Idiosyncrasy, although present in all aspects of a truly artistic work, is best pinpointed in the style.

Leech and Short stipulates that in literary stylistics, the material chosen for analysis should ask the question ‘what for?’, that is, it must look for artistic motivation and
function first. But by doing so, the emphasis is on the conscious application of various techniques rather than style. A given technique can become a feature of style by the frequency of occurrence of that feature. Therefore, frequency of occurrence is the primary selection factor. An examination of the inter-relatedness between the text, the style and the author can lead to the construction of a model for stylistic analysis which is based on statistical or linguistic deviance that is a breach of a norm of language, both in terms of frequency and form. But with some writers it is very difficult to observe any violation of the rules of language and only an extensive comparative statistical study will reveal their idiosyncrasy in the frequency of use of particular linguistic features. In such cases, the text is said to be TRANSPARENT as the language used in it does not attract the reader’s attention more than the content, i.e. it is not foregrounded. The language of texts that confronts the readers with unexpected linguistic forms, both in terms of linguistic rules and frequency norms, is called OPAQUE (Leech and Short 29). The notion of transparency and opacity are important in the study of literary style, for all texts to some extent may be described as both opaque and transparent.

In the process of writing the author makes two separate choices: of content and form. This dualist notion is challenged by the Monist School who argue that there is only one choice, for form and content are inseparable (Leech and Short 15 -26). But the pluralist points out that the dual nature of Fiction consists of the texts (language) and the fictitious reality which is evoked and referred to by that text (the referential function of language). But style deals with both form (manner of expression) and content (semantic part of the text), for form answers the question ‘How?’ and the content ,the question ‘What?’. A writer when he begins to write must decide WHAT exactly he wants to write and HOW. The WHAT FOR leads to an analysis of technique. However, the definition of
style as the study of language use, with its emphasis on the frequency factor makes it
distinctive from technique which is considered on the basis of its artistic function. A
technique can be part of style and conscious stylization can be a technique, but they are
not the same concept.

Stylistic analysis of literary works can be enhanced by comparison using the same
linguistic procedures. Comparative Stylistics consists of the comparison of texts in respect
of one linguistic feature, or of a number of features taken separately. A number of standard
scales could be selected. Such standard criteria would obviously facilitate the process of
the whole-text stylistic comparison, but it is rather difficult, for it involves handling so
many variables that it could be anything but extremely cumbersome. Hence, stylistic
comparison is usually restricted to a few linguistic features.

The linguistic discussion of style, evidently is much dependent on frequencies of
occurrence of variable linguistic features, hence the results can conveniently be presented
statistically or at least by numerical method. Stylistic description in linguistic terms is the
description of patterns at the level of form, specifically the identification of patterns
formed by the arrangement of linguistic variables. Patterns occur at any of the three sub-
levels: Lexical, Grammatical or Syntactic and Rhetorical. In making stylistic comparison,
one is likely to take one type of pattern only and note its occurrence in the other text(s).

To sum up, the purpose of stylistic analysis is to investigate how the resources of
language are put to use in the production of actual messages.