3.1. Poetry as a Literary Genre: A Survey

If there is not much written about literary genres like the essay, the opposite is true of poetry. Perhaps, no other genre has been written about and discussed as much as poetry. The discussion has, moreover, been wide-ranging, covering topics like the function of poetry, the composition of poetry, the devices used in poetry, and even, the language of poetry. This discussion has not been confined to one special period of history, but has continued almost unbroken from the time of Plato. (The discussion here is however confined to Anglo-American literature).

There could be two reasons for this abundance of material on poetry. One, literature is somehow first equated to poetry and then to other forms. The normal reaction of people when asked to name great names in literature is to name poets. Even if Shakespeare is named, the next statement will be not about his drama, but about
the beautiful poetry in his dramas. And poets have always been people who have been noticed - one can detest them or one can admire them, but one cannot ignore them. Hence the long passages in Plato discussing the role of the poet in society, showing how pernicious his influence can be; or Sidney's description of how moral a poet should be to be really called a poet. Poets have themselves claimed that their task is to present 'a criticism of life', an onerous responsibility indeed. So, a poet has always been someone who has stood apart from the common herd, and hence has drawn attention to himself and his occupation of writing poetry.

The second reason why poetry has had such a predominant position among literary genres is that poets themselves have talked a lot about their craft. "Because poets have a strong tendency to form opinions about their craft and to use these opinions as part of the message of their poems, we are likely to find literary theory of a sort as far back as we can find poems." (Wimsatt & Brooks: 1957: 3)

Once a theory is proposed, it is but natural
that sooner or later there will be an attempt to overturn it and an alternative theory proposed. Hence, the discussion about literature, especially with reference to poetry has continued over the years. This on going discussion has provided a rich source of ideas for the student of literature.

It has been mentioned earlier that the discussion on poetry has covered a vast range of topics like the function of poetry, the composition of poetry, the devices used in poetry and the language of poetry. A brief survey of the views expressed on these topics would be useful.

Poets have always considered themselves and have been considered by society as special people touched by something divine. Even Plato, who said that only religious poetry and hymns would be allowed/should be allowed in a republic, conceded that poets were creatures who were divinely inspired. The Elizabethans too, gave due respect to poets (though it did not stop them from cutting off their heads in some cases) and Shakespeare, the representative of this age, had this to say: 'The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling'
So this notion of divine inspiration has become fixed in the minds of poets and the consciousness of society.

The next point to consider is, what is it that a poet says when inspired? For a long time, it was considered that poetry was truth, and the function of poetry was to 'delight and teach'. It was the function of poetry to hold a mirror unto nature or to man himself, to edify, teach and improve. Even among the modern poets, this idea is quite prevalent, as Robert Frost's remark demonstrates: "Poetry begins in Delight and ends in Wisdom".

Of course, the idea of Wisdom has assumed different meanings over the ages, as also the content of what has to be taught - from didacticism to humanistic values, from social behaviour to Marxist tenets. So it can be seen that the message contained in poems has been considered to be very important and significant.

The next relevant question which arises is that of the composition of poetry. How does a poet compose when under the influence of the Muse? It is here that two distinct schools of thought
emerge: One which says that under inspiration the poet pours forth 'unpremeditated' lines of poetry, and the other which says that whatever be the inspiration, poetry must be composed according to some rules and regulations. These two points of view have held a ding-dong sway over the poets' methods of composition, and many modifications have also occurred.

This leads directly into the next point of discussion on poetry - the devices used in poetry. Whether it be 'unpremeditated art' or a stylized rendering, all poets use some special devices. Those who see poetry as an attempt to embody in words a truth which has been perceived non-verbally, think of symbols. This, in a way, is very much like religion.

.....it is not strange that the poet should be almost the same as the theologian and the dialectician.... divine philosophy, or theology as we prefer to call it, has two parts, and each of them is adapted and fitted to one part of our mind, which is composed of the divisible and the indivisible, .... (according to the Areopagite) that that part of occult theology that is contained in the signs, and has the power of making one perfect.... Thence it leads to the contemplation of divine things; and to move readers in this way with images, as do the mystic theologian and the poet.... The mystic theologian and the poet then,
are far more noble....

(Wimsatt & Brooks: 1957:165)

Since poetry is made up of words, poets have to use words as symbols. These words or images produced by words reflect the reality of the poets' vision or could be reality itself.

I do believe, though I have found them not, that there may be words which are things.

(Byron: Childe Harold: Canto III, Stanza CXIV)

Of the same school of thought are modern American poets like Poe and Whitman; in a slightly modified way, W.B. Yeats also subscribed to this view. It is interesting to note that at times even a person like Sartre, who believed that literature should be more 'useful' than decorative says that:

For the poet, language is a structure of the external world. The speaker is in a situation in language; he is invested with words. They are prolongations of his meaning. The poet is outside language. He sees words inside out as if he did not share the human condition, and as if he were meeting the word as a barrier as he comes towards men. (writer's emphasis)

(Sartre: 1967:6)

It is to be noted here that whether language, or 'words', are considered to be 'barriers' or
'reality', a lot of attention has been paid to language. This attention has focussed on the semantic and connotational aspects of language rather than the structural.

There is the other school of thought which does not look at language as a barrier but as a useful tool for communication particularly so in poetry. According to this school,

'True wit is Nature to advantage dress'd; What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.'

(Pope: Essay: lines 297-98)

Here a lot of attention is paid to language and to the use of language. Language is not viewed as some sort of encumbrance to communication, but rather as something which is a divine gift. According to Schlegel:

The greatest and most important discovery of human ingenuity is writing; there is no impiety in saying that it was scarcely in the power of the Deity to confer on man a more glorious present than LANGUAGE, by the medium of which he himself has been revealed to us, and which affords at once the strongest bond of union, and the best instrument of communication.

(Wimsatt and Brooks: 1957: 248)

This attitude to language leads to the poets
of this school treating language rather objectively and working on it consciously. The Aristotelian theories of poetry and the language of poetry are accepted and used by the poets of this school of thought.

The corollary of this attitude is the prescription of what should be done with language if it has to be used to dress thought appropriately. Aristotle was prescriptive in Poetics and so were Pope and Dryden, the former in Essay on Criticism and the latter in Essay on Dramatic Poesy.

3.1.1 The Language of Poetry

The discussions deal mainly with the following questions.

i) Function: If poetry is sublime, what sort of language is best suited to this? Similarly, when dealing with the other functions of poetry like moralising, teaching etc, what sort of language is appropriate for these different functions?

ii) Composition of poetry: How relevant is language to this aspect of poetry? Does it
have any significance when a poet writes under the influence of 'divine inspiration'? If language is to be used deliberately, what are the norms of composition to be followed?

iii) Devices used in poetry: Since it is an inescapable fact that all poetry is made up of words, do poets have any special devices which they use, or even, should they use any special devices?

Often in connection with these topics and rarely apart from these related topics, the language used in poetry has been discussed by both poets and critics. But these discussions are incidental. No critic or poet until modern times has undertaken a full-length serious discussion of 'language' in literature, which includes poetry.

Just as the serious study of how language works is a comparatively recent development, the notion of a legitimate way of approaching a text... is to look closely at its language is a distinctively modern one, dating back no further than about 1920. This does not mean, of course, that before that date no-one looked closely at the language of literary works. Medieval scholars, for their own good reasons, scrutinised the language of Biblical and other texts, and a long tradition of classical scholarship and translation involved its practitioners in detailed attention to words. Literary criticism was not,
however, usually part of their purpose. More relevant to our present concerns are the occasional asides of authors and critics mainly intent on other preoccupations — usually brief, throwaway observations that, however full of local insight, form part of no systematic attempt to engage in verbal description or analysis....

.....from Aristotle onwards, most literary critics until the present century concerned themselves with larger, more general and theoretical issues — such as the nature and function of literature, the definition of genres, and the morality of art.

(PAGE: 1984: 10-11)

Despite the fact that the study of language has not been considered a tool to study literature (here, poetry), many poets have given language some thought. A survey of what has been said of poetic language shows that the primary focus has been on two aspects. (i) words and phrases and (ii) dialect.

Aristotle (de Poetica: 694) when discussing poetic diction, says:

What helps most, however, to render the Diction at once clear and non-prosaic is the use of the lengthened, curtailed and altered form of words. Their deviation from the ordinary words will, by making the language unlike that in general use, give it a non-prosaic appearance; and their having much in common with the words in general use will give it the
quality of clearness\(^1\).

..... whereas Euripides, by the change of a single word, the substitution of a strange one for what is by usage the ordinary word, has made it seem a fine one.

The urbane Roman critic, Horace, has this to say of the poet and his art:

The poet who takes his art seriously will come to his task in a spirit of honest self-criticism. He will not flinch at throwing out whatever words are lack-lustre and lack weight or in any way undeserving.... A good poet will dig up long forgotten treasures of vocabulary and will put them into circulation again.... His utterance will be urgent and clear, like the spring torrent; he will pour out a wealth of words....

(Wimsatt & Brooks: 1957: 360)

Sir Philip Sidney makes the following observation, which in some way echoes Aristotle. "The .words, (besides they delight which hath a great affinitie to memory) being so set, as one word cannot be lost, but the whole work fails; .... every word having his naturall seate, which seate, must needes make the words remembered." (1927: 38-39)

\(^1\) What Aristotle is talking about here is the way poets use the normal paradigm as base and then deviate from it as mentioned by Leech (1969: 30)
Pope, when he talks about the "language" of poetry, talks of words in a different way. He discusses their place in a line of poetry, for rhyme is very important to this poet. In his _Essay on Criticism_, he says:

Th' oft the Ear the open Vowels tire...
(line 345)

And ten low Words oft creep in one dull Line....
(line 347)

He also discusses stereotypes in poetry, the words and phrases used so often and so mechanically that they become clichés:

"Where'er you find the cooling Western Breeze,
In the next Line, it whispers thro' the Trees;
If Chrystal Streams with pleasing Murmurs creep,
The Reader's threatened (not in vain) with Sleep".
(350 - 53)

Johnson's criticism of Dryden's use of meta-language in 'Annus Mirabilis' is made on the basis of his belief in the use of 'general' expressions in poetry, so that it becomes universally understood. His objection here is to the use of special words like 'gall'd', 'marling' and 'tarpawling', in the lines
"Some the gall'd ropes with dawby marling bind,
Or sear-cloth masts with strong tarpawling coats."
(verse 148)

What Johnson is criticising is the use of 'specialist' vocabulary in poetry.

The most important poets who dealt with dialect,² as opposed to mere words were the Romantics. Wordsworth's Preface to the Lyrical Ballads (Hutchinson: 1904 : 734 - 763) discussed at length the question of poetic diction - that is, the variety of language to be used in poetry. This question had been touched upon by different poets off and on, but not in any detail. Addison in the Spectator had talked about the language of poetry and how a poet 'should take particular care to guard himself against Idiomatick ways of Speaking' as oft used phrases 'contract a kind of Meanness by passing through the Mouths of the Vulgar' (Spectator no. 285). Pope acknowledged that Greek seemed to have majesty but also admitted

2. Wordsworth seems to think of 'dialect' not only as a variety of language spoken in a particular area but also as language spoken by a certain class.
that this could be because it was a dead language and no longer current. Gray's words, 'The language of the age is never the language of poetry' are popular enough to be quoted by every undergraduate student.

Wordsworth wanted poetry to be a description of ordinary events and situations in 'a selection of language really used by men'. The reasons for this use of 'low and rustic' language, which was in itself poetic, were

....because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society... being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language.... is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets. (p. 735)

Wordsworth also admitted that though this language was excellent, it would be 'purified' to some degree to meet the needs of composition. To which Coleridge replied that '.... a rustic's language purified from all provincialism and grossness, and so far reconstructed as to be made consistent with the rules of grammar' (which are in essence no other than the laws of universal usage) applied to
psychological materials) - will not differ from the language of any other man of common sense, however learned or refined he may be, ....' (Coleridge: 1965: 195-196).

So it can be seen how the idea of Language in poetry was discussed in considerable detail in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Again, the terms used were general, no specifics were mentioned with regard to the particular use of words. This was perhaps because there was no fully developed discipline which could be referred to as a framework of analysis. It can be noticed that there is an awareness of types of language as also the concept of 'universality' of language (though not in strictly linguistic terms). But this awareness, unfortunately, gets relegated to a secondary position because of the lack of an adequate framework within which this question could be discussed; and also because of the poet's preoccupation with more general and philosophical issues.

The language of poetry has continued to be discussed in the twentieth century too, and though much of the discussion has followed earlier
patterns, the concerns of critics have embraced a wider field: I.A Richards (1923, 1924) is interested in the semantic aspects of words, especially words used by poets in their poems, and Pound (1920) has introduced the concept of the Chinese ideogram into English poetry. There has also been, in the twentieth century, a move towards the inclusion of other related fields of activity like sociology and psychology into the criticism and evaluation of literature.

3.2 Stylistics and Poetry.

Along with the traditional schools of criticism, there has been, in the twentieth century, a group of scholars who have made use of insights from a related field of activity to look at poetry from a totally new perspective. This is the linguistic perspective. This way of looking at poetry has become possible because of the development of linguistics as a rigorous discipline.

The greatest advantage of linguistics is that it allows one to look at language objectively. It has a clearly defined framework of what language
is, and this is of immense use to the analyst. Further, the construction of a framework has also led to the description of how language operates at different levels: the phonological, morphological and the syntactic.

Added to these is another aspect of language that is being studied, namely its use in discourse.

The application of linguistic insights to the analysis of poetry has led to the understanding of how a poet uses the language and what the effects of using language in a certain way are. This does not mean that poetic devices like similes and metaphors are ignored. Indeed, Leech (1969) in his *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* devotes two chapters to figures of speech in poetry (chapters 9 & 10); features like metre etc. are also discussed as well as the logical base of expressions in poetry. But his approach is linguistic and his way of looking at the language of poetry is objective and analytic.

Just as linguistics in its early stages was rigorously scientific and excluded meanings and connotations, stylistic analysis of poetry when it
was done first was also rigorously objective and did not deal with interpretation, which is important in the study of poetry.

One of the first to use a Neo-Firthian framework of linguistic analysis was M.A.K. Halliday. In his seminal article, 'Descriptive Linguistics in Literary Studies' (Freeman: 1970: 57-72), he demonstrates how a poem can be analysed using linguistic categories. The aim of this exercise is pure description. "But if a text is to be described at all, then it should be described properly; and this means by theories and methods developed by linguistics, the subject whose task is precisely to show how language works." (p.70). He dissociates interpretation of literature from linguistics for he feels that 'only a literary analyst - not the linguist - can determine the place of linguistics in literary study' and that 'Linguistics is not and will not be the whole of literary analysis'.

In his analysis of Yeats' poem Leda and the Swan he focuses on the nominal and verbal groups. The linguistic category he uses to describe Leda and the Swan is the deictic use of 'the', which is
used in three different ways viz. cataphoric, anaphoric and homophoric. He finds in *Leda and the Swan* a high density of structurally cataphoric, but functionally anaphoric uses of 'the'. He comments "The only other type of writing I can call to mind in which this feature is found at such high density is in tourist guides and, sometimes, exhibition catalogues. " (I hope that this is in no sense intended as an adverse criticism of the poem)" (p.61).

After this, he analyses the verbal groups in the poem and presents the findings in a tabular form:

Verbal items in *'Leda and the Swan'*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items in verbal group (i.e., operating as 'predicator' in clause structure)</th>
<th>Items in nominal group (i.e., not operating as predicator)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>hold</td>
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<td>send</td>
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<tr>
<td>put on</td>
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</table>
He concludes saying

In 'Leda' the few verbal items are varied in power, though medium rather than extreme. But they get lexically more powerful as they get grammatically less "verbal": in finite verbal group in free clause we have "hold", "push", "put on", "feel"; while at the other end of the scale, not operating in verbal group at all, are "stagger", "loosen", and "caress". (p.63)

Halliday does not discuss the relevance of these findings in relation to the interpretation of the poem. But he makes a strong statement about the importance of 'proper' linguistic analysis of poems:

The literary analyst is not content with amateur psychology, armchair philosophy, or fictitious social history; yet the linguistics that is applied in some accounts of literature, and the statements about language that are used as evidence, are no less amateur, armchair and fictitious. It is encouraging that literary scholars are coming more and more to reject such statements, and to demand a standard of objective linguistic scholarship that is no less rigorous than the standard of literary scholarship which they expect, and exact, from themselves. (p.70-71)

Using a similar framework, Sinclair, in his article 'Taking a Poem to Pieces' (Fowler: 1966:68 - 81) does precisely that - he takes Philip Larkin's First Sight to pieces. He begins by saying that it is "a short, recent, lyric
poem. It contains no magnetic peculiarities of language; in fact most critics, I imagine, would ignore the language altogether." (p. 68)

Stating that the accent of the paper will be on grammar, he goes on to the poem straightaway. He deals basically with the occurrence of 'free' (grammatically independent) and 'bound' (grammatically dependent) clauses. 'They could not grasp' is a free clause, while 'when their bleating clouds the air' is a bound clause. The other linguistic features he deals with are 'arrest' and 'release'. When a predictable syntactic pattern is interrupted by the introduction of another linguistic unit, the structure is 'arrested'. For example the first few lines of the poem:

Lambs that learn to walk in snow
When their bleating clouds the air
Meet a vast unwelcome....

The syntactic pattern here is Noun Phrase 'Lambs that learn to walk in snow' + Verb Phrase 'Meet a vast unwelcome'. 'When their bleating clouds the air' is the arresting adverbial. The completion of the structure which begins with the Noun Phrase is arrested by this adverbial.
The other kind of contextual organisation he discusses is 'release'. If a clause is complete grammatically, and yet the syntactic structure is extended beyond the fulfilment of the grammatical prediction, then 'release' occurs, e.g. in the line 'They could not grasp it if they knew', the conditional clause 'if they knew' is a releasing element as the rest of the sentence is complete grammatically.

He further considers unusual vocabulary juxtapositions; e.g. 'vast unwelcome', 'a wretched width of cold'. He pays special attention to the last lines quoted below which employ what he calls the 'brush off' structure and paraphrases this as 'something I'd prefer not to talk about', 'Nothing you won't know all about in time', 'what doesn't concern you'

What soon will wake and grow
Utterly unlike the snow.

He says that the last line of the poem 'contrives to begin to say something about the appearance of whatever is about to wake and grow, and it also manages to mention the snow'. This he says, gives a vague meaning, and he says that it
is the traditional 'brush off' structure — but very significant in poetry. Sinclair concludes by saying that this paper shows 'how some aspects of the meaning of the poem can be described quite independently of evaluation.' (p.81)

Commenting on this article of Sinclair, Widdowson (1974:221) says: "It is clear that by a use of releasing and arresting elements, a writer can deny the reader a fulfillment of his predictions as derived from his knowledge of the code and replace them with predictions derived from the intra-textual patterns set up in the context of the poem itself."

Using the framework of Transformational Generative Grammar, Levin (1969) develops the notions of equivalence, and coupling. He discusses two main types of equivalences: Type I or positional equivalences. These occur when items are assigned to the same class because they may all occupy the same position in relation to other forms; that is, they are equivalent in respect to the positions they may occupy in utterances' (p.22). The members of this class are infinite and constitute such things as verbs,
nouns, prepositional phrases, subordinate clauses, morphological classes, derivational/inflectional suffixes. For example: prefixes like 'di-', 're-' 'per-' 'ad-', 'in-' etc are positionally equivalent because they may occur in front of the stem 'vert'. Similarly all the items which can occur in the environment "I saw him at-", are said to be positionally equivalent. e.g. 'night', 'seven' or 'our house'.

Type II or natural equivalences. These are semantic or phonological in nature. The first category includes classes like synonyms, antonyms, abstract terms and collocations. Two elements are said to have natural equivalence when they 'overlap in cutting up the general "thought-mass"'. For example, synonyms like 'happy' and 'gay', antonyms like 'happy' and 'sad' or homonyms like 'happy' and 'emotion'.

Natural equivalences of a phonological nature exist between elements which 'overlap in cutting up the phonoetico-physiological continuum'. For example, words which have the same syllable structure would be considered equivalent.

The most important notion which Levin
introduces is that of 'coupling'. Coupling is achieved through the exploitation of equivalences. He cites a line from Pope to illustrate this device:

'A soul as full of worth as void of pride.

The phrases 'full of worth' and 'void of pride' are in equivalent positions, qualifying the noun 'soul'. Phonologically, as they have the same rhythmic structure, they are equivalent. The words 'full' and 'void' are positionally equivalent, as they share the same environment, and are also naturally equivalent semantically as they are antonyms. Coupling is achieved through exploiting equivalences, and this is a special characteristic of poetry. The exploitation of equivalences also gives poetry its peculiar characteristic, of bestowing meaning on words over and above that recorded in the code. Intra-textual patterning is also achieved through this device (coupling).

Another example given to illustrate this
concept of coupling is from Rabbi Ben Ezra

Irks care a crop full bird?
Frets doubt the maw crammed beast?

(Browning)

Here, 'irks' and 'fret' which are semantically equivalent occur in equivalent positions. Similarly 'crop full' and 'maw crammed' occur in equivalent positions and are semantically equivalent too. So, the convergence of positionally equivalent and semantically equivalent elements leads to coupling.

Poetry makes use of and exploits a set of received conventions, derived originally from ordinary language. Unity of structure in poetry arises not from the uniformity of subject matter as in prose, but through coupling.

The last part of Levin's book is devoted to the analysing of some extracts and a Shakespearean sonnet (number 30). The detailed analysis of these poems illustrate the principle of coupling.

In the concluding chapter, Levin talks about the distinctiveness of poetic language and how it is different from prose. The distinction between prose and poetry is in the way in which it
(poetry) uses language. This special way of using language, of encoding the message, makes the poem permanent.

What characterizes this type of analysis is its focus on the structure of the poem. Levin speaks of the way in which the poem encodes the message, but never actually says what the message is. For example, the analysis of the William Carlos William poem, 'Theocritus: Idyll I', is excellent.

If the Muses choose the young ewe
You shall receive
a stall-fed lamb

as your reward,

but if they prefer the lamb you
shall have the ewe for second prize.

The syntagmatic equivalences of the two 'if' clauses is as evident as the parallelism of the structure: CNVN-NVNPN but CNVN - NVNPN. The semantic equivalences of the following are also
choose - prefer
young ewe - lamb
receive - have
as your reward - for second prize

But what do 'young ewe' and 'lamb' stand for? Why is a 'lamb' superior to a 'ewe'? What do 'Muses' refer to here? Or are these things to be understood tacitly? What are the connotations? These are some questions which come up and which are totally ignored— for the analysis is purely descriptive. The Shakespearean sonnet is analysed in the same way.

Thorne in his paper 'Stylistic and Generative Grammars' (Freeman: 1970: 182 -- 196) discusses the apparent ungrammaticality of poetic language, which flouts the T.G theory that a grammar should generate all and only well-formed sentences of a language and that sentences not generated by grammar are not interpretable. This very often causes problems of explication— for this apparently ungrammatical language is understood in poems, but is not easily explainable. If grammar were to be enlarged to accommodate all sentences
which are generated by poets it would become very complex and unmanageable. This is an echo of what Levin (1969) says about the generation of sentences like Milton's

Him who disobeys, me disobeys.

and the possibility of the generation of sentences like 'They who likes, us likes!'. While Levin suggests analysis of poems in terms of equivalence and coupling, Thorne suggests treating poetic language as a sample of a language different from Standard English. Each poem would then be made up of a different 'language' and students of poetics would write up a grammar for each poem separately. Attention then would be diverted from the relations between the language of the poem and Standard English, and instead be focussed on intratextual relations which would form a separate code altogether.

To illustrate his Theory, Thorne takes up an e.e. cumming's poem anyone lived in a pretty how town and shows how the problems presented by the language of this poem disappear when we do not let our notions of word categories intrude and we see the poem as an independent entity. He suggests
the following framework:

**NOUNS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Subclass A</th>
<th>Subclass B</th>
<th>Subclass C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(objects)</td>
<td>(adv. complements)</td>
<td>(subjects &amp; objects only)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>did</td>
<td>tree, leaf, bud,</td>
<td>someone,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>didn't</td>
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<td>everyone</td>
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<tr>
<td>isn't</td>
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Words like 'did', 'didn't', 'isn't', 'same' etc. are classed as members of a subclass of nouns (class A) which enter into the formulae which develop objects. Other words like 'spring', 'summer', 'autumn', 'sun', 'moon', 'stars' etc. could be classified as adverbs. Other words like 'tree', 'leaf', 'bird' 'snow' etc. ('tree by leaf'/'bird by snow') could be the subclass of another class of nouns (Class B): only members of this subclass can occur in rules for generating adverbial complements. The third subclass of nouns Class C, would be words like 'Someone', 'everyones' ('someone married their everyones'); they can be either subjects or objects but they never form compound nominal phrases with adjectives.

Thorne concludes by suggesting that not only poems with obviously deviant language but also
poems in Standard English should be analysed in this manner, and he feels that this will throw new light on the structure of poems.

The same approach of generative grammar is used in another article of his 'Generative Grammar and Stylistic Analysis' (Freeman: 1981:42-52). After a preliminary discussion of the basic principle of generative grammar, viz. the distinction between surface structure and deep structure, he reiterates his theory of ungrammatical or deviant sentences being non-deviant within the context of the poem. Using the criterion of +/-animate, (a possibility touched on in the last paragraph of the earlier article) he illustrates how Donne in his poem A Nocturnal Upon S.Lucies Day makes use of deviant constructions. Donne says '(Mee) who am their Epitaph'. The deep structure of this sentence would be 'I am their Epitaph'. This would not be a well-formed sentence according to Standard English, because 'I' normally collocates with + animate. In the same poem Donne says things like 'I am every dead thing; I.... am the grave of all: I am None', which is again an instance of the breaking of
Selection restriction rules. Selection restriction rules on the same axis of +/- animate are broken when Donne writes 'Yea plants, yea stones detest and love'. Thorne says that such irregularities are regular in this poem and go to underline the existing sense of chaos and breakdown of natural order which 'many literary critics have associated with this poem'. (p.48)

The same +/- animate rule is broken in Theodore Roethke's 'Dolour'. For example, the deep structure of the phrases 'Sadness of pencils', 'dolour of pad and paperweight' and 'misery of manila folders and mucilage' would be: 'the pencils are sad', 'the paperweight is dolorous' and 'the manila folder is miserable'. (The sentences in the poem are nominalizations of these deep structure sentences)

Thorne's conclusion is that poets create a new language because they have messages which can be 'said in Standard English, but in a different way, (and) also things which cannot be said in Standard English at all' (p.50). Yet, a person has to know Standard English to be able to understand these deviations.
Ohmann also has suggested the use of generative grammar, in the study of poetry. In his article, "Literature as Sentences" (1972), he uses the framework of generative grammar and some of its terminology to discuss three passages from literary texts: the last sentence from Conrad's *The Secret Sharer*, one sentence from Joyce's *Araby* and an extract from Dylan Thomas' *A Winter's Tale*. In each case he differentiates between the deep structure and the surface structure of the sentences, the deep structure being the 'content' and the surface structure the 'form' of the passages.

He describes three important functions of this kind of analysis:

i) A study of the deep structure supports what a 'careful reader' of the text feels intuitively about the structure of the text.

ii) Syntactic density is an 'important influence on literary comprehension'.

iii) By using deep structure analysis a critic can understand better the structure or 'build' of a literary work.
He concludes in an interesting way, talking about 'meaning' but strictly within the parameters of linguistic description, though he does mention the reader's mind and emotion too.

.....since critical understanding follows and builds on understanding of sentences, generative grammar should eventually be a reliable assistant in the effort of seeing just how a given literary work sifts through a reader's mind, what cognitive and emotional processes it sets in motion, and what organization of experience it encourages. In so far as critical theory concerns itself with meaning, it cannot afford to bypass the complex and elegant structures that lie at the inception of all verbal meaning. (p.361)

All these scholars keep 'interpretation' of literary texts out of their reckoning. For them, linguistics is purely a tool for description, whichever model they use, Neo-Firthian or Chomskyan. If the organization of form is discussed, how it relates to other intra-textual patterning is not discussed. Or, if the intra-textual patterning is discussed, it is done without any 'evaluation'. In fact, linguistics is applied like a mathematical formula and the results presented. Interpretation is not within the purview of this kind of analysis.
Jakobson's 'Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics' (Sebeok: 1960 : 350-377) approaches the study of poetry through language functions. The fundamental factors influencing a Speech Event are represented by the following figures:

**FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS - SPEECH EVENT**

- **CONTEXT**
- **MESSAGE**
- **ADDRESSER**
- **ADDRESSEE**
- **CONTACT**
- **CODE**

**FUNDAMENTAL FUNCTIONS**

- **REFERENTIAL**
- **POETIC**
- **EMOTIVE**
- **CONATIVE**
- **PHATIC**
- **METALINGUAL**
The **addressee** sends a **message** to the **addressee**; to make the message operative, a **context** is needed; to understand the message, there must be a common **code** between the **addresser** and the **addressee**; the physical channel between the two is the **contact**.

The **emotive** function is oriented towards the **addresser** and aims at an expression of his attitude towards what he is speaking. The **conative** function is oriented towards the **addressee**; the message can be **phatic**, opening and keeping open the channel of communication or **poetic**, focussing on the message for its own sake. The **referential** (denotative, cognitive) function is oriented towards the context; the **metalingual** function, or glossing function, is oriented towards the code.

Jakobson argues that the poetic function subsumes not only poetry but other genres too where some other functions are superimposed upon the poetic function. According to him "Any attempt to reduce the sphere of poetic function to poetry or to confine poetry to poetic function would be a delusive oversimplification" (p.356).
He further says that: "The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" (p.358).

Jakobson then proceeds to say that since poetry too is a kind of language, it can be studied linguistically. He then goes on to discuss different meters, both English and Russian as also the equivalences of phonemes and rhythms, or 'the figure of sound'. He relates this to a poem by Pasternak (which cannot really be understood as one does not know the language) and also fragments of English poetry.

Grammatical equivalences are discussed in relation to Mark Antony's funeral oration in *Julius Caesar*. He illustrates how Shakespeare uses language in the speeches of both Brutus and Antony, and how the skilful use of grammatical categories helps Antony to debunk Brutus' arguments. For example, 'I speak....' 'Brutus spoke....' 'I am to speak' -- all these are reported speech as opposed to reported fact. Also, the word 'ambitious' used by Brutus in "he was ambitious" is first transferred from agent to
action ('Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?'), then by eliciting the abstract noun 'ambition' and converting it into a subject of a concrete passive construction ('Ambition should be made of sterner stuff').

Jakobson concludes by saying "All of us here (at the conference) however, definitely realize that a linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unconversant with linguistic methods are equally flagrant anachronisms" (p.377).

This is a valid point of view, which sees the complementary roles of literary criticism and linguistics.

Though Jakobson's approach is, theoretically speaking, in terms of functions, his analysis of the poetic function is in terms of the structural notion of equivalences.

Recent developments in Discourse Analysis have led scholars to use some of the insights gained from the work done in this field to analyse poems. Notable among these are Ohmann, Levin and Epstein.
In his article 'Speech Acts and the Definition of Literature' (1971) and 'Literature as Act' (1973), Ohmann proposes a discursal approach literature including poetry. In the first article, which is purely theoretical, Ohmann refers to Jakobson and the framework proposed by him and also Austin's Speech Act Theory, as a possible base for stylistic analysis. No one genre of literature is referred to in particular in this article. In the second article, he discusses drama at some length and some extracts from poetry. He discusses poems by Milton, Yeats and Larry Rottmann. To all these, he applies Austin's rules about felicity conditions for the successful performance of a Speech Act, and remarks:

....He (the reader) receives a series of illocutions divorced from their actual originator... he has nothing to guide his understanding except the purported speech acts of one or more personae. From these he makes inferences of many kinds...... the reader makes these judgements in large part by putting to work his tacit knowledge of the conditions for happily performing illocutionary acts. (p.98)

He also discusses the notion of 'mimesis' in relationship to the illocutions in literary texts:
As we participate in speech, we use what we know of the speaker and of the circumstances to determine the felicity of the illocutions. In mimesis, we assume felicity and infer a speaker and a fictional world from the circumstances that felicity requires. Needless to add, we may drop the hypothesis of felicity at any time, given the conflicts in the work or between the work and what we know of the world. (p.100)

He concludes saying that many felicity conditions are flouted in poetry, a point which is taken up by Levin.

Levin in his article 'Concerning what kind of speech act a poem is' (1976), bases his discussion on Austin's categories of constatives and performatives, felicity conditions governing the success of a Speech Act and the illocutionary force of an utterance which may be expressed implicitly or explicitly. He goes on to discuss these in connection with Ohmann's approach to linguistic analysis based on Austin's Speech Act theory. Ohmann says that poetry violates all felicity conditions needed for the successful performance of a Speech Act. Levin's contention is that an implicit higher sentence, "I imagine myself and invite you to conceive a world in which....." would indicate the successful
performance of a speech act in lyric poetry. Though all poems do not lend themselves to an opening higher sentence like the one above, especially in poems beginning with questions and requests, suitable adjustments in accordance with the Speech Act Theory can be made.

Levin also goes on to say that, not only should the illocutionary force of poems be studied, as suggested by Ohmann, but the locutionary force too. This is because the locution of poetry is something different or special. The study of both these will make clear the perlocutionary power of poems - how they persuade or instruct.

He analyses Blake's 'Holy Thursday' and says that because of the illocutionary force of 'imagine' and 'invite' the poet is free to conceive of and present a world which is a total reality to him. The metaphors in the poem are paraphrases to describe a world which cannot otherwise be made available to the reader.

Epstein (1978) uses the conditions necessary to make a question a 'true' question, an assertion an assertion and a command an effective command to
analyse Yeats's poem *Fergus*. For a question to be a true question, Searle has laid down four conditions:

1. The questioner does not have the information necessary to complete a proposition truly.
2. It is not obvious to the questioner and his audience that the audience will provide the information without being asked.
3. The questioner wants information
4. The question counts as an attempt to elicit information.

The complex question 'Who will go drive Fergus now?/And pierce the deep woods woven shade,/And dance upon the level shore?' - fails as a true question because of the absence of an immediately present audience and seems to violate conditions 2 and 4.

Epstein takes up the question of commands and says that a true command does not possess 'the self-informative quality of the act of attribution'. Both questions and commands point to the future, whereas attributives are essentially in the past, in which the evidence for
the attribution has been gathered. So if attributives (non-restrictive adjective) are used in questions or commands, they 'drag down' the future force of commands and questions.

He concludes that the introduction of attributives in questions and commands makes the locutions lose all their illocutionary force, yet gives them a force which is specifically literary. The vagueness and mild absent-mindedness in this poem is because of this specific use of language - which is an aspect of its 'style'.

Epstein's analysis points towards interpretation, for he starts with the effect of the poem and then tries to find out why or rather how it conveys what it conveys.

Thus Ohmann, Levin and Epstein have discussed literature from a discoursal point of view. Discourse Analysis focuses on interaction between persons and as such has to account for many possibilities, for the response to an initiating move can be almost as many as there are circumstances, personalities and settings. This had led to the tacit acceptance of implied meanings, which means that one starts working
backwards from perlocution through illocution to locution. On the other hand, when syntax is the basis of linguistic stylistic analysis, the language and its syntactic rules are taken as a base and from them is built the framework of analysis. The possible effects of the use of language are discussed later, unlike Discourse Analysis where one starts with: What does he/she mean exactly when he/she says this? and then how does he/she convey this distinct meaning?

Till now, the discussion has been about schools of thought which have seen linguistics mainly as a tool for description of literary texts. The description is arrived at using different frameworks. And most descriptions stop short of going into aspects of meaning other than the denotative - in other words, interpretation is not attempted. But there have been other linguists who have looked at literature from a slightly different perspective. Linguistics (any model or framework) is seen by these as a tool which will aid interpretation. Linguistics, further, is seen as a necessary tool, for a description must be, in Halliday's words, 'proper'
for any effective interpretation to be done. The study of the work of these persons can throw light on how stylistic analysis can be used effectively to study literature and understand it.

Leech (1969) says that "insight or understanding is a much more important goal in any human endeavour, than being objective." (p.6) Linguistics, according to him, is a tool to achieve this understanding in the case of poetry. Clarity in description is important if a work has to be effective. To this end, Leech, though he uses well-established literary terms, re-defines them in the context of linguistic analysis, thus avoiding ambiguity and fuzziness.

He begins his investigations into poetry by discussing the 'differences' between the language of poetry and ordinary language. 'Difference' does not mean differences of dialect or register and the use of archaisms, for most poets use standard language to compose their poems, the notable exception being Burns, who used dialect. Difference or deviance in poetic language comes about by using the language creatively, i.e. (i) making original use of the established
possibilities of the language or (ii) by going beyond it and creating new communicative possibilities. This in turn leads to the notion of poetic licence and deviance in language. Deviance can be in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REALIZATION</th>
<th>FORM</th>
<th>SEMANTICS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonology</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>(Denotative or Cognitive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphology</td>
<td>Lexicon</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next part of Leech's book deals with foregrounding, an understanding of which, he feels, is essential to the appreciation of poetry. Different types of foregrounding are discussed: phonological, semantic and situational. Ambiguity and puns are also dealt with. In each of these areas, conventional terms, when they occur, are explained and their place in the scheme of analysis fixed; e.g. while discussing sound patterns onomatopoeia and chiming are explained; in the chapter on figures of speech, simile, metaphor and synecdoche are discussed. Examples from different poets are given.

The point of view from which poetry,
linguistics and literary criticism are viewed, is that of the reader. Leech calls poetry a 'hypersemantcized' medium where the reader projects significance 'wherever his critical judgement lets him do so'. Interpretation is the result of what the reader puts into the poem and also gets out of it. Leech uses linguistics to explain one level of poetry and point the reader towards the meaning of it; interpretation is left to the reader so that 'the mystery and miraculousness' are not totally lost. Stylistics is the meeting ground of the linguist and the literary critic - and the Reader is both.

In his article "This Bread I Break" - Language and Interpretation' (1970 : 119-128) Leech further clarifies his view of linguistics and literary studies. He says that "Linguistic description and critical interpretation are, to my mind, distinct and complementary ways to 'explaining' a literary text. By reference to Dylan Thomas's poem quoted above, I shall attempt to show how they are related, and indirectly, what the former can contribute to the latter" (p.120).

He discusses three categories of linguistic
description and relates them to literary expression as found in Dylan Thomas's poem. The categories are:

1. Cohesion, which is "the way in which independent choices in different points of a text correspond with or presuppose one another." (p.120) In the poem there is lexical cohesion in the repetition of the word 'oat'. There is further cohesion between word chains like 'wine', 'tree', 'fruit' and 'grape'.

2. Foregrounding, "or motivated deviation from linguistic or other socially accepted norms, ..........a basic principle of aesthetic communication" (p.121); e.g. 'the oat was merry' N(-animate) + 'be' + N(+animate) is foregrounded against the norms of language: N (+animate) + 'be' + N (+animate). There is foregrounding at the phonological level too: the phonemic congruity of words like 'wind', 'wine', 'vine' and 'veins'. The other sort of foregrounding discussed is when the writer "temporarily renounces his permitted freedom
of choice, introducing uniformity where there would normally be diversity" (p.122). For example, the structure 'Man in the day' is parallel to the structure 'wind at night'.

3. Cohesion of foregrounding "........ (where) the foregrounded features identified in isolation are related to one another and to the text in its entirety" (p.123). For example, the deviant expression 'broke the sun' is related to deviance of a similar kind in the line 'broke the grape's joy' and 'pulled the wind down'. Patterns in texts are thus established by the cohesion of the foregrounded expressions.

Another person who has discussed the relationship between linguistics and stylistics with great insight is Widdowson (1975). Along with some theoretical issues, he has discussed in detail 'applied linguistics' and its place in the general scheme of teaching literature.

Widdowson discusses the frameworks of stylistic analysis as proposed by Halliday and Thorne and shows how one framework cannot be applied to all poetry for purposes of analysis.
He also points out that in the frameworks of Halliday and Thorne literary texts are not treated as autonomous texts but as exemplifications of "the system of English as represented in his grammar, or if they do not exemplify it in what respects they deviate from the rules" (p.27).

Further, he asks a pertinent question: How far do these types of analyses help one to understand the poem? His suggestion is that poetry be viewed not as 'text' but as 'discourse'. "...grammar, whether it describes the language system as a whole or the language used in a particular piece of literature, can of its nature only describe 'text'. What we want is a way of describing 'discourse', the manner in which linguistic elements function to communicative effect" (p.33).

The understanding of this limitation of descriptive linguistics is very important to the theory put forward by Widdowson, for no grammar can describe discourse, 'the manner in which linguistic elements function to communicative effect'.

In the chapter on the nature of literary
discourse, Widdowson talks about the importance of the relationship between 'the signification and the value' of different linguistic items in the context of a literary text. He further discusses how this can help interpretation: "...how the patterning of language in a literary work sets up a system of regularities and how a recognition of these regularities contributes to interpretation" (p.46).

He further clarifies what exactly literary communication is. In normal contexts, there are a set of tacitly understood conventions, and these operate when we communicate. But Literature, especially a poem, is different. Here, what the poet wishes to communicate is "..... an individual awareness of reality other than that which is given social sanction but nevertheless related to it... Of its nature unstable, incomplete, kaleidoscopic, it cannot be described but only expressed" (p.70).

Therefore is evolved the special language of the poet, who creates a linguistic reality within the text, a reality which echoes the transient, elusive nature of an experience. In the teaching
of literature it becomes necessary "to develop in the student an awareness of the what/how of literary communication and this can only be done by relating it to, without translating it into, normal uses of language" (p.70).

Next, Widdowson discusses the teaching of literature in a way which can teach students to appreciate literature. Some exercises in stylistic analysis are given to exemplify the theoretical aspects discussed in the earlier sections.

Both Leech and Widdowson acknowledge the fact that meaning is central to the reading of any piece of literature (here, meaning in more than just the denotative sense). Both use linguistic tools. Widdowson in fact, makes use of the whole range of linguistic methodology available for the analysis of literature. For example, he uses +/- animate features while discussing Ted Hughes' Wind; syntactic equivalences while discussing an extract from Pope's poem and an excerpt from Tintern Abbey; and single lines/extracts from various poets while discussing the basic principles of communication, viz.
relationship/position of addresser and addressee.

Both have in mind students, students of literature (as in the case of Leech) and also language learners (as in the case of Widdowson). And as Randolph Quirk says in the foreword to A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry "His book will therefore be of immense value not only to the students of literature..... but also to more senior readers: the critics who wish to see something of what linguistics is coming to offer their discipline....." (p.vi).

There are a few other scholars who have also discussed literature with deep insight but who are not in the category of people who see stylistic analysis as purely descriptive linguistics or in the category of people who are primarily interested in interpretation of literary texts. One of them is Nowottny (1962) who sees the language of poetry as something special and an exciting linguistic experience.

I have talked of poems simply from the point of view of the linguistic excitement they afford. But I hope it has become clear that this linguistic excitement is an excitement about encounters between relationships, and that these can be set up among any of the elements present in poems (p.221).
In her book she discusses how this excitement is generated. She bases all her arguments on "what is 'there' in the poem - 'there' in the sense that it can be described and referred to as unarguably given by the words" (p.1). Her method is like the French 'explication de texte' with the aim of understanding the complex relationship of different elements in a poem. This, she feels, will help "not only in determining lesser poetic effects but also in directing the larger mental and imaginative processes activated by the poem" (p.2).

Her discussion ranges from Diction and Metaphor to Ambiguity and Symbolism and Obscurity. She pays special attention to metaphor as she feels this is central to much of poetry, though her position is very far from 'veneration of metaphor'. Illustrated with apt examples and argued persuasively, this book looks at poetry without the constraints of 'pure' linguistic analysis.

The different schools of thought with regard to poetry and poetic analysis can be summarized in the table given below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Towards Discourse</th>
<th>Discourse Analysis/ Speech Act Theory</th>
<th>Linguistics/ Discourses Analysis. Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neo-Firthian</td>
<td>T.G.</td>
<td>Jakobson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halliday (1964)</td>
<td>Levin</td>
<td>Ohmann</td>
<td>G N Leech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinclair</td>
<td>Thorne</td>
<td>Levin</td>
<td>Widdowson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ohmann</td>
<td>Epstein</td>
<td>Halliday (1983)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fact that Halliday figures in two columns may seem odd, but it is really something legitimate. Over the years, Halliday seems to have shifted from his 1964 stand of regarding the function of linguistics as being purely descriptive.

He (1987) says

It seems to me that studies such as these have fashioned what starts out as a reasonably coherent account of language as system and process into a powerful tool for the interpretation of texts in their cultural or macro-semiotic environment. (p.viii)

......This same dimension of REALIZATION enables us to enter the context of situation, the contextual configuration in terms of field, tenor and mode; and this in turn leads in to the context of culture, the socio-historical and ideological environment engendering, and engendered by, the text. (p.ix)

In his foreword to another book (Cumings and Simmons : 1983) he says :

Does this mean that the analysis of a text become a purely mechanical operation, or at least purely electronic - one that is fully programmable?

I think not.....

The analysis of a text 'as a piece of literature' - stylistic analysis - always involves acts of interpretation. (p.ix)
So, from a 'purist' standpoint, Halliday has moved towards the view that literature is meaning, and that literature can be interpreted using linguistics as a tool.

3.3 Stylistics and the Teaching of Poetry

Poetry is perhaps one genre of literature, about which there is ample material. This amplitude is found even in the field of teaching poetry. It would be convenient to discuss these materials under different heads for the sake of clarity. The heads under which these will be discussed are of necessity, broad categories, for a detailed criticism of all the material would take much time and space — and such discussion may not really be necessary for purposes of this thesis.

The following diagram represents the broad categories into which different approaches to stylistics and the teaching of poetry can be classified.
Stylistics and the Teaching of Poetry

Traditional Approaches: Much of the discussion of poetry involves the use of traditional categories in the traditional sense. Books like Lemon's Approaches to Literature (1969) discuss poems like Keat's Ode to the Grecian Urn with regard to the historical background of the poem, Keat's letter on the poem, and Metaphor, Meaning and Poetry. The Figurative Language and the Structure of the Ode are also discussed. Similarly, the treatment of Pope's Rape of the Lock also deals with these categories; in addition to this the theme of the poem and the use of the heroic couplet are also discussed. Most examination guides too deal with such categories, perhaps because questions are still set in the traditional pattern.

(ii) Stylistics for the study of poetry (literature): This can be discussed under theory and practice. The theoretical frameworks for the
use of stylistics to teach literature in general and specific genres in particular have been discussed by linguists like Widdowson and Brumfit.

Widdowson (1975) explains his theory of stylistics and its place in the general scheme of things.

The following figure represents his view of the place of stylistics.

```
DISCIPLINES: LINGUISTICS LITERARY CRITICISM

STYLISTICS

SUBJECTS: (ENGLISH) LANGUAGE (ENGLISH) LITERATURE
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He sees stylistics as a means of relating the subjects of language and literature to the disciplines of linguistics and literary criticism. He advocates the teaching of literature as discourse: i.e., linguistic features be discussed in relation to the effects they create, and not as an end in themselves.

To illustrate how these principles perform in actual operation he takes up a passage from
Somerset Maughan and Robert Frost's poem *Dust of Snow*. The discussion of this poem sets out a pedagogic framework for the approach to poetry through stylistics. There are questions asked about the poem, which show how language can be exploited to get at the meaning, for example, using a dictionary to find out details of meanings of some words like 'crow', 'dust', 'hemlock', 'tree'.

Roethke's poem *Boy on Top of Greenhouse* is also discussed to illustrate further possible ways of exploiting the text through stylistics. For example, writing out the lines of the poem as complete sentences, and then comparing them to those in the poem to find out if there are differences.

Widdowson takes up Frost's *Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening* to discuss stylistics and literary appreciation. Pronominal forms and lexical items are discussed in terms of stylistic analysis, to show how: "to develop in learners an awareness of how literature functions as discourse and so to give them some access to the means of interpretation" (p 116).

Brumfit (1985), presents a trilogy of
articles about the development of a methodology for the teaching of literature. He believes that literature is taught so that people can read and enjoy "great works of international literature". All reading, he feels, need not be equally valuable, and that what is important educationally is "the attested quality of the experience of reading certain works" (p.103).

Literature teaching for Brumfit means the development of literary competence, the ability to read a literary text and perceive complex relationships. This, he says, is something more than the extension of ordinary reading skills. What the learners need is accessibility to codes, not just linguistic but also interplay of event with event, exploitation of value systems etc.

To develop this accessibility, a special type of pedagogical framework is needed:

![Diagram of Pedagogical Model for Literature Teaching]

**A Simple Pedagogical Model for Literature Teaching**

1. **Principle**
2. **Literary Behaviour**
   - Literary texts
   - Other texts
3. **Pedagogy**
   - Experience outside Literature
   - Texts - Text Study
   - Mimetic Study

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The approach to literary texts, if it has to be meaningful presupposes a few things: access in terms of linguistic, cultural and other expectations. Brumfit represents the three phases of what he thinks a literature syllabus should be, so that students can read, enjoy and "be willing to perceive a literary text as important in relation to their own understanding of themselves and the world" (p.124).

Three Phases
1. Minimum access (language etc.) ?? (a)
2. Literary response ?? (b)
3. Accounting for Literary response
   Explaining
   (a) Is Literature to language possible?
   (b) Is explaining to Literature possible? (p.125)

He concludes by saying:

Only when we have responded to literature should we be asked to understand literary theory, whether structuralist, deconstructionist or traditional. However many scholars implicitly reject this view, and key questions for us to decide on are the extent to which literary response can move back into language development or
explanation of literary response back into literary response itself.....People committed to stylistics as a major device in literature teaching may be using it for either of these transitions. Whether or not they are justified will only be revealed by experience and further discussion (p.125).

As can be seen, stylistics and literature teaching are discussed in general theoretical terms here. The principles would, of course be applicable to the teaching of poetry too.

Brumfit and Carter (1986) deal quite exhaustively with the interaction between language, literature and education. The first section of their book Literature and Language Teaching has articles on the relationship between language and literature, including Carter's 'Linguistic Models, Language and Literariness: Study Strategies for the teaching of literature to foreign students' which deals with procedures like prediction and close procedures as strategies to teach literature.

In the same section, there is a brief article by Widdowson on the teaching of a lyric poem. He says that a lyric poem is essentially paradigmatic - it is an in-depth exploration from a fixed point. He takes up Wordsworth's She dwelt among
Untrodden ways and explores ways of teaching it through exploitation of pronominals and lexical items (using the dictionary), the final aim being to realize "associative significance beyond paraphrasable content" (p.139).

Other books are practice books, or books which intend giving practice in stylistic analysis, so that students/readers understand literature, and respond to it. Cummings and Simmons (1983) deal with stylistic features at the levels of phonology, graphology, grammar and lexis, and illustrates them with excerpts from/pieces of literature.

Poems are used extensively to illustrate certain stylistic features like sound features, alliteration and onomatopoeia. Hopkins, Arnold, Byron and Frost are discussed with regard to one or the other feature of poetry. Poems are discussed under graphology too. While discussing grammar and its different aspects like depth, poems like Dylan Thomas's Refusal to Mourn the Death by Fire, of a Child in London are discussed; excerpts from Milton are used for clause analysis. An extract from Pope's Essay on Criticism is taken.
for discussion on tonic syllables, emphasis and exploitation of all the stylistic features of the heroic couplet.

Emily Dickenson's There's a certain Slant of Light and Dylan Thomas's Fern Hill are discussed with regard to lexis. Tulips by Sylvia Plath is considered in terms of context, as also Naming of Parts by Henry Reed.

Two resource books for the teaching of literature are Carter & Long (1987) and Collie and Slater (1987). Both try an integrated approach, that is, they use language and language teaching techniques to get at the meaning of the literary text. Collie and Slater's book is especially rich with ideas of classroom techniques. In chapter 10, what poems to teach and how to teach them are discussed. After this, some poems or rather the teaching of some poems is discussed in detail. Some worksheets too are given. The ideas they present are to be used to elicit authentic student response to the text, which is an admirable aim.

Carter & Long's The Web of Words (1987) attempts to outline a methodology which will integrate both language and literature. The
authors want to "help learners of English to understand and appreciate English literary texts". Towards this end, they focus on language "... to appreciate the style, effects and techniques of the writing" (p.1). They feel that this integrated approach is necessary not only for mother-tongue English studies, but for the study of literature as well, as most courses do not focus at all, or focus weakly on the language of literary texts. Poems are discussed in different chapters in this book.

(iii) Study of Literature for Language Learning:

There is a considerable body of literature on using literary texts to teach language. Since the language of literature is rich in variety, and since an author shows how language can be exploited to create meaning, language teachers have naturally used literature as a source of language samples.

Some practice books, like Lott's A Course in English Language and Literature (1986) set out to do two things: "They offer experience in the close reading of many different kinds of literature, and also structured practice in
The aim of this book is to improve language skills through the reading of literature, a stand very different from that which studies literature for its own sake.

*Literature: a close study* (1983) also uses literary texts to show what can be done with language.

The Central Institute of English, Hyderabad, had also published a book *Language Through Literature* (1986). Here again literary texts are used to teach language skills.

It would be relevant to mention here, that some textbooks for Central Board of Secondary Examination (CBSE) and Indian Council of Secondary Education (ICSE) streams make use of literary texts of various kinds to teach reading skills, which in turn ought to lead to appreciation of literary texts and interpretative ability, as the foreword to one of the class XII books makes clear. "It (this book) is primarily designed for developing in students a taste for extensive reading and also for developing in them the sophisticated abilities of imaginative and
interpretative comprehension." (NCERT : 1986: -)

It is evident from the above that more and more material is being produced for the teaching/learning of language/literature. The use of literature for teaching/learning language is nothing new - in fact, fifty years ago, people could not conceive teaching language without a literary text as the base. But today, with the developments in language studies, other kinds of materials too are available. It is significant that the use of literature for the teaching of language is a conscious choice now. The teachers of language no longer cavil at the inclusion of literature in this curriculum, as they see it as a rich source of language experience for the student.

The teaching of literature itself has undergone a change. With the advances in linguistics and the psychology of learning, a first hand experience of the text is seen as a necessity. It no longer suffices if a teacher lectures on a literary work - a teacher should device means of making the text accessible to the students. This aspect has been explored in books
like Corcoran & Evans (1987).

The theoretical aspects of the teaching of literature have been explored to some extent by scholars like Widdowson, and more and more authors are discussing and putting forward their views about this aspect of the teaching of literature. An added dimension which has come in is the question of teaching literature to learners for whom English is a second language. Tentative beginnings have been made, and it is hoped that soon there will be enough literature on this aspect.

In the teaching of literature, the ready acceptance of stylistic analysis as a tool for analysis and description and interpretation is a positive trend, opening up new possibilities in approaching texts.

A general discussion about literature might seem out of place in this chapter on poetry, but when one remembers the predominant position of poetry in literature, one sees the relevance of the points mentioned above. For whatever the advances in linguistics or stylistics, the long tradition of equating poetry to literature still
holds good, and more often than not one finds poetry as the basis of theoretical discussion or practical work in literary studies.

3.4 The Need for a Methodology

With so many books available in the market, the need for further research in the teaching of poetry might be wondered at. The explanation is simple: none of the books mentioned have second language learners of literature in mind. Methods for the teaching of poetry which have been proposed have in mind either native speakers or speakers of English with near native speaker competence (like the students of exclusive educational institutions). Many things are taken for granted, especially things to do with language competence. For example, Cummings and Simon's book which is, incidentally, an excellent one, has questions like the following:

"What is the difference in the sound of /t/ in 'top' and the sound of /t/ in 'trade'? In what sense are these different sounds? In what sense are these the same sound? What could you deduce about the effect of surrounding sounds on /t/? Do
you think there is a minimal pair in the inventory of English words which distinguishes any of the different ways of articulating /t/ in 'top', 'stop' and 'trade'?" (p.24-25).

To answer the above question, the students would have to have either a considerable knowledge of Phonetics and especially phonetic and phonemic analysis or they should be so good in the language that they are able to pick out the differences in the production/reception of these sounds. One wonders how valid or effective this sort of questioning would be when dealing with students of General English in Indian colleges, or for that matter, even students of literature.

There are other tasks in this book dealing with details of lexis and context, where a considerable amount of knowledge of society and culture is taken for granted as also the command of language. **Literature: a close study**, another excellent book, takes for granted the student's awareness of some aspects of literary devices and conventions. The book is, moreover, a sort of self-study book for students who have already been trained to some
extent in the study of literature. Hence, questions like the following are asked:
Find two examples of assonance in lines 3-5. What is being emphasised by this assonance? (p.82)
(Would our students know what assonance is? Would they be able to identify it?)
Briefly trace the expansion-contraction structure in the poem. (p.83) (How would a group of science/commerce students respond to such a question?)
The point which is being made is that books which set out to teach literature using linguistics as a tool cater to a set of students who are either native speakers or are doing a special course in literature.
The other books available frankly say that they are using literature to teach language. Literary texts, for them, exemplify language patterns, and exemplify them well. Therefore, since the focus is on language, they are not concerned with 'response to literature' which is the core of all literature teaching.
The pedagogic aspect of teaching literature to second language learners has been debated to
some extent by people like Brumfit, who has discussed the "attested quality of the experience of reading certain works" (1985:103) and the enrichment of the students in terms of experience, which can be offered. But again, though wider issues of syllabuses and texts have been discussed, no concrete methodology has been proposed. There is a very valid reason for this — very few 'specialists' have tried out the teaching of literature on a large scale in different countries. The insights which they have abstracted have been mainly through limited experience, however rich that experience might have been. So there seems to be a natural diffidence in advocating a universal methodology.

Different techniques have been tried out by different people in different environments, and these have been well documented, but again, this is hardly a methodology.

Regarding theoretical discussions, as Widdowson (1975) says, no one way of analysis, can really work for all poetry. So, like the poems which are exclusive, different ways of analysis have to be found exclusively for each poem. Also,
most of the analyses of poems have been done to exemplify the working of a certain approach; the poems have not been considered in their own right, as autonomous texts.

These then are the reasons for the search for a new methodology.

3.5 Teaching Poetry

Persons who have analysed poetry to exemplify a certain system of linguistic analysis, have begun their analysis with the structural aspects of the poem. Sinclair, Thorne and Halliday are a few who have shown how this can be done successfully.

Yet, when it comes to the question of actually teaching literature using linguistics, the focus always seems to be on lexis. In a recent workshop on Teaching Language Through Literature, (Feb. 6 – 8, 1990) held at the Regional Institute of English, Jane Spiro of Nottingham University, the resource person, presented several types of tasks exemplifying the language-literature interface. Most of the tasks were based on lexis. The weightage in favour of
lexis is found in other books too, like Carter and Long (1987). In fact, the title of this book The Web of Words is suggestive. The reason for this could be, that as the audience the authors have in mind are native speakers or students of literature, they take for granted their command of the structure or syntax of the English Language. This, unfortunately, is not the case in a second language situation, where more often than not, it is the syntax of the language which poses problems. Language teachers recognise this, which is why most language classes focus on syntax rather than lexis.

From the theoretical point of view too, the syntax of a poem is very significant. In Nowottny's words "Of all the elements necessary to make an utterance meaningful, the most powerful is syntax, controlling as it does the order in which impressions are received and conveying the mental relations 'behind' sequences of words." (1962:9)

The validity of this statement cannot be questioned, especially in a second language context. Very often, critics and analysts are preoccupied with lexis: the collocations,
connotations etc. But the audience they usually have in mind as mentioned earlier is a native-speaker audience which has an intuitive understanding of the structure of the language. In a second language situation, the biggest stumbling block to comprehension is more often than not, syntax. If the basic structure of the language is not understood, how far will discussions about connotations and collocations help in the comprehension of literature? And especially a poem, where syntax is used to give different 'shapes' to poems?

Keeping these points in mind it was decided to use syntax as the base for the stylistic analyses and the teaching of poetry, in this project.

The questions which confront a teacher trying to evolve a methodology for teaching poetry using stylistic/linguistic frameworks are:

1. Should a model of stylistic/linguistic analysis be adopted in its totality to teach poetry in the class, and if so, which model should it be?

2. If the available models cannot be adopted
as they are, can they be adapted without loss to the essential principles underlying the framework of analysis?

3. At which level of linguistic competence can these be used?

Since the teaching of poetry is to be in the classroom with all its constraints, none of the sophisticated models of analysis, like those proposed by Levin, Thorne, Halliday or Sinclair can be adopted in toto.

Adaptation is possible, as these models proposed by experts are based on principles which address themselves to fundamentals and are thus valid in all situations. The important features can be adapted for the teaching of poetry in the classroom.

The level of linguistic competence varies from class to class, and from situation to situation. Therefore, no rigid level of linguistic competence can be defined. Each situation/class will have to be judged on individual merits and the features of stylistic analysis for application worked out.

The notions which can be applied with
modifications in an undergraduate class are:

i) The notions of equivalences and coupling proposed by Levin. This can be done because poetry abounds in equivalences: phonetic, syntactic and semantic. The identification and comprehension of equivalences should lead naturally to the coupling and the specific effects it has in a particular work.

ii) The deep-level surface-level approach used by Thorne. The deep level structure contains the proposition put forward in the poem. This could be used as a starting point for the discussion of the meaning of the poem; the surface-level realization could lead to the discussion of style and its effect. The terms deep-structure and surface-structure need not, of course, be used.

iii) The discoursal aspects of the poem, viz. the 'higher sentence' notion with regard to lyric poetry proposed by Levin, and Epstein's use of categories like true questions and commands could be exploited for studying poems.

iv) Foregrounding in poetry and the use of
poetic devices which Leech proposes as tools to study a poem can be used to comprehend and interpret poems.

The categories mentioned above cannot be used uniformly to analyse and teach all poems. Depending on the poem and the linguistic level of the students, those factors which would work would have to be chosen. Since the aim is the understanding and interpretation of the poem, the approach would be eclectic.

3.6 Proposed Methodology

The following methodology was proposed for the teaching of poetry

Before the Reading

A. If necessary, linguistic categories required for the description of the stylistic features of the poem would be discussed. This would be necessary to focus the attention of the students on the language of the poem. If there was a gap in the students' knowledge of the linguistic item, this could be filled.

B. The title of the poem could be given and the
expectations of the students about the content of the poem exploited to motivate the students to read the poem with interest and find out if the theme and treatment of the subject matter indicated in the poem were what they expected.

During the Reading

A. The reading of the poem could be done silently by the students. The question of reading the poem aloud would not arise, as reading aloud needs special training. Or, a teacher would have to be naturally gifted to do this well. Since the capacity to read a poem aloud in such a way as to make the meaning clear cannot be ensured, it would be better to allow the students to read on their own. Reading poetry would be approached as a private activity.

B. Stylistic Analysis: The relevant linguistic categories would be used to analyse the poem. The word 'relevant' is used because each poem has a syntactic structure which is unique. Therefore each poem would have to be approached individually. At this stage of the proceedings, the teacher would act as facilitator and see that
the direction in which the students are working is correct. But it would be essential to allow the students to work with the poem on their own, for this would make them familiar with it and also help them, through many readings, understand the structure of the poem.

C. Interpretation: Once the pattern is established the students could be asked to interpret the results of the analysis. This part of the lesson would require a lot of discussion, for there would be exchange of views and new insights could come up. At this stage, the linguistic competence of the students would be tapped. For example if they saw a special use of the articles in the course of their analysis, they would have to say, using their insights, what it means. Their response would depend a lot on their linguistic competence.

After the Reading

A. Personal Response: Based on the above, the students would be required to respond to the poem as individuals. This would be a totally unmonitored session. All and any answers would be
accepted, and if necessary, discussed.

B. Written Work: Keeping the examinations in view, students would be asked to write answers to the type of questions asked in the examinations. Their answers, if the above methodology works, should be fluent, and individual—not a set, guide-book sort of answer.

3.7 Procedural Details

3.7.1 The Text

Two poems were chosen to be tried out. One, *Mirror* by Sylvia Plath, and two, an adaptation of a poem in Hebrew by Denis Abse.

(i) *Mirror* is a fairly straightforward poem: the theme is the aging of a woman, something which can be understood by all students, exposed as they are to advertisements and articles in the popular media etc. about the process of aging and how to arrest it—especially in a woman.

(ii) The poem by Abse is very simple structurally. It has a folklorish rhythm and a repetitive structural pattern. There are no lexical items which would be difficult to understand. The theme is contemporary and
students should be able to relate to it easily.

3.7.2 The Class

i) II B.A. students of the Smt. V.H.D. Institute of Home Science did Mirror. Most of the students of this class had done their schooling in English. Being girls, they would be quite aware of the issue of aging, and could be expected to be aware of the pressures, societal and otherwise, on the aging individual.

ii) Students of II B.A., 'A' and 'B' sections of Government Arts College, Bangalore, were chosen to do the poem by Abse. The students (all boys) school in the regional language and study English as a subject. Many come from a rural background. These students, in direct contrast to the students of the Home Science Institute, have little or no exposure to English. These students can be expected to find even simple instructions in English difficult to follow. Their spoken English is generally poor, and written English almost non-existent. But one factor which generally weighs in their favour is the motivation to learn. Despite the importance
given to regional languages, English still has a prestigious position, and knowing good English is felt to be an advantage. So students in these classes are generally determined to learn as much of English as possible.

3.8 Text I

Given below is the text of the poem Mirror and the teacher's analysis.

MIRROR

SYLVIA PLATH

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions. Whatever I see I swallow immediately Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike. I am not cruel, only truthful - The eye of a little god, four-cornered. Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall. It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers. Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me, Searching my reaches for what she really is. Then she turns to those liars, the candle or the moon. I see her back and reflect it faithfully. She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.

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I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises towards her day after day, like a terrible fish.

3.8.1 Analysis of the Text

The sentences in the poem have basically two grammatical subjects: 'I' and 'She', the 'I' is the mirror and the 'She' the aging woman. There are other sentences which begin with the introductory 'it'. There are in this poem 11 clauses with 'I', e.g. 'I am silver', 'I have no preconceptions', 'I am not cruel', 'I am a lake', 'I ... reflect it faithfully' etc. In contrast, there are just 6 clauses with 'she' as a subject - 'She bends over me', 'She comes and goes', '......She has drowned a young girl' etc. The 'it' clauses relate to the wall which is opposite the mirror.

This count is interesting, for though the poem is basically about the woman, the focalizer is the mirror. The 'I' sentences are all descriptions of the nature of the mirror rather than of its physical aspects. Except for the
first part of the first line ('I am silver and exact') the rest of the sentences deal with the 'character' of the mirror, a character it has been endowed with by the poet.

Most of the sentences have the structure N + V + N/Adj complement except the last two lines, where adverbials are used to introduce the main clause: 'In me she has drowned ......., and in me an old woman......'. These sentences culminate in the final simile 'like a fish' which again points back to the first part of this stanza 'Now I am a Lake'. It would also be useful to consider the difference which comes about with the use of the cleft construction in the line:

Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness

vs

Each morning her face replaces the darkness.

Most of the verbs used to describe the mirror are stative, while dynamic verbs are used in clauses with the woman as the subject. This again underlines the passivity of the mirror as opposed to the active movements of the woman. This has a
bearing on the aging of the woman, which is a biological process. The mirror doesn't age - it just 'is'.

It would be interesting to see if any of the students would connect this mirror with the mirror in 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs', which makes use of the mirror as almost a character in the story. There is an implied simile in the first stanza 'The eye of a little god, four cornered' (like the eye of a little god/like a four-cornered eye of a little god).

3.8.2. The Lesson

II yr. B.A., Smt. V.H.D. Institute of Home Science, Bangalore. One period of 1 hour. (This lesson could not be taped as there were no facilities to do so in the room where the class was held)

Before the Reading

As the language of the poem is quite simple and as the teacher found out on meeting the class that most of them were fluent in English, no pre-reading tasks with linguistic items was done. It
was felt that with their linguistic competence, they could work through the poem without any problems. This guess of the teacher proved correct.

Instead of discussing linguistic categories, the teacher asked the class what they thought a poem titled *Mirror* would deal with. The guesses were obvious ones - description of a mirror, autobiography of a mirror, function of a mirror, vanity etc. All the students somehow associated 'woman' with 'mirror', not a man.

**During the Reading**

The students were asked to read the poem silently. This they did quickly. The students were next asked what the poem was about. They were not able to give a clear answer. Next, they were asked if their reading made them see the structure of the poem. They could only indicate that there were two stanzas, and that there was a woman and a mirror.

**Stylistic Analysis**

The students were asked to pick out all the verbs in the first stanza. These verbs were put
on the blackboard. Then the students were asked to pick out the subjects of these verbs. They were listed to the left of the verbs. The third task they had to do was to pick out the complements (both adjectival and adverbial). The terms 'complement', 'adjectival' and 'adverbial' were not used. The students were simply asked: Can you identify words and phrases which come after the verb?

The final figure on the blackboard was as follows:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>am</td>
<td>silver, extract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have</td>
<td>no preconceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>(see) (whatever) as it is,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(swallow) unmisted by love/dislike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am</td>
<td>not cruel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meditate</td>
<td>on the opposite wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have looked</td>
<td>long at it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It</td>
<td>is a part of my heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It</td>
<td>is pink with speckles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It</td>
<td>flickers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faces &amp;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>darkness</td>
<td>separate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>us/over &amp; over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same method was followed to analyse the second stanza too.
The analysis here was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Object or Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>am</td>
<td>a lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>see</td>
<td>her back/it faithfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reflect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>bends</td>
<td>over me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>turns</td>
<td>to those liars/the candle, the moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rewards</td>
<td>me/with tears &amp; agitation of hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>comes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>goes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>has drowned</td>
<td>a young girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her face</td>
<td>replaces</td>
<td>the darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An old</td>
<td>rises</td>
<td>towards her/day after day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation

The next step was to work out the description of the mirror from the tables. This was quite simple.

The students were asked to look at the verbs and see if they found anything special about them. After discussion and some prompting on the part of the teacher, they said that the verbs used with the mirror were descriptive, while those used with the woman were 'doing' words. At this juncture, the teacher told them briefly about stative and dynamic verbs and how stative verbs tell of qualities and dynamic verbs of action. Using this
insight, the students were asked to discuss the relevance of the use of these categories of verbs. They very quickly saw the passive role of the mirror ('The mirror cannot move, ma'am') and the active role of the woman. One student pointed out that the mirror was a thing, whereas the woman was a living person, therefore dynamic verbs were more suited to the woman. Further discussion elicited the fact that the mirror simply reflected everything - it had no individuality of its own.

Next, the metaphor had to be worked out. The question asked was 'Why has the mirror become a lake?'. Many students pointed out the use of the word 'drowned' and 'fish'. They commented that the first line was related to the last two lines only. At this point, they were told what a metaphor was and were asked to link it to the metaphor in the last stanza. They understood the ageing process (some thought cinematically - the mirror metaphor is obviously used frequently in films), but they could not understand the significance of the 'fish'.

It is here that the class went beyond the strictly linguistic structure. One of the
students in the class, a practising Christian, on being requested, related the Biblical story of Jonah and the Whale. The sense of inevitability was brought out. The class spontaneously, went back to read the poem again. It was perhaps to get at the meaning fully.

The next part of the interpretative process was to see that the point of view presented in different stanzas. In the first stanza, it is the mirror (I) who speaks most. In the second, the focus is on the woman (She, her face). The first is pure description whereas the second talks about the woman and her reactions.

After the Reading
Personal Response

The students were asked what they deduced from all the work they had done on the poem and what their reaction was. All of them, almost without exception, talked of the despair and grief of the ageing woman. Since they were using phrases like 'very sad' 'terribly unhappy', the teacher suggested the word 'agony'. They accepted this as being the correct word to describe the
feelings of the woman.

They felt the despair of the woman and said that what Plath had written was true. One student said that there was something wrong in such despair. She, and a few of her classmates/questioned the idea of the sort of valuation which is put on physical beauty/youth etc., especially when it has to do with a woman.

It was evident that the students were responding intelligently and individually to the poem.

Written Work

The students were required to answer the following questions:

1. How has the poet developed the image of the lake? How does it help the poet to convey the message?

2. Justify the title Mirror.

The answers were satisfactory, in the sense that the students wrote with confidence about the poem. The most positive point of this exercise was that they did not write a 'set' answer, but handled the questions competently, on their own.
Given below are some sample answers.

(i) How has the poet developed the image of the lake? How does it help the poet to convey the message?

The image of the lake is compared to a crystal. The theme of the poem is about ageing. As the poet says that a young girl is drenched in a lake and as time passes, an old woman sleeps like a turtle. We:

(i) Justify the title "Turtle?"
Alphonse Allais
1855 -1908

Lydia Plath comments on some
stuff a autobiography a woman,
A woman, which live no age
but does it chest, helpfully and
faithfully. Since then the Lydian
Plath bathes about a lake.
The lake is also a woman,
reflecting what comes within it
peace, and here are two of
it. A the woman which she
really is. The lake becomes
moment to the woman. He
dies in the bottle. Until
she is no more than young, now
beautiful, vital she was, but an
old woman.

With the simple stuff chaste,
the woman and the lake.

Alphonse Plath brings out the
Czars, beautifully, saying that
sweat runs away from old
eyes and even the sun and heart
by to me every day to be
true away from it.

The poet calls "revelation" has
been empty and waste yet
for their poems.

Alyce Plath brings up the
questions of the woman,
peace, the will, life still, and
faithful. We are how much
to wonder if with the
peace. Well knowing how
endowed. I wonder causal for.
As the woman, the wonder could
try to run away from the
truth, but the woman remains.
By the faithful as usual it
has to say, how can kill?
This revelation may be.
The poet is justified in using the title of 'Mirror' for this poem. A mirror is something that reflects exactly what a person or object is. In the first paragraph, the object, a mirror, is something not quite alive, detached and impersonal. Whatever is placed before it, the image reflected is that of the object, as it is by itself, without any aids. The mirror doesn't mean to be copied, it just does its job. Sincerely. And also the point about the mirror most often reflecting the opposite wall emphasizes its impersonality.

In the second part of the poem, the subject is a woman, gradually ageing. The object is the lake, which is somehow made to sound more human than a 'dead' mirror. The lake is important to the lady because it helps her to keep pace with her ageing. But the apt, very honest portrayal of herself seems to upset her.

The title is very fitting, in the sense that, it is almost as if you have your life being reflected back, the person you were, the person you gradually become. It shows up starkly without any preconceptions about one's self.
Follow up

To see how far the students would be able to apply these methods on their own when reading a new poem, Shakespeare's Sonnet No.3 was given to them.

Impressionistically speaking, the students seemed to understand that the poet in this poem was more optimistic, and could see hope in the continuation of the family line.

3.9 Text II

Given below is the text of the poem They held up a stone by Dannie Abse

They held up a stone,
I said, 'Stone.'
Smiling they said, 'Stone.'

They showed me a tree.
I said, 'Tree.'
Smiling they said, 'Tree.'

They shed a man's blood.
I said, 'Blood.'
Smiling they said, 'Paint.'

They shed a man's blood.
I said, 'Blood.'
Smiling they said, 'Paint.'

Dannie Abse, adapted from the Hebrew of Amir Gilboa, 1982
3.9.1 Analysis of the text

The poem is made up of three line stanzas which follow a simple structural pattern. There are three verbs and three nouns which occur in equivalent positions, viz. 'held up', 'showed', 'shed'; 'stone', 'tree', 'blood' and 'paint'. These apparently symmetric positions are exploited to bring about a powerful effect. The repetition of the word 'smiling' begins by connoting approval in the first stanza but changes to something sinister by the third stanza.

The protagonists in this poem are 'I' and 'They', two pronouns which acquire definite characteristics as the poem proceeds. The very anonymity of 'they' adds to the effect of impersonality and coldness in the poem.

3.9.2 The Lesson

Two classes, II B.A. section 'A' and 'B' were taught separately. Each section was met for one hour each. Both classes had students with the same linguistic ability, and the classes proceeded along the same lines. Therefore the lessons have not been discussed in separate sections. Any
differences in the classes have been mentioned at relevant points.

Due to technical snags, these classes too could not be taped.

Before the Reading

The linguistic ability of the students was so low that the teacher had to use Kannada to even introduce the sort of work the students were expected to do. Instructions had to be given in Kannada. Some of the steps had to be modified to suit the needs of the students.

No linguistic tasks were done as the poem is not at all difficult at the level of language structure. More attention was given at the stage of interpretation.

During the Reading

The poem was read aloud for two reasons:

1. Since the linguistic competence of the students was not very high, reading aloud would perhaps help them listen to the poem, its rhythm and its sounds.

2. As there was a blind boy in the class, who
wanted very much to participate in the lesson, the teacher could not but read the poem aloud. In fact, at the request of the blind boy, the poem was read aloud four/five times, by which time he had got the gist of the lines.

When asked whether they understood the poem, the students said that it did not make much sense. They understood the sentences all right, but not the overall meaning of the poem.

Stylistic Analysis

The first question asked was, whether they knew who the 'I' in the poem was. They had no difficulty in identifying it as the poet.

Next, they were asked to list all the things the poet said. Their answers were put on the blackboard. After this, they listed out all the things 'they' said. This completed two columns. Thirdly, they were asked to put down all the things 'they' showed. The three columns at the end read as follows:

What 'they' showed  What poet said  What they said

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stone</th>
<th>stone</th>
<th>stone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tree</td>
<td>tree</td>
<td>tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blood</td>
<td>blood</td>
<td>paint</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next part of the discussion was related to the chart on the blackboard and the apparent differences in the last row. There is perfect consonance in two lines between what 'they' show, what the poet says and what 'they' say. But there is a discrepancy in the third row. When asked the reason for it, the students said after some fumbling, that they did not know.

Interpretation

Unlike other classes, the teacher had to help the students quite a lot to interpret the results of the stylistic analysis.

The students were asked to comment on the truth value of the statements. They said that they tended to believe the poet. This naturally led to the question of why somebody would call blood, paint. They said that it was 'untruth' and that 'they' were lying.

Next, they were asked why the last verse was repeated. They said that it was important, therefore it was repeated.

What do you associate with a smile?, was the next question. The answers were varied: happiness, goodness, cheerfulness etc. Then why,
it was asked, were 'they' smiling?

After the reading

This question led imperceptibly onto Personal Response. The students felt that a wicked person too smiles, even one who tells a lie. When asked if they could guess who 'they' were, the answer in chorus was 'politicians'. In Kannada and some English, they very vocally said that politicians were capable of smiling and telling untruths. In fact, some examples, which could not be recorded, were given of politicians and their lies. The class became very lively, and since they could use Kannada, they gave some very perceptive comments. One student wanted to know if the poet was modern. When asked why, he said that the older poets were only interested in trees and flowers, and not 'reality'. When given the poet's name and the area from which he came, they said they could very well understand why such a poem had been written.

In the second class the discussion went along the same lines, with a few differences. The word 'paint' was associated with make-believe. They said that very often people are fooled when they are shown paint; here, the case was reversed,
'they' wanted to fool the 'public' by saying that blood was paint. This class too seemed to easily connect 'they' with politicians. In fact, when one of the persons involved with the college elections came into the class to ask some of the boys to help him, one of the students, jokingly said, "'They' are here."

Written Work:

Since the class was 'slow' in terms of progress of the lesson, there was very little time to get the students to do written work. One task, however, was given: Give a title to this poem.

The titles, interestingly read:

'People with power'; 'Heartless people'; 'Cruel Mind'; 'Heartless People & Kindless people'; It is 'Human Power'; 'Mindless Human'; 'Blood'. Some comments on the poem are as follows:

3. Every year, elections are held in colleges to elect student representatives. As students form quite a powerful section of the electorate, quite a few students are backed by political parties. Elections in colleges generate great excitement and since there is a possibility of violence erupting the state administrative machinery comes into the picture. So the students are aware of all the implications of elections.
"This is Mercury poem. Very simple poem. But understand is difficult."

"The Indians peoples no (know) of the paints and blood not equal. The political peoples equal to the blood and paint. This poem is very interested and understand."

"They people with politicians heartless and no (illegible)"

3.10 General Observations

The two experiences of teaching poetry were totally different as were the students in the two colleges. The reactions or responses were different too: the Home Science College students, who had studied in English responded in more or less the expected way. The boys at the Government Arts College responded in rather unexpected ways, their reactions were unconditioned, and were not those of a 'trained' collegiate.

The common factor in both colleges was the effectiveness of employing a stylistic approach. The response of both groups, when they understood the structure and the meaning of the poem was very much the same. There was a brightening up and a
more alert reading of the poem. There was also a
greater degree of confidence when they talked of
the poem. Their responses, both spoken and
written show this.