CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSING LITERARY DISCOURSE

4.0.

This chapter contains the second part of my applicational phase of the discourse model. It attempts an analysis of literary discourse in terms of my tentative discourse analytic framework. It would pay special attention to the issues of discourse, text and context, the creation and interpretation of meaning in literary discourse, the possibility of multiplicity of interpretation of a given text and similar issues.

4.1. Introduction

Literary discourse is one of the most refined, sophisticated, and planned discourse types. Traditionally, literary discourse has been considered to be quite different from certain other discourse types such as conversation. For example, unlike conversation, literary discourse is not considered to be dialogic. However, Bakhtin (1929) contradicts this notion, and shows all discourses to be dialogic. It might be argued that the discourse of conversation is fundamentally different from that of, say, a novel or a story, in that it is the joint creation of two or more people in interaction, and thus only partly under the control of one individual. However, a literary discourse is as much created by the writer
as by the reader (cf. Barthes 1977). Again, spoken discourse is often considered to be less orderly, not so much planned, and more open to intervention by the receiver. However, there are certain kinds of spoken discourse (such as lessons, interviews, trials), which have significant features in common with typical written discourse (cf. our analysis of conversation in chapter 6). It is obvious that in reading a novel one cannot influence its development, but it is almost equally difficult for a criminal to influence the direction of a trial, or a primary school child to prevent the lesson progressing in the way that the teacher plans. Thus, when we place literary discourse at par with other discourse types, it becomes rather difficult to compartmentalise literary discourse from the rest. Here the division is made only for analytic conveniences.

Literary discourse is also termed 'creative' in the common parlance. However, from linguistic point of view, every discourse is creative. Literary discourse is all the more so because it extends the possibilities of interpretation in a rich, varied, and at the same time more compact manner. Hence, to my understanding, the difference between literary and other types of discourse is one of degree (cf. the discussion of Fowler 1981 in section 4 of this chapter). For analytic purposes, in this chapter I would look at one sample of literary discourse, in terms of my discourse analytic tools, to find out the usability or otherwise of the framework.

The discourse type is selected because it represents one distinctive point of formal, highly edited discourse types in the discourse continuum. In sharp contrast to legal discourse, public notifications, literary discourse is always open to multiple, purely subjective interpretations. We assume that while a literary discourse is being created, the author attempts – if not a single interpretation – one’s own kind of meaning and
interpretations. Nevertheless, words always carry different associative significance for different people, based upon the context in which they are used at any time in the past or present. Since literary discourse aims at the emotional being inside every person, it inevitably creates different worlds for different readers. Thus, literary discourse differs from all other discourse types in its degree of multiplicity of interpretation, degree of multitextuality. This is the rationale behind the selection of literary discourse for analysis in this chapter.

Since my global aim is to evolve a general discourse analytic framework, I propose to analyse the sample using the same tentative framework that I have already used for legal and metalinguistic texts. As I can envisage now, there are certain problems that might call for the modification of this framework. For instance, the notion of a speech act encounters problems when applied to literature. Some of these problems are mentioned below:

- The inference of an illocution, when a related verb is not used in its expression, depends upon the sender’s correct assessment of the receiver’s knowledge. Nevertheless, literary texts have, along with other texts for unspecified receivers, a degree of uncertainty about the knowledge of the receivers; they are also very frequently severely displaced in time and culture. Homer could not have possibly made any judgements about his twentieth century readers.

- The second and related problem is that if the receiver were unspecified, the perlocutionary effect of the speech act would also remain open-ended.
Thirdly, if interpretation relies upon mutual knowledge of the relevant context, then in a fictional work it is often difficult to say what the implied elements of the relevant context could be.

These and other problems that the notion of a speech act creates in evolving a discourse analytic framework would be discussed and ongoing modifications attempted wherever necessary. Now I would like to move on to the data collection and analytic procedure adopted for this chapter.

4.2. Data Collection and Analytic Procedure

The data for this chapter are collected from literary works. Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” forms the first sample. Eliot’s poetry in general reflects a complex texture, a mixture of diverse ideas and voices, selected both synchronically and diachronically from different cultures and languages worldwide. This subjective interpretive judgement goes into the selection of Eliot for sampling. Similarly, in the selection of the other samples intertextuality, multitextuality, and polyphony are given preference. Sample 2 is from cummings’s (sic) poem “ygUDuh”. It exhibits a rather complex intermingling of spoken and written language, where the text mode along with the lexical, syntactic, typographical, registral, stylistic, discoursal choices altogether create the persona and both create and reflect the context of a society in terms of attitudes, prejudices, century old beliefs and many other contextual features. The unnamed persona here, like Eliot’s Prufrock, is representative of a class, a society, and an
age. The third sample is from Rushdie’s novel The Ground Beneath Her Feat. Using a longer narrative form, Rushdie here experiments with the meaning creation and interpretation process. Another experiment is exemplified in the passage from McEwan’s novel Enduring Love. This dual diversion of the samples as novels or prose narratives and poems or verse narratives also bring in the issue of the traditional distinction and actual merging points between the two genres within literary discourse.

Another issue that is worth discussion is whether we should name these samples as instances of literary texts or discourses. The authorial creation of a literary text is almost always personal. The author presents the edited, and in his or her decision, final presentable version of the discourse in a textual form. Therefore, the authorial part of the discourse is not easy to share. However, when the reader deciphers the text, he or she recreates the discourse through the text with the implied, imaginary, or actual author. Hence, in literary texts, and for that matter, in any written texts, the relationship between the text and the discourse is both immediate and long distant.

I attempted to maintain uniformity in the application of the analytic procedure. However, because of the rich texture of the texts selected, the chapter focuses more on the text-context boundaries and assimilation points. We would discuss this data specific analytic flexibility in the concluding chapter.

The following section makes an analysis of the data.
4.3. Data Analysis

We start with the first sample of literary discourse. It is a poem by T. S. Eliot - our familiar “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (The poem is provided in appendix 3 sample 3.1).

The whole poem is a communicative event within a certain spatio-temporal-graphical framework, with the author and the reader/s as the participants. Within that communicative event, there are multiple discourse units that are positioned in a seemingly incoherent manner. The discourse units owe their existence to various co-texts, other texts (i.e., ‘intertext’), the physical situation, the social and cultural situation, the interlocutors and their schemata (knowledge about other people’s knowledge). In other words, the interpretation of the poem is crucially dependent upon the interpretation of the context – socio-politico-cultural, linguistic, generic (in the broad sense – literary, in the narrow sense – Modernist).

The poem challenges us with the unitary title and the apparent disunity and incoherence inside. This contrasts sharply with the features of other discourse types such as metalinguistic or legal. In the latter, cohesion, grammatical correctness, explicit explanation of any potentially ambiguous expression are given immense importance, which contribute to unitariness of interpretation. An example from a legal text can be:

*this direction would necessarily mean that...*

(Appendix 1 sample 1)

I do not want to deal with this type of examples in detail here since we have already discussed the characteristics of legal discourse in the third chapter of this
dissertation. The example merely serves to make the difference between the two types of discourse more glaring. The poem under observation in this chapter discards every attempt of unitariness in terms of the persona whose supposedly love song it is named to be, in terms of the person's speech, and also in terms of the references and the images. Let us first look at the different voices and the different personalities that come to the making of the mental world, the voice, as well as the personality of the character:

1. The poem is the love song of a person, namely Prufrock, in his voice. Therefore, it reflects the individual filter (i.e., mental repertoire, perspective), worldview, consciousness of this created person. This individual is in turn created and controlled by an actual or imaginary socio-cultural, political, and religious milieu.

2. The voice of Prufrock is created by the poet, Eliot. Therefore, it necessarily reflects the kind of lexical and syntactic choices, choice of imagery, choice of character development, and its placement in a particular world, of the poet. This again undergoes Eliot's individual filter and the contextual filter that we have already mentioned in case of Prufrock.

3. Eliot's voice, manifested through his creation, was edited by Ezra Pound. The third level of individual and contextual filters come in at this point.

4. Before we hear the voice of Prufrock, we hear the voice of Guido. The positioning of the quotation and its content make us accept this voice to be somehow related to Prufrock and his song. Here we are at the fourth level of individual and contextual filters.
5. The voice of Guido is created by Dante the poet. Therefore, Dante the creator's individual and contextual influences come in as the fifth level at this point.

6. There is a disparity between the third person point of view of the title, and the first person point of view throughout the poem.

7. If we want to know Prufrock's love song, we are confronted in the very first line with a 'you' and an 'I'. Keeping the 'you' aside, let us concentrate on the 'I'. If we take it as Prufrock speaking directly to us the readers, then again we face the following problems.

8. The person Prufrock is going backwards and forwards in his imagination with many references to different historical, mythical characters comparing or contrasting their situations with his own. Thus, the 'I' of the poem is a complex mixture of all these different personalities. For instance, Prufrock first thinks of an association with Prince Hamlet, and immediately negates it. To know how and why the association and the dissociation are being made, we have to know *Hamlet* the play, the character, our own interpretation of the character as well as others' interpretations (there are more than a thousand research works available on this single character), we have to know the context of the play in terms of Shakespearean drama and in terms of Elizabethan drama in general, which in turn would necessitate considerable amount of knowledge of Elizabethan life and society.

9. Immediately after the negation of the association with Hamlet, Prufrock or the 'I' associates himself with "an attendant lord" and the "Fool". Now again we have to go into the same cycle mentioned in the previous point to find out who this lord
and the Fool are. Different identification of the Fool will definitely change the characteristics to be associated with Prufrock and the love song.

10. At another point, Prufrock associates himself with Lazarus. The identification is taken for granted in spite of the fact that there are different Lazaruses in Christian religious history and mythology. Again, we face the same problem that we faced with the “Fool”. What is the appropriate context referred to? How does it shade its colour in the text?

11. Prufrock visualizes his head brought in upon a platter, though he says he is no prophet. If we assume the context to be a particular historical period with the biographical history of one particular person, John the Baptist, then we arrive at a meaning. However, the meaning radically changes if we do not possess this historical knowledge. At the extreme, vacuity of the reference point may lead us to believe that Prufrock must be mad. Societal and individual interpretation of madness will then come into play, yielding another set of different interpretations.

The following is a diagrammatic presentation of these different layers within Prufrock:
Diagram 10: A possible exploration of the multilayerity within Prufrock
Thus, we have seen that the singularly named persona is a complex mixture of a wide range of different personalities, historical, mythical and literary figures, and the contextual background associated with all these characters. Since the personality is shown to be split and disintegrated, his song is also made equally incoherent, at least apparently. Nonetheless, this realisation assigns relevance to all the outward incoherence, contradictions, repetitions, ellipsis that exist in the poem. In fact, the poem, the persona, the song, and the background or the context against which it is created cannot be separated. Extensive shared knowledge is presupposed on the part of the reader. The poet almost assumes that the reader perceives the world as he has seen, felt, apprehended; that the reader has equally extensive knowledge of contemporary and past history, culture, civilisation, religion; the reader can easily fill in the gaps in line and in meaning. Thus, the readers or participants aimed at or implied, are a limited few with a considerable amount of shared knowledge and worldview. Hence, this discourse is also similar to metalinguistic discourse in contrast to advertisement or legal discourse. However, it is marked by the lack of metalinguistic steadfastness to grammaticality and cohesiveness. That is why, for the speech event of the poem to be successful, it is of vital importance that the reader understands the references and the images used, and the way they are used. It is left to the reader to gather different associative clues from public (as well as group, i.e., highly educated people with sound knowledge of Biblical, mythical, historical, literary past) and private memory, from the socio-cultural-political-economic context of Europe and the world in the first half of the twentieth century.
The lexical, syntactic, and discoursal selections have the major contribution in the creation of this complex whole. Grammatical units are deliberately merged, recreated, or left open, punctuation is used at will, and cohesion is nearly ignored for the special coherence that is attempted at. The syntactic arrangement is very interesting to look at. The traditional notion of a sentence starting with a capital letter and ending with a full stop can lead to many garden path errors (i.e., the error of mistaking the immediately preceding or following grammatical units to be connected to each other grammatically in a linear order). Let us look at the first part of the poem up to the first full stop:

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherised upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question...
Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'
Let us go and make our visit.
This stanza consists of one whole unit of language use with a message sent, received, and interpreted. Therefore, it can be termed a discoursal unit. Now, this discoursal unit is divided into several lines, consisting of a complete or a parsed clause or a complete sentence itself. Nonetheless, apparently the whole discourse is meant to be one sentence, with only one full stop at the end and the following clausal embeddings:

(Let us (go then, you and I,
(When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like (a patient etherised upon a table;))))
(Let us (go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
(Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
(To lead you to an overwhelming question… ))))
(Oh, do not ask, (‘What (is it?)’))
(Let us (go) and (make our visit)).

As we can notice, the syntactic cohesion is lost after the dotted part, as if the person got lost in the mazes of images, only to wake up to utter quite incoherently: “Oh, do not ask, ‘What is it?’/ Let us go and make our visit.” The coherence can be discovered only when we imagine the persona as one average modern man for whom courage,
heroism, romance, religion, myth, morality, language everything has ‘fallen apart’. The loose syntactic structure confronts us with this taken for granted shared knowledge of the world of the author and the reader. There are other complementary devices too. For example, in the twice repeated “And would it have been worth it, after all”, the use of past conditional tense suggests that the question is rhetorical: the persona is sure that his intended act of heroism is not worth all those linguistic and mental gymnastics. Again we notice that the local and global relevance of the seemingly misplaced words, and the jerky, disconnected sentences, half sentences, half narratives are left for the reader to discover. There is also a lot of discourse mixing and discourse shifting in the whole poem. For example:

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, ‘Do I dare?’ and ‘Do I dare?’
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair –
(They will say: ‘How his hair is growing thin!’)
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin –
(They will say: ‘But how his arms and legs are thin!’)
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
A constant mixture of 'levity and seriousness', of different perspectives, of different concerns, and different worlds mark these lines. The perspective changes from his own to people that he considers he can compare himself with, to the imaginary audience of his imaginary visit, back to his own introspection. The persona is thus split and caught in his mental world (a similar change in perspective can be seen in the sample from *Enduring Love*). The whole background, the assumed shared knowledge on the basis of which the poem is written, can be discovered more explicitly if we look at the poem in terms of the Hymesian SPEAKING grid:

**Setting/scene**: Modern society where all earlier beliefs, faith, morality, religion, social conventions are shattered (global)

Modern man in a modern setting as Eliot perceived (local)

**Participants**: The writer and the reader

**Ends**: To portray the split, disintegrated modern personality (global)

To portray one individual as representative of the modern man (local)

**Act sequence**: The unuttered speech act of declaration (implicit)

Many complete or fragmented, actual, thought out, quoted speech acts of request, question, declaration and so on

**Key**: Various, from the sublime to the mundane

**Instrumentalities**: Written presented as if verbal

**Norms of interaction and interpretation**: Sound knowledge of the social, cultural, political situation in the first half of the twentieth century, along with a thorough
knowledge of classical and modern literature, Christian, European, Oriental mythology, history, beliefs, rituals

**Genre:** Literary

This grid and the eleven-layered exposition of the persona presented earlier show how much of intertextuality, multitextuality, and interdiscursivity have gone into the making of this poem. The term 'intertextuality' appears to have been coined by Julia Kristeva (cf. Moi 1986), and has been used to describe a wide range of relationships that may hold between discourses. Genette (1982) talks of 'transtextuality', reserving the term 'intertextuality' for exact quotation of one text within another. Although Genette's categories are subtle, they have not become widely acceptable, and 'intertextuality' is usually used to describe the way that a text's production and reception are governed by – and go on to affect – the history of text production and reception in a culture and a particular writer's and reader's experience of that culture. Fairclough (1992) argues for a closer relationship between textual analysis and intertextual analysis, the latter not always closely grounded in the details of the text. The term 'interdiscursivity' signifies similar embedding that exists in discourse. By 'multitextuality' I mean the potential existence of multiple interpretive versions of a text, i.e., texts created by an interaction between actual reader/s and the so-called 'text'.

The text under observation has many instances of intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and multitextuality within it and I hope my analysis has brought to light some of them. The discourse here is the meeting point of many uttered, unuttered, implied, signalled
discourses of scores of actual, literary, historical, mythological personalities, the actual author and the implied author, and the actual reader and the implied reader. All of them together both negate and embellish the love song of the persona.

Ehrlich (1990), following a distinction introduced by the logician Hans Reichenbach (1947) establishes three concepts of time in narrative: speech time (ST), i.e., the time at which the utterance is spoken; event time (ET), i.e., the time at which the event that is spoken about took place; reference time (RT), i.e., the time indicated by the temporal indicators of the utterance. In “The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock”, the speech time is not particularly mentioned; the event time and the reference time are diverse. Guido’s speech is taken from a text written at a time that is pretty far from the present time. The utterance of Prufrock starts in the present time. However, it refers to various time in the past, and finally ends in an enigmatic way:

I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.
I do not think that they will sing to me.
I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.
We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

Here the first quoted line is in indefinite future, indicating that the event is yet to occur. This is immediately followed by a remembrance from the past, placed in present perfect tense. It is followed by a present foreseeing of a future event. Again the poet or the persona goes back to the remembrance and finally merges the remembrance with the future event, thereby intermingling time past, present, and future. One analysis of this complex mixture can be that the persona is caught in the quagmire of time and the very deciphering process of the poem throws the reader also into the quagmire. This assumption is enhanced by the change in the use of personal pronoun from ‘I’ to ‘we’.

The text also creates the mental image of proximity and distance and shifts it time and again. For example, the title of the poem, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”, indicates the distance between the poet and the persona – the love song is Prufrock’s not the poet’s. The lines that follow are spoken by Guido da Montefetro, one of the damned in Dante’s inferno. It is difficult to be certain, at least in the first reading, who speaks in Guido’s voice – i.e., whether it is the poet, or the persona, namely Prufrock. Nor can we be certain whether the epigraph is meant to express the poet’s predicament or Prufrock’s. In the opening line “Let us go then, you and I”, three of the seven words are personal pronouns. The question that immediately arises is, who is the ‘you’, the implied listener being addressed? Guido reveals his identity to Dante only because he mistakes Dante for one of the damned, like himself, for whom there is no escape from hell. Therefore, we have the option to deduct that Prufrock’s relationship to the poet is similar to that of Guido’s to Dante, and that he is willing to speak only because he believes that his ‘love song’ will not be heard by anyone else since he and his creator are both imprisoned in
hell. The implied listener could be the poet, the reader, or Prufrock himself as he cannot escape from the circle of his consciousness. There is a shifting and merging of the points of view of the poet, persona, and the reader, so that the distinction among them is blurred. Even when Prufrock addresses himself, he implicates the reader and the poet in his speech. The poet too is a split character who assumes different voices (Eliot said that Prufrock "was partly a dramatic creation of a man of about 40 [...] and partly an expression of feeling of my own"). Again if the ‘you’ being addressed is Prufrock himself, the reader, in reading the love song, is by implication also trapped within the closed circuit of Prufrock’s consciousness. At the same time, through the interplay of voices, the title, and the epigraph, a distance is deliberately created between the reader and the persona, and between the persona and the poet.

Literature, particularly from the Modern period, abounds in multilayered personae and multilayered texts. For example, in the poem “Fiction” by Peter Reading, a fictitious character called Donald creates a character called ‘Donald’ or ‘Don’ who writes poetry under the pseudonym ‘Peter Reading’ and –

sues a man whose real

name is ‘Peter Reading’ for having once

written a fiction about a poet

who wrote verse concerning a novelist

called ‘Donald’ whose book Fiction deals with ‘Don’ [...]

(Reading, Collected Poems 1: 137-38)

At the very first glance, the extract exhibits the following layers:
Diagram 11: The Multilayered Persona in "Fiction"
The poem is named 'fiction' – thereby it proclaims its fictitious nature. The actual author is Peter Reading, Donald (1) is his creation, who creates a character named Donald or Don (2), who takes the pseudonym Reading, and sues the real Reading who writes a fiction about a poet, who composes poetry about Donald (3) the novelist, who creates Fiction, the novel, dealing with Don (4). This is deliberate intermingling of the fictitious and the actual world, an attempt at merging the distinction between the creator and the created. In the world of drama, we notice this kind of a premeditated intermingling in plays like Six Characters in Search of an Author. A play, by its generic nature, reaches its audience more immediately and forcefully than a written poem. The obvious reason is that in a dramatic presentation, the characters utter the words intended for them, and their body language, the setting, the use of light and background music, all these together offer a more powerful and instant medium. Therefore, the difference between the written script and the presented form of a play is very fascinating to analyse.

Sample 2.2 almost challenges this advantage that a play enjoys. In this extract from a poem, a complex mixture of spoken expressions is presented in a written form. The written form of the spoken expressions show them to be not fully uttered, which might be due to the educational level of the implied speaker (illiterate), or due to the immediate physical condition of the implied speaker (drunkenness), accompanied by the emotional state (biasness and hatred towards 'them'). The implied hearer is included in the 'us', the inner group against the 'them', the others. The two complementary messages: 'you don’t owe anything to them' and 'you have got to get rid of them' are
presented in a phased manner – first they are presented half mentioned (ygUDuh / ydoan); then audience response is sought (yunnuhstan); then they are presented in a bit more modified version (ydoan o / yguduh ged), with another round of audience response seeking (yunnuhstan dem); and finally they are presented in the full form (yguduh ged riduh / ydoan o nudn); followed by an urge to the audience to listen (LISN bud LISN). The frequent seeking of audience response makes the discourse conspicuously dialogic. Moreover, words are presented in a free phonetic style. This technique not only gives the impression of a spoken utterance to a written one, but also adds accents, stylistic features, dialectal features and so on, and thereby depicts the implied speaker drawing on the shared knowledge of the reading public. The text does not disclose itself instantly, at least not to each and every reader around the globe.

Some literary texts can be very open, taking liberty not only with the syntactic structure, but also with the lexical resource, playing with the expectations of the readers. For instance, we can have a look at the following text:

anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating many bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn’t he danced his did.

Women and men (both little and small)
cared for anyone not at all
they sowed their isn’t they reaped their same
These are the first three stanzas of an unnamed poem. What do we specify as the context in consideration of which the text would look coherent and interpretable? How do we account for the facts that it does not have a name; that only one line starts with a capital letter (and the capital letter bearing word is a common noun, whereas the authorial background information tells us that the author deliberately crushes all capital letters from even proper names, including his own); that the poem echoes familiar words, patterns, structures, styles, but it is adamantly unfamiliar; that the protagonist is named 'anyone' and his lover 'noone'; and so on. The poet carefully selects the form of a conventional lyric (which tempts us to interpret it in terms of Elizabethan lyrics), and at the same time, he takes liberty in syntactic structure, which places him in the Modern period. Extreme liberty with syntactic structure yields to apparent incongruity:

he sang his didn't he danced his did.

The auxiliaries 'didn't' and 'did' are used as nouns. The nominal status equates 'did' with the persona’s doings, works, achievements; and ‘didn’t’ with whatever he could not achieve, do, or work out (a partly similar construction is: they sowed their isn’t
they reaped their same). The happiness, light heartedness connoted by the verbs ‘sing’ and ‘dance’ assigns an easy go lucky characteristic to the persona. As the protagonist is anyone with no particularity added, his place is left open to be filled in by any reader, or whoever the reader thinks to be the appropriate person. But as a reader I feel that social and cultural milieu, as well as psychological factors come in here to restrict our choice, so that we don’t want to fix this ‘anyone’ with anyone from the idyllic past, but with someone from the present, known milieu.

Thus, we have seen that this is a text which cannot be called ‘the text’ — it is rather a multitext, which has a new version created by the interaction between the text and its every reader. Similar experiments are carried out in longer narratives like novels. However, a novel works in a slightly different way. A novel is generally a narrative, (though there are novels that radically play with the narrative expectations, as Tristram Sandy does).

Toolan describes the chief characteristics of a narrative in the following way:

   c) sequenced or interrelated event;

   d) foregrounded individuals;

   e) crisis to resolution progression.

According to him, what makes narratives, especially literary or extended spoken ones, different from others is that in narratives the speaker is often particularly noticeable (Toolan 2001: 1).

Mcquillan (2000) is of the opinion that any linguistic act necessarily takes the form of a narrative mark. However, what is identified through an institutional practice as ‘literary narrative’ represents a special object of study. The emergence of a ‘truth-claim’
within the intersubjective use of language disguises the formal characteristics of narrative, as linguistic action, in the majority of social-praxis. The ethical determination of 'truth' sets the limits of an imaginary figure of closure and so masks the narrative construction of ideologically motivated social discourse. It is in the cultural products of a linguistic community that narrative forms may be seen most clearly. Every author creates in a work a world, which the author shares with the reader, and within that world the author experiments all sorts of new ventures. Joyce was particularly daring in this aspect. A mere look at an extract from one of his novels gives us an idea of the extent to which he exploits the advantages that the form or the specific genre offers:

Listener: reclined semilaterally, left, left hand under head, right leg extended in a straight line and resting on left leg, flexed in the attitude if Gea-Tellus, fulfilled, recumbent, big with seed. Narrator: reclined laterally, left, with right and left legs flexed, the indexfinger and thumb of the right hand resting on the bridge of the nose, in the attitude depicted on a snapshot photograph made by Percy Apjohn, the childman weary, the manchild in the womb.

Womb/Weary?

He rests. He has travelled.

With?
Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the Tailor and Jinbad the Jailor and Whinbad the Whaler and Finbad the Failor and Binbad the Bailor and Pinbad the Pailer and Minbad the Mailer and Hinbad the Hailer and Rinbad the Railer and Dinbad the Kailer and Vinbad the Quailer and Linbad the Yailer and Xinbad the Phthailer.

When?

Going to a dark bed there was a square round Sinbad the Sailor roc's egg in the night of the bed of all the auks of the rocs of Darkinbad the Brightdayler.

Where?

(Joyce 1914: 737)

If we compare this extract with another from legal or metalinguistic discourse, or with the report of a scientific case study, this extract would appear wild and incoherent. It deliberately violates all the restrictions that an utterance imposes on itself in order to convey the intended meaning. Words are created at will, sentences are extended and compressed freely, a detailed description of a very minute observation is followed by an equally long sentence which sounds more like nonsense blubbered off. Nevertheless, within the context of the discourse of the whole novel and the different worlds (for instance, the world of Ulysses, the world of Everyman and so on) it subtly implies, imitates, or refers to, it yields meaning for those readers who attempts at deciphering the dauntingly absurd text.
The self consciously fictional status of a literary narrative allows a display of the fictional process of construction of subjectivity, which is disguised elsewhere. These processes are textually inscribed, Mcquillan (2000) says, within the linguistic use of the communal narrative-matrix and are structured like a narrative. Mcquillan makes an explicit attempt not to efface the difference between fictional and historical narratives, although as Ricoeur (1984) demonstrates, the two have aporetical links.

Novels, as fictional narratives, can experiment with the setting, point of view, time, space and almost all the aspects of the SPEAKING grid explicitly and implicitly. For example, in *Enduring Love*, McEwan bases his plot on a fictional psychiatric case study, which he presents in an appendix to the novel as if it were a genuine article from a scientific journal:

This case confirms the reports of some commentators (Trethowan 1967; Seeman 1978; Mullen & Pathe) on the relevance of absent or missing fathers. It must remain a matter for conjecture at this stage whether R, aged 47, represented a father figure to P, or whether, as a successful, socially integrated individual, he represented an ideal to which P aspired.

(McEwan *Enduring Love*: back cover leaf)

It is a novel where one of the characters takes the authorial position of the direct narrator, but the narration is extended up to the back cover leaf where the novel is given the form of a scientific case study (which connotes truthful, objective investigation). This final twist fictionalises scientific investigations and at the same time extends truthfulness
to fiction. This is an intermingling of the genres, with consequent merging of the assumed distinction of truth versus imagination between the two genres. The sentences are coherent; the vocabulary consists of carefully selected words that are used not in literary writing but in scientific rational thinking. The passage exhibits greater proximity to the rational discourse we are going to analyse in chapter five, than to the samples of literary discourse we are analysing in this chapter. Nowhere in the main narrative we are told that the implied speaker is not the actual speaker cum author; nowhere are we briefed that the narrative is the data for a case study, which might lead to several conjectures that can be placed at par with conjectures arrived at by other researchers. The narrative style echoes that of a news report, particularly in set constructions such as "R, aged 47". McEwan posits several questions through the narrative techniques, style, description of the appearances of the characters, the beliefs they have or they express, the way they think or they present their feelings. At a deeper level the author is presenting scientific rationality against humane qualities. The careful selection of words, phrases and sentences, the descriptive style, the presentation of the themes, all these add to that contrast. The main theme of the novel is based on a real incident involving an accident with a helium-filled balloon. Interspersed with it is the theme of the disastrous love or infatuation of Jed Parry for Joe, the implied narrator, which in turn complicates the relationship of Joe with his wife Clarissa, leading Joe to a mentally deranged state. Since the narrative perspective is mainly that of Joe’s, the narrative raises questions about its own perspective of the events it describes. Is it actually narrating a story, or is it presenting the refracted version of an incident by a mentally imbalanced person? Is there anything called the event, story or incident? Could it have been different if it were narrated from Parry’s or somebody else’s
perspective? Making the narrative all the more intricate, one episode is related in Joe’s ‘voice’ but from Clarissa’s point of view; and as we have seen, the ending is in the form of a scientific paper and case study where Joe, Clarissa, and Parry get converted to mere ‘J’, ‘C’ and ‘R’, closely following the notion of scientific objectivity.

A classic example of intricate narrative perspective can be found in Chaucer’s “The Nun’s Priest’s Tale” in The Canterbury Tales. The actual author Chaucer’s perspective is hidden behind the implied author cum narrator Chaucer’s perspective, which in turn is explicitly negated by the implied author foregrounding the perspective of the implied narrator of the other tale, namely the Nun’s Priest; the Priest’s perspective is obliterated by the perspective of the cock Chaunticleere; the cock’s perspective is seemingly overruled by the perspective of some unnamed writer of a classic who tales the story of two friends; the perspective of the story writer is pushed behind the perspective of one of the friends who tells the other about his experience in a dream; the friend’s perspective is negated by the perspective of the person he saw in his dream. This seven-layered narrative complexity comes to its climax when a generalisation is placed without any ascription of the speaker position (use of the technique of deliberate demarcation of the speaker position in metalinguistic discourse is discussed in chapter five).

Sample 3, from Rushdie’s The Ground Beneath Her Feet, is a good example of multiplicity of points of view – that of the actual and implied authors’, that of the direct narrator, that of the character Vina, those of the audience. The audience’s perspectives are closely and inextricably intertwined with either Vina’s or the narrator’s perspective and judgement of the situation. This is subtly reflected in the different interpretations that are given to the audience’s response to Vina’s singing:
$VIT\!O!$

$VIT\!O!$

Go back to him, they were saying. We need you to be together. Don’t throw your love away. Instead of breaking up, we wish you were making up again.

Vertical Take-Off. Or Vina To Ormus. Or, "We two" translated into Hug-me as V-to. Or, a reference to the V2 rocket. Or, V for peace, for which they longed, and T for two, the two of them, and O for love, their love. Or a homage to one of the great buildings of Ormus’s home town: Victoria Terminus Orchestra. Or, a name invented long ago when Vina saw a neon sign for the old time soft drink Vimto, with only three letters illuminated, Vimto without *im.*

V...T...Ohh.

V...T...Ohh.

Two shrieks and a sigh. The orgasm of the past, whose ring she wore on her finger.

(Rushdie, The Ground Beneath Her Feet: 7)

Though it is not directly stated, these interpretations appear to be a presentation of somebody’s stream of consciousness, in all probability, Vina’s. They are drawn from a repertoire of largely different worlds, different experiences, some of them very personal. There is also multiplicity of grammatical perspective (for example, *We did not spare each other. In this telling therefore, nothing will be spared,*), discourse perspective (for example, *like Lord Shiva back home*). Numerous socio-cultural-mythical references
(references to Aristaeus, Shiva, bees and so on) could also be found. As in the samples from legal discourse, we get absolutes here (for instance, *nothing will be spared*). However, there is hardly any attempt of using the absolute in the way they are used in legal discourse. In the latter, special attention is being paid to mention the limits of not only the absolute terms, but also any other potentially confusing terms. For example:

3. a) *No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour*;

   b) *Paragraph 3a) shall not be held to preclude*, [...]  

   (Appendix 1 sample 3)

In the sentence from the novel *(In this telling therefore, nothing will be spared.)* (Appendix 2 Sample 3)), the absolute is not used in the same way. The reader knows for sure the absolute is fixed by the writer or rather by the implied narrator with all his limitations in perspective of the narrative technique, narrative intention and so on.

The French author George Perec wrote a novel, translated into English as *A Void*, in which the narrator never uses the letter ‘e’, which in turn happens to be the initial of a woman he loved. In another of his works, *W or the Memory of Childhood*, the first person narrator alternates childhood memories with chapters describing a strange island where life is entirely focused on sport, but which comes gradually to bear an uncanny resemblance to the concentration camp in which his parents died. This is done through images that can be associated with different worlds. In Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, the narrator is Offred, a woman living in the future, in an imaginary state in America, The Republic of Gilead. Fearful about the declining population, due to
man made environmental disaster, a dictatorship assigns very narrow, specific roles to all the people, particularly to women. Offred is a handmaid. Her job is to ‘breed’ to ensure the survival of her nation, while other women are responsible for domestic chores and some carry out the formal duties of a wife. Thus, her position is negated to that of “viable ovaries”. We notice the author peels off different layers of her consciousness in the narrative that reflects in turn the society, the people, the environment, the worries, anxieties, morality and so on:

The chances are one in four, we learned that at the Centre. The air got too full, once, of chemicals, rays, radiation, the water swarmed with toxic molecules, all of that takes years to clean up, and meanwhile they creep into your body, camp out in your fatty cells. Who knows, your very flesh may be polluted, dirty as an oily beach, sure death to shore birds and unborn babies. Maybe a vulture would die of eating you. Maybe you light up in the dark, like an old fashioned watch. Death-watch. That’s the kind of beetle, it buries carrion.

I cannot think of myself, my body, sometimes, without seeming the skeleton: how I must appear to an electron. A cradle of life, made of bones; and within, hazards, warped proteins, bad crystals, jagged as glass. Women took medicines, pills, men sprayed trees, cows ate grass, all that souped-up piss flowed into the rivers. Not to mention the exploding atomic power plants, along the San Andreas fault, nobody’s fault, during the earthquakes, and the mutant strain of syphilis no mould could touch.

(Atwood The Handmaid’s Tale: Ch 19)
Apparently, this is an innocent description of whatever one perceives, realises, feels. Nevertheless, it invokes strong negative images of the world she is living in and the people she is surrounded with. It reminds us of Eliot’s “Preludes”, loaded with all the dingy images. Thus, in all these instances mentioned here and many other similar instances that could be mentioned, it is extremely difficult to draw the demarcating line between the traditional genres of a poem and a prose narrative, as it is difficult to draw a line between literary and other discourses.

I stated in chapter one that language is a refracting medium, the refracting factors being educational, cultural, social, and other private and public domains of the individual. As an individual and a researcher, my own refracting factors must have come inevitably into the reading of the text and the subsequent analysis. Ten different readings of the same text from different points of view would give birth to as many outcomes. Since I have presented the above analysis from my own perspective, it may be interesting to have a cursory glance at the different theoretical orientations through which a textual analysis is done, so that evaluation of my analytical framework can be objectively carried out. The following section deals with some of them.

**Conclusion**

So far, we made an attempt at discovering the intricate relationship of a text and its literary, linguistic, social, historical, cultural context in which it is placed by the author. We found that there exist various layers of multitextuality and interdiscursivity in this sample poem, and the other examples also disclosed different degrees of
multitextuality. Now I propose to move on to expository works by other researchers carried out from similar or different points of view.

4.4. Overview of the Field

In chapter one we have already discussed the approaches to discourse in the literary parlance. Here I would concentrate on certain individual works. Expositions of literary discourse are diverse and are carried out from different perspectives – literary critical, linguistic stylistic, discourse analytic, psycholinguistic, pedagogical and so on. Here we will briefly mention some of the more recent ones that are particularly relevant for this chapter.

Fowler (1981) propounds the following basic notions:

a) ‘literary’ texts are simply those which are designated and used as literature by the relevant society;

b) they are not linguistically special or linguistically unitary;

c) the idea of text is subordinate to the idea of discourse, that is, texts are the medium of communication for literature-using societies;

d) literary communication (a type of language use) may be a distinctive form of behaviour even though ‘literary texts’ and ‘poetic language’ are not distinctive (cf. Posner 1976).

(Fowler 1981: 188)

Along with Wolfgang Iser (1972, 1974), Fowler feels that meaning is not in the text, but the text is arranged so that the reader produces a meaning from it, since this
involves a transformation of the repertoire of meanings the reader possesses before, a communicative transaction takes place in which the text is not the object but the instrument. Fowler argues for a linguistic theory to organise and make sense of the theories of literary discourse, which are emerging in poetics. The requisite theory would have to integrate, Fowler feels, Formal Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Cognitive Semantics. However, Fowler's formulation remains at the theoretical level here and he himself feels that "empirical research descriptions concentrating on interpersonal, modal, deictic, sociolinguistic, text-cohesive, etc. dimensions of literary texts should proceed in advance of (and as a contribution to) the formation of a general theory of discourse." (Fowler 1981: 189). He considers Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics to be the requisite theory as far as English is concerned.

Carter and Simpson (1989) is a collection of articles that aim generally at evolving 'Discourse Stylistics'. Carter and Simpson are of the opinion that in its varied forms, discourse analysis is that branch of linguistics most directly concerned with the ways in which texts create contexts, with their organisation at the suprasentential level and with their operation as part of a dynamic process between participants. Most of the essays in this volume attempt at examining those broader contextual properties of texts, which affect their description and interpretation. Discourse analysis, they feel, should be concerned not simply with the 'micro contexts' of the effects of words across sentences or conversational turns but also with the 'macro contexts' of larger social patterns.

Cook (1994) is written under schema theoretic framework. Schema theory has its origins in the Gestalt psychology of the 1920s and 1930s. Its basic claim is that a new experience is understood by comparison with a stereotypical version of a similar
experience held in memory. From 1970s and 1980s this theory has been applied to artificial intelligence and to the understanding of texts. In Discourse Analysis, the theory has been combined with existing approaches to the study of cohesion, text structure, and pragmatics (cf. McCarthy 1991: 68-71). Cook shows, with various examples, literary as well as non-literary, that certain uses of language can alter our schemata, i.e., change our representation of the world. Cook therefore advocates a ‘cognitive change principle’ that underlies certain discourse types such as literary discourse. Cook’s definition of context is already discussed in the first chapter.

Halasz (1987) exhibits a slightly different perspective. The contributors to this volume discuss various aspects of the relationship between psychology and literary discourse as well as literary discourse processing. Fernandez (1977) takes it for granted that literature with mere words can bring into life all the forms of communication, physical contact, tone of voice, rate of speed, and even the flutter of an eyelid. It can present all the strata of human relations through the single narrowed channel of verbal communication. Radically opposed to this is the concept of the Russian Formalists most markedly expressed by Eichenbaum (1924) that artistic creation is suprapsychological and is determined rather by the laws of artistic construction. Halasz contrasts between literary, scientific, and conversational discourses. Scientific discourse endeavours to give, as exactly as possible, co-ordinates in space and time, to determine strictly the reality and truth-value of what is stated. It attempts to convey universal meaning unchanged in space and time. Its conciseness is derived from eliminating everything, which contradicts the statements and the principles of logic necessary for verification. Thus, it makes the recipient filter out of her impressions everything that does not comply with the objective
criteria of pure cognition. In this sense, the emotions, memories, and thoughts of the processor are burdened with narrowed channel capacity. As opposed to this, literary discourse is full of intentionally organised connotative meaning. The consequence of intentional use of connotations is that the contextual meanings are overwhelming and the sum total of the meanings cannot be computed (cf. Marcus 1974). So literary discourse is polyvalent. Polyvalence is the “property of a context which signals that multiple meanings are indeed intended and recoverable” (Schmidt 1982: 90). All these offer a large scope to the recipient’s emotions, memories and thoughts and an interpretative-constructive process takes place on the basis of incoming information, past experiences, biases, and expectations. Therefore, Kintsch believes that in the case of literary discourse “the comprehension process is controlled not merely by a single schema [...] that is activated from the text itself. Different control schemata allow for different levels of comprehension” (Kintsch 1980: 98).

Short (1996) has combined linguistic stylistic and conversation analytic techniques to explore poetry, drama, and prose, taking instances from a wide range of English texts. It is a good textbook that follows Leech (1969), with its checklists in every chapter for the reader to find out features like deviation, parallelism, foregrounding, style variation,metrical structure (in case of poetry), discourse structure and speech realism like turn taking, speech acts and politeness, inferences (in case of drama), linguistic indicators of point of view and style features of narrative description (in case of prose). However, Short has also noted that “a whole set of sentences may consist of a series of speech acts which all add up to one overarching macro speech act” (Short 1996: 204). As an example he refers to the long speeches by Goneril and Regan in the first scene of King
Lear, which counts overall as declaration of their love for their father. Short has also pointed out that the speech act value of an utterance might be different for different characters on the one hand and the audience on the other, leading to differing understandings and hence to situations of dramatic irony.

Coulthard (1994) is a collection of several essays by Coulthard, Sinclair, Hoey, Halliday, McCarthy, and others, which basically deal with sentential and discourse cohesion.

**Discussion**

This brief exposition of some of the existing studies in the field was expected to help us in the evaluation of our framework and the analysis carried out in section 3 of this chapter. As we can notice, my analysis empirically attempted to unite formal linguistic, sociolinguistic, and cognitive-semantic analytical tools that Fowler (1981) attempted to combine at the theoretical level. However, Fowler's professed (op cit: 189) leanings were for Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics, which I do not adhere to.

Carter and Simpson (1989) was a praiseworthy attempt in the field and I share their belief that Discourse Analysis should be concerned not simply with the 'micro contexts' of the effects of words across sentences or conversational turns but also with the 'macro contexts' of larger social patterns. However, the texts they covered were limited and the analytical tools have been improved in these twelve years. Therefore, though a historical perspective assigns credibility to the book, we cannot rely on it for discourse analysis any more.
Cook (1994) is good within its own theoretical framework. However, it shares the limitations of the theory it relies on. Halasz (1987) distinguishes in a neat way the difference between literary, conversational and scientific discourses. I have already attempted, at various points in my analysis, to show the differences that exist between literary discourse and other discourses. However, the orientation of Halasz (1987) is the exposition of one aspect of literary discourse, that is, its relationship with psychology, and hence it remains a limited theoretical exposition of literary discourse.

Short (1994) analysed quite a considerable number of texts from English combining linguistic stylistic and conversation analytic framework. However, since the book is meant to be a textbook, it is more analytic in terms of the texts in hand, than critical and evaluative in terms of the theories. Nevertheless, it posits a division of speech acts as macro and micro speech acts. What remains to be said is that this division is closely context-sensitive.

Coulthard (1994) is concerned mainly with sentential cohesion and though satisfactory at this level, is not comprehensive for the overall analysis of a discourse.

These are only a few of the many works available in this area. Carter and Simpson (1989), though old by now, presents the pertinent question in this field - how much of the text should be taken to be embedded in the context, and to what extent can the context be explored linguistically and objectively? I have already explicitly stated that I consider a text and its context to be integrally interrelated. I also think that a purely objective exploration is not possible.
4.5. Evaluation of the Framework

On the basis of these works discussed above and the analytic frameworks in which they are carried out, the tentative framework I applied seems to yield better understanding of the field. Due to concentration on one particular aspect from one particular perspective in the analysis, the others appear to be lacking a synthesis of analytical procedures as varied as speech act categorisation, grammatical exposition, reflection of social and cultural norms of interaction and interpretation, importance of relevance in discourse/text formation and analysis, and the empirical evidence of applicability of the synthesis. I would, therefore, take the position that my framework, which makes an attempt to synthesise various analytical procedures, should yield better results. Our analysis of the sample literary text showed that our framework could be applied to literary discourse suitably. The problematic areas such as the notion of a speech act and perlocutionary effect are mentioned, hierarchy of speech acts are locally established in terms of the context of the sample text. Another problematic area that emerged is the hierarchy of discourse that the poem under analysis posited. The whole poem can be considered as one discourse unit; at the same time parts of it, as the first stanza has shown, can be taken as a discourse unit. Keeping it open at this moment, I propose to move on to analyse other discourse types to come to a tentative generalisation.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter explored the possibility of applying our framework to literary discourse. It also looked at the close relationship that texts have with the diverse contexts
linguistic, generic, psychological, as well as interpersonal. It reaffirmed the following points I have made in the first chapter:

◊ A text is the end product of intrapersonal as well as interpersonal conflicts, a process of selection and elimination of events, narratives, ideas, genres, in terms of local and global goals of discourse.

◊ Every text is a multitext, embedded in the linguistic, generic, psychological, social, cultural contexts of previous, simultaneous, and/or future discourses.

◊ A text necessarily reflects in different degrees the speaker/author/producer’s mind which is a complex mixture of events, ideas, imaginations past, present, and future.

The chapter also evaluated the possibility of applying my general discourse analytic framework to literary discourse, and found the framework more or less suitably applicable. Two problem areas are discovered – those concerning the definition of discourse, and of a speech act. At this stage, the problems are left open for discussion.

On the basis of the analysis and the overview of related field, we can arrive at the following tentative generalisations as far as literary discourse is concerned:

◊ Literary discourse is a joint production of the writer and the reader, i.e., literary discourse is dialogic.

◊ A literary text is potentially a multitext, embedded in the linguistic, generic, discourse specific characteristics.

◊ The perlocutionary effect of a literary text remains open-ended, whether the writer wishes it or not.
A literary discourse may or may not assign importance to grammaticality and cohesion.

Every literary discourse starts in the author’s mind as a coherent piece. This coherence may rest at the explicit or implicit level. In the latter case, coherence might become a relative term depending upon the extent to which the reader is able to recreate the coherence intended by the author.

A lot of shared knowledge is generally presupposed, sometimes even without offering any clue to the presupposed shared world.

With these generalisations concerning literary discourse, we move on to examine another discourse type in the next chapter.