
Module for B.Ed Early Childhood Education Programme

EBS158SW: PROSE FICTION

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UNIT 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO ELEMENTS OF PROSE FICTION I

In this Unit, we shall examine various elements that occupy the attention of students of Prose Fiction which are within the broader concepts 'prose' and 'fiction'. The discussion will bring up their characteristics and their place in literary studies. The unit will also isolate the prose elements such as plot, structure, style and diction to literary discussions. In all these, we will examine their relevance in the study of prose fiction. We hope the unit will lead you to discover a lot of issues that relate to literature.

Learning outcome(s)

By the end of the unit, the participant will be able to:

- Explain the various terms that control the study of prose fiction.
- Clearly distinguish between the closely related terms.
- Identify and discuss these elements in a prose text.
- Share with their pupils the meaning of these terms in (literature) prose fiction.

SESSION 1: PROSE, FICTION AND TYPES OF PROSE

In this session, you will be introduced to prose fiction as a literary genre by attempting to explain the term in the context of its morphological make up. You will learn the definition of the words 'prose' and 'fiction' as a stepping stone to define 'prose fiction'. You will also be introduced to the major types of prosaic writings that fall under prose fiction.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Define prose fiction.
2. Differentiate prose fiction from other prose works.
3. Define prose fiction in your own words.
4. List the types of prose fiction.

Definition of Prose

Prose is the most typical form of language and it is derived from the Latin word "prosa" which literally means 'straight-forward.' It is like talking to someone in a straight-forward manner and not in a sing-song or poetic way. This means that a prosaic writing is presented in a straight-forward manner. For instance, historical stories are written or presented in prose style.

There are many views on the construction of prose but the summary of these views is that it has a simple and loosely defined structure. Prose works are mostly not presented in any particular or special structure. This lack of formal structure makes it to be adopted as the general mode of communication in many formal and informal presentations like the spoken dialogue, speeches, factual, topical and fictional writing. This means that most of the books you read are presented in prose and that you also speak in prose form.

Meaning of Fiction

Fiction is derived from the Latin word fiction which means "created". Fiction is a term used to denote anything, mainly stories or accounts that are not real. Can you recall the fairy tale or other

stories that your mother or grandmother used to tell you about animals, or human beings that existed in faraway countries or in the primitive times? These are fictional narratives. Fiction is therefore any form of narrative which deals, in part or in whole, with events that are not factual, but rather, are imaginary and invented by its author. They are created from the artist's imagination. It is thus important to state here that fictional stories or presentations are not factual or real. It is purely imaginative. I hope you understand non-imaginative stories. They true stories such as autobiographies and real life accounts.

Meaning of Prose Fiction

We have learnt the meaning of the words “prose” and “fiction” as separate words. Now, let us try to merge the two words to get the meaning in our present context, that is, as a genre of literature. Prose fiction is a literary genre that is purely imaginative and presented in an ordinary everyday language in a narrative. Can you say this in your own words? It is fictional work that is presented composed in a simple everyday language in a narrative form.

Fiction and narrative are words that distinguish prose fiction from any other form of narrative or fictional work. For instance, drama is fiction but it is presented in dialogue and not narrative.

Explanation of Non-fiction (Non-imaginative)

Non-fiction as a contradictory term to fiction is used to denote anything, mainly stories or accounts that are real or based on facts. That is, non-fiction refers to stories that are based on events that actually happened in reality. It has a true setting and the characters are real people. It tells a true story, but with lots of drama and all the interesting quirks of the characters. It could have some elements of imagination but there is a high degree of truism in the story. Unlike fictions, non-fictional narrative are a non-imaginary but factual in nature.

Some common forms of non-fiction may include biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, histories, letters, and newspapers among others.

Types of Prose

Prose fiction is distinguished from other forms of prose because its artistry, imaginative nature, and its creation to mirror the totality of life are based on history or contemporary issues of an individual or a people. The portrayal of life (society) in prose fiction is done at different levels by different authors using different styles which give rise to different types of fiction. *The basic types of prose fiction include novels, novelettes, short stories, novella (fables, and fairy tales) (McKeon 1987:30).* In this context, the length of the text determines its prose type. The paragraphs below would list and explain the different types of prose. The content of the prose text can also define the text.

a. The Novel

The novel is a fictional prose narrative or tale presenting the picture of real life, especially the emotional crises in the life history of the men and women portrayed. In literary terms, the novel is defined as “a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length, portraying characters, actions, or scenes representative of real life in a plot of more or less intricacy” (Harmsworth 78). It is a long narrative in literary prose that has its historical roots both in the medieval and early modern romance and in the tradition of the novella.

The present generic term “novel” is coined from the Italian word novella which means a compact prose tale of somewhat longer length than the short story. The novel is usually thought of as ranging from 50,000 words or more (about 170+ pages).

b. **The Novella**

Novella is simply a term used for *a miniature or short novel*. It shares all the characteristics of the novel and can fall into any of the categories of the novel. However it is not as popular as the novel and sometimes, readers cannot differentiate between a novel and a novella. It is a written fictional prose narrative longer than a novelette but shorter than a novel. The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America Nebula Awards for science fiction defines the novella as having a word count of between 17,500 and 50,000.

c. **The Short Story**

The short story is a type of prose fiction that is usually written in narrative format. This format tends to be more pointed than longer works of fiction, such as novellas and novels or books. A short story is defined based on the length but this differs somewhat even among professional writers. Since the short story format includes a wide range of genres and styles. Many short story writers define their work through a combination of creative, personal expression and artistic integrity. In contemporary usage, the term short story most often refers to a work of prose fiction that is not longer than 7,500 words and not shorter than 2,000 (5-25 pages).

Short stories tend to be less complex than novels. Usually a short story focuses on one incident, has a single plot, a single setting, a small number of characters, and covers a short period of time. A typical pattern in a short story could be presented with exposition, complication, climax and resolution as in longer forms of fiction. However, some short stories may not follow this pattern while some do not follow any patterns at all. For example, modern short stories only occasionally have an exposition. More typical, though, is an abrupt beginning, with the story starting in the middle of the action (in medias res). As with longer stories, plots of short stories also have a climax, crisis, or turning point. However, the endings of many short stories are abrupt and open. As with any art form, the exact characteristics of a short story vary by its author.

Key Ideas

- Prose is the most typical form of language and it is derived from the Latin word “prosa” which literally means 'straight-forward.'
- Prose works are mostly not presented in any particular or special structure.
- Fiction is any form of narrative which deals, in part or in whole, with events that are not factual, but rather, are imaginary and invented by its author.
- Prose fiction is a literary genre that is purely imaginative and presented in an ordinary everyday language in a narrative.
- The basic types of prose fiction include novels, novelettes, short stories, and novella.
- The novel is a fictional prose narrative or tale presenting the picture of real life, especially the emotional crises in the life history of the men and women portrayed.

Reflections

- What are the basic concepts of prose fiction that I have been exposed to?
- How will the understanding of the literary concepts studied in this session prepare me to expose my pupils to stories?

Discussion

- How has this session equipped you to appreciate the different types of prose narrative?
- How is the novel related to prose literature?
- Can an autobiography be considered fictional? Give reasons to support your stance.

SESSION 2: PLOT, STRUCTURE, STYLE, DICTION

Welcome to session 2. In the previous session, we explained the terms ‘prose fiction’ by dwelling on the words ‘prose’ and ‘fiction’ that make up the phrase. The types of prose were also considered. In this session, we shall focus our attention on some important elements of prose fiction (plot, structure, style, diction).

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Discuss the structure of the plot.
2. Explain style and diction of a text.
3. Relate these to a novel.

Explanation of Plot

Plot may be defined as a story’s sequence of incidents, arranged in dramatic order (Gwynn, 2009:13). Due to different modes of presentations of events in a story, the order of events in a story (plot) may or may not be in a chronological order. For instance, some techniques as flashback, foreshadowing and in medias res sometimes denies the plot its chronology. Usually, plot has a beginning, middle, and an ending. Plot starts with a situation depicting the characters’ interpersonal relationships and they are usually in conflict with each other or with an outside force. As the story progresses, the conflicts deepen, intensify and are heightened and lead to a complication of action and it rises to a climax and moves down to a resolution.

The basic plot structure is made up of **the exposition**, which provides reader with essential information about the story and characters; **the complication**, the appearance of circumstance or event that stirs up the stable situation presented in the exposition. The complication may be either external or internal, or a combination of the two. The complication is heightened by the conflict between the characters; **the rising action**, the point when the tension begins to pile up, then the central moment of crisis in the plot, **the climax**, or moment of greatest tension, which inaugurates **the falling action** of the story, in which the built-up tension is finally released. The final part of the

plot structure is **the denouement** (resolution) where all the tensions calm down and conflicts are resolved.

There are two basic types of plot: simple and complex plots.

i. **The Simple Plot**

A simple plot, in most cases, presents the adventure of one character, usually the hero, from the beginning to the end. In simple plots, as the name implies, the incidents are presented in a simple straight forward manner. In this type of plot, the incidents or events are closely knit and are strung together in a linear sequence. This means that events and incidents are presented in a chronological order as one event leads to the other and the subsequent event is dependent on the preceding one. A very good example is Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. In the novel, Okonkwo's father, Unoka is a lazy man so his son works hard to avoid his father's fate. Okonkwo inadvertently kills a man during a funeral ceremony and he is sent on exile. He would not have gone on exile if he did not kill the person.

ii. **The Complex Plot**

Complex plot as the name implies is more complicated than the simple plot. The story here does not run chronologically from the beginning to the end. In many cases, the story is presented in a disjointed manner and the reader will have to rearrange it to form a logical sequence. This type of plot, according to Ezeigbo (1998), "requires disentanglement" and it is a type in which "the author's point of view necessitates some rearrangement and realignment of circumstances or events" (11) for it to make meaning. This plot type can be exemplified in Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*. The first chapter of the book presents Obi Okonkwo as he is caught in a bribery act and this is the incident that should have ended the novel. In this case, the novel starts from the last incident and the story starts to unfold after that. Consequently, at the end of the novel, the reader has to recast the plot as presented so as to piece the different parts together.

In some novels, there is a subplot which is a second story that is complete and interesting in its own but is integrated in the main plot in such a way that it forms part of the main story. A sub plot that is well integrated helps to broaden the reader's perspective on the main plot so it concretizes instead of diffusing the overall effect of the story.

Meaning of Diction and Style

Style in fiction refers to the characteristics of a language in a particular story and to the same characteristics in a writer's complete works. In simple terms, style is the manner of expression of a writer produced by: choice of words, sentence structures, and the use of literary device, rhythm, organization and other elements of composition. Many writers have their own particular style which is chosen by the author with a purpose depending on the audience. A detailed analysis of style in an individual story might include attention to such matters as diction, sentence structure, punctuation and the use of figurative language. Thus, the aspects of style in literature may include elements such as:

- i. The use of words with significant connotations (meanings either than their basic reference).
- ii. The use of emotive language. Language that will provoke a particular emotion in the reader or audience. The emotions could be one of joy, sorrow, fear, anger, disillusion etc.
- iii. The use of figurative language. A figurative language is the opposite of literal language where we mean exactly what we say; all our words adhere to their denotative meanings or senses. On the contrary, when we speak figuratively, we conceal the actual meanings or ideas that we want to communicate. The figurative use of language is marked by the use of figures of speech such as *hyperbole* (an exaggeration for an effect), *metaphor* (the sense of one thing is represented in another through a direct comparison), *irony*, *personification* and *simile* among others.
- iv. The use of imagery/descriptive language; words that appeal to the senses of perception.

Meaning of Prose Fiction

We have learnt the meaning of the words “prose” and “fiction” as separate words. Now, let us try to merge the two words to get the meaning in our present context, that is, as a genre of literature. Prose fiction is a literary genre that is purely imaginative and presented in an ordinary everyday language in a narrative. Can you say this in your own words? It is fictional work that is presented composed in a simple everyday language in a narrative form.

Fiction and narrative are words that distinguish prose fiction from any other form of narrative or fictional work. For instance, drama is fiction but it is presented in dialogue and not narrative.

Key Ideas

- Plot is explained as the sequence of a story showing causes and effect.
- The basic plot structure is made up of the exposition, the complication, the rising action, the climax, the falling action and the denouement (resolution).
- There are two basic types of plot: simple and complex plots.
- In simple plot, the incidents or events are closely knit and are strung together in a linear sequence.
- Complex plot as the name implies is more complicated than the simple plot. The story does not run chronologically from the beginning to the end.
- Style is the manner of expression of a writer produced by: choice of words, sentence structures, and the use of literary device, rhythm, organization and other elements of composition.
- Diction is explained as the writer’s use of words; regarding the choice and ordering of the words and the effects.

Reflections

- How would I explain plot to my students for them to understand well?
- How can I help my students to identify the plot structure of a story they have read?
- How do I explain the relevance of style and diction in a literary text?

Discussion

- How will you explain plot to your friends?
- Mention and describe the stages of a plot.
- How different is the diction of a literary work from an ordinary essay?

UNIT 2: GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO ELEMENTS OF PROSE FICTION II

This Unit examines the additional elements of Prose Fiction, their characteristics and their place in literary studies. The unit will specifically isolate the prose elements such as character, characterization, character types, setting, perspective of narration (point of view), subject matter and theme to literary discussions. In all these, we will examine their relevance in the study of prose fiction. We hope the unit will lead you to discover a lot of issues that relate to literature.

Learning outcome(s)

By the end of the unit, the participant will be able to:

- Explain the various terms that control the study of prose fiction.
- Clearly distinguish between the closely related terms.
- Identify and discuss these elements in a prose text.
- Share with their pupils the meaning of these terms in their literature lessons.

SESSION 1: CHARACTER, CHARACTERIZATION, CHARACTER TYPES

In this session, we shall explain the terms ‘character’ and ‘characterization’ as defining elements of a novel. The types of characters would also be discussed in the session were also considered.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Distinguish between character and characterization.
2. Explain the types of character types.

Definition of Character

Characters in fiction are the human beings, animals or supernatural beings that act out the story presented in the work.

The author creates characters and presents his or her story through the actions and words of these characters. The novelist, depending on the point of view he or she uses, may allow one of the characters in the work to tell the story, otherwise, he narrates the story him/herself, telling the reader what this character did or did not do as the story progresses. Characters therefore are indispensable in any form of prose fiction no matter how superficial or how short the work is. Basically in a prose fictional narrative, there are two major characters, *the protagonist* and *the antagonist*. There are other characters too. They include the minor or supporting characters. The minor or supporting characters are involved in fewer actions or incidents in the work. Their roles are just to complement the major characters in driving the plot of the story. Characters are developed through appearance, words, feelings, and reaction of others.

Explanation of the term Characterization

Characterization refers to the way an author creates and manipulates the characters in the work to explicate his/her theme. A character is a participant in the story and is usually a person, but may be any personal identity, an animal or an entity whose existence originates from the fictional work.

The author is usually careful in the selection of these characters and ensures that the role of each character is clear. Some characters are used and dispensed with while others are active participants in the story from the beginning to the end. The former are the minor characters while the latter are the major characters. The writer reveals the character in such a way that the reader becomes familiar with the character's nature through the character's words and actions. A character is also revealed through his relationship with other characters and reaction to situations and events. Sometimes the character's thoughts are revealed by the writer depending on the narrative mode or point of view. Characterization is therefore the means by which a writer creates designs a character with assigned roles, and also the process by which a literary critic analyses/reveals a character.

A character in a text can be revealed through the following:

- i. what others say about him or her
- ii. what the author says about him or her
- iii. what he or she says about him/herself
- iv. by his relationship with other characters
- v. by his thoughts

Types of Characters in Fiction

There are different types of characters and the author decides the ones to use depending on the message and the effect she/he desires to create.

a. **Flat Characters**

The flat characters are those characters who remain the same in the course of the story from the beginning to the end. Some scholars refer to them as *static characters*. They do not undergo significant changes during the course of a story. The flat characters are very predictable because there seems not to be any change in their growth and activities.

A good example of a flat character is Mystique Mysterious in Benjamin Kwakye's *The Clothes of Nakedness*.

b. **Round Characters**

Round characters are those characters that grow in the course of the narration. Most of the time, they grow from innocence to maturity and adapt to situations accordingly. They respond to changes in their environment and react differently to different situations.

c. **Dynamic characters**

A dynamic character is a person who changes over time, usually as a result of resolving a central conflict or facing a major crisis. Most dynamic characters tend to be central rather than peripheral characters, because resolving the conflict is the major role of central characters.

d. **Stock characters**

Stock characters are those types of characters who have become conventional or stereotypical through repeated use in particular types of stories. Stock characters are instantly recognizable to readers or audience members (e.g. the femme fatale, the cynical but moral private eye, the mad scientist, the geeky boy with glasses, and the faithful side

chick). Stock characters are normally one-dimensional flat characters, but sometimes stock personalities are deeply conflicted, rounded characters (e.g. the "Hamlet" type).

Key Ideas

- Characterization is an indispensable element in prose fiction.
- Characters are the representation of human beings in any fiction.
- Characterization is the act of creating the characters by the writer.
- The flat characters are those characters who remain the same in the course of the story from the beginning to the end.
- Round characters are those characters that grow in the course of the narration.
- Dynamic character is a person who changes over time as a result of resolving a central conflict or facing a major crisis.
- Stock characters are one-dimensional flat characters, but sometimes stock personalities are deeply conflicted, rounded characters.

Reflections

- How would I distinguish between character and characterization to my students?
- How are characters in the prose text I have read revealed?

Discussion

- Differentiate between characterization and character in prose fiction.
- Explain three criteria used in discussing the character traits of a character in a text.
- Explain the types of characters that can be present in a novel.

SESSION 2: SETTING, POINT OF VIEW, SUBJECT MATTER AND THEME

In this session, we are discussing setting, point of view, subject matter and theme as crucial elements in a literary text. We will also focus on the relevance of these elements in prose fiction.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Define and identify setting in prose fiction.
2. Explain the different types of setting.
3. Explain point of view.
4. State the advantages and disadvantages of a particular point of view.
5. Distinguish between subject matter and theme.

Definition of Setting

Setting is defined as “the physical, and sometimes spiritual, background against which the action of a narrative takes place” (Harmsworth, 1998:108). Basically, there are two types of setting *physical setting* and *geographical setting*. The reader identifies setting easily through the mention of some identifiable locations and dates.

Types of Setting

There are two main types of setting. They are the physical and historical settings.

a. Physical Setting

The general milieu of a work is its geographical or physical setting. In other words, it is the place where events occur in a story. The geographical location of a work is not synonymous with where it is written. In addition to the general locale of a work, there may be specific places also where different actions take place. *The physical setting is therefore the location in which action takes place.*

b. Historical Setting

Some writers give dates and places of the action of their work, while others give the information indirectly. This is referred to as the time setting, temporal setting or the historical setting. This type of setting in a work may be immediate or remote. The concept of time setting also encompasses what it evokes and carries along with it like the cultural, social, economic and religious issues raised in the work. The time setting also influences the mode of writing and the subject matter. For instance, *Things Fall Apart* was published in 1958, two years before colonialism ended officially in Nigeria but the events of the story may have taken place some years earlier and the story itself must have been written earlier than the date of publication. This is very appropriate because the temporal setting presented two years later would not have presented a true picture of the events in the novel.

Importance of Setting

Setting is one of the important elements of prose fiction which the author uses to accomplish various goals like

- a. Enhancement of Verisimilitude: Setting in form of description of time, place, weather, furnishings and other elements of setting are usually included because they help to give a sense of reality and credibility to the plot of the story.
- b. Culture: Setting evokes the general culture aspects of the text. Literary texts are reflections of real societies which have specific locations with identities. References to such settings in the literary text situate the story in the culture of the location. Setting as in time implies that periods of time reflect unique socio-economic-cultural conducts and lifestyle. Time setting thus explains the general sphere of life in the text. An example is the human sacrifice as an aspect of culture during the pre-colonial era of the Igbos in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.
- c. Mood: Setting may emphasize the mood of a character. For instance a rainy day may bring out or strengthen a feeling of sadness in people. On the other hand, this setting could be appropriate to the events that are occurring in a narrative.
- d. Special Effects: A writer may use a particular setting for "...an important effect upon the actions of a character (as the river and the market do on Nwibe in Achebe's "The Madman." (Adeleke 1997:52).

The Meaning of Point of View

Point of view can be defined as the mode (s) established by an author by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, actions, settings and events which constitute the narrative work of fiction (Kennedy, 1976). It signifies the angle from which way an author tells his/her story. In other words, point of view reveals the position from which the events are presented by the writer and observed by the reader. The story could be presented through the perspective of one or more of the characters or by the writer. Point of view is therefore the perspective from which the reader hears, sees, and feels the story.

Types of Point of View

There are many types of point of view. When the story is told by one of the characters in the narrative, it is called the first person narrative. In cases where the story is narrated by the writer, we get the omniscient point of view. Aside these two narrative styles, there can be other narrative styles like the second person narrative and the multiple or mixed point of view. Let's deal with types of point of view in detail.

- **Omniscient Point of View**

The omniscient point of view is a narrative mode in which both the author presents events and situations through narration, and through the senses and thoughts of more than one character. The writer presents the actions, hopes, aspirations and other psychological and emotional states of the characters through an "overarching godlike perspective that sees and knows everything that happens and everything the characters are thinking" (Martin, 2003). In this kind of narration, the writer names all the characters with third person pronouns and it is usually referred to a story in which he does not use the pronoun "I" to refer to himself.

- **Limited omniscient point of view**

In this method, writer presents the entire story via the point of view of one character, and looks through this at other characters (Mirsadeghi, 1987). Writer is both with him in the outside and penetrates his thoughts. However, because of the limited view of this character, the writer's view toward others is limited, too. Therefore, the writer here does not have the vast authority of the omniscient narrator and the key character plays the role of his representative in the story.

- **First Person Point of View**

In the first person point of view the narrator speaks directly from his or her own experience, often represented by the narrator's consistent use of the first person pronoun "I". This narrator takes part in the events of the story. He /she may be an observer, the protagonist or a minor character but the narrator seems to be standing a little to one side, watching a story that mainly concerns him/herself or someone else as it unfolds.

- **Stream of consciousness method**

A method of narration by which the depth of character's mental fluid that is, a mixture of sensuous understanding, conscious and sub-conscious thoughts, memories, feelings, and

accidental associations is expressed in the way they are. This way of narration is based on concepts that are the result of meaning association. “Stream of consciousness is a dissolved collection of associations, moments, and emotions in which conscious and unconscious layers pass through each other” (Falaki, 2003: 45).

Explanation of Subject Matter

The subject matter in prose fiction is a kind of summary of what is present in the work. It is what the story is all about. It is the subject of discussion in the work which is different from theme. The theme refers to the ideas which are stated abstractly but the abstract ideas are dramatized through the subject matter. The subject matter is what the work is about. We can state the subject in a word or phrase. However, theme is what is said about the subject matter in a text. Stating a theme requires a complete sentence or several sentences.

Subject matter concerns two aspects of prose fiction that seem to be the same yet they are different. The subject matter is how the idea is explicated to form the story. If for instance, the theme of Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* is colonialism, the subject matter becomes the story of Okonkwo and the disintegration of a once harmonious society as a result of Colonialism.

Meaning of Theme

Theme is the central dominating idea in a literary work. In the views of Harmsworth (1989), theme in non-fiction prose may be thought as the general topic of discussion, the subject of discourse, the thesis. In literary works, theme is the abstract concept or idea which is made concrete through its representation in person, action and image in the work. It is the central idea or insight serving as a unifying element, creating cohesion and is an answer to the question, ‘What did you learn from the piece of fiction?’

Theme is usually seen as an abstract concept like love, marriage, corruption, bad leadership, crime, justice, and many other issues that reflect human experiences. This means that the theme is not written down anywhere in the work so you have to read the novel, novella or short story very well to decipher the theme. If you have read Ama Ata Aidoo’s *Changes, a Love Story* for instance, one idea there is ‘what constitutes rape in marriage’. In most novels from East Africa, we find the themes of possession and dispossession of land while the South African novels, until recently, present the themes of apartheid, racism. The themes of oppression and subjugation are common in the prose fiction from the two regions.

Key Ideas

- Setting is the physical and sometimes spiritual, background against which the action of a narrative takes place” (Harmsworth, 1998:108).
- *The physical setting is therefore the location in which action takes place.*
- The two major types of setting are the physical and time setting.
- Point of view is the perspective from which the reader hears, sees, and feels the story.
- There are many types of point of view: they include first person point of view, omniscient point of view, limited omniscient point of view and stream of consciousness method.
- The subject matter is how the idea is explicated to form the story.

- Theme is the central dominating idea in a literary work.

Reflections

- How has this session equipped me to analyse literary text for setting, point of view and theme?
- How would I help my colleagues understand the difference between subject matter and theme?

Discussion

- Explain the concept of setting as an element of prose fiction.
- How does setting make a literary text meaningful?
- List four types of point of view and explain one of them in detail.
- State the relationship between the theme and the subject matter in Prose fiction.

UNIT 3: A STUDY OF GEORGE ORWELL’S *ANIMAL FARM* I

In this unit, we shall take a look at George Orwell’s novella, *Animal Farm* and relate our study to the basic principles of prose fiction discussed in Unit One and Two such as the plot, characterization, setting, point of view, and style of writing, the language of the text, the major theme and sub-themes in the text.

Learning outcome(s)

By the end of the unit, the participant will be able to:

1. Apply your understanding of the principles of prose fiction to the text under study.
2. Discussion the text as a prose fiction that reflects reality.
3. Make a judgement on the effectiveness of the approach used in delivering the message.

SESSION 1: THE TITLE AND PLOT SUMMARY

In this session, we shall look at a brief history and authorship of the novella lay out the plot of *Animal Farm* and link the plot to the structure of the text. In the course of the discussion, we shall introduce terms that are relevant to our study of this text. We will urge you to look up for the meaning of any such term in a good literary dictionary. You can also google for the meaning.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Share a brief background of the author.
2. Present the plot of the story.
3. Discuss the appropriateness of the title.

The Title and authorship

Animal farm is written by Eric Arthur Blair under the pseudonym, George Orwell. It was first published in 1945. The original title of the novel was *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story*. However, the subtitle was dropped when it was published in the US in 1946. The title of the novel is the name the animals on Mr. Jones’ farm adopt for the farm after the rebellion against Mr. Jones, their human owner. The name “Animal Farm” actually comes to replace the original name which is “Manor Farm”. Previously, Mr. Jones and his workers dominated the daily activities and lives of the animals. Conditions on the farm during the reign of man marks oppression. However, the new name actually symbolizes the animals’ authority over their own affairs. The title is also a symbol of Old Major’s idealistic dream that prophesied an animal utopia. The fable has relevance for political ideologies. We shall discuss them as we go through the text.

The plot summary

Animal Farm is an allegorical novella that narrates the story of farm animals who endure oppression and neglect at the hands of their drunken owner, Mr. Jones. The story is evoked through the

inspiration of Old Major who dreamt that a perfect society for the animals is one that has no human presence. Later in the life of the animals, they carry out a rebellion with the intention of creating a perfect society where all animals are equal and have enough freedom that will make them happy. This marks the central conflict of the novella. Having gotten rid of Mr. Jones, the animals believe they have overcome human oppression. The success of their revolt is marked by the change of name from “Manor Farm” to “Animal Farm”. They adopted the Seven Commandments from the spirit of animalism which Old Major had ignited in them during his speech.

At first, “Animal Farm” prospers. The animals begin to manage their own affairs with Snowball teaching the older animals to read and write while Napoleon schools the young puppies on the principles of animalism. There is abundance of food and division of labour on the farm. The pigs gradually assume the leadership positions and allow themselves certain privileges which include special food menu for their health. Mr. Jones and his men attempt to reclaim the farm, however, this backfires. It is after this attack that Snowball declares his intention to build a windmill. Napoleon disagrees with this modernization and instructs his dogs to chase Snowball out of the farm.

Subsequently, Napoleon declares himself the sole leader of the farm. He implements several changes in the governance structure of the farm. Their regular meetings are substituted with a committee of pigs who will manage the affairs of the farm. Squealer, one of the pigs, becomes Napoleon’s spokesperson. It is through him that Napoleon sabotages Snowball, while taking the credit for the windmill idea. When a storm collapses the windmill, Napoleon is able to convince the animals that Snowball is trying to sabotage their project. Any animal who was accused of helping Snowball was executed by Napoleon’s dogs. Life on the farm now becomes similar to the hardships they faced during the time of Mr. Jones. However, Napoleon is quick to point that they are better off than they were under the ownership of Mr. Jones.

Mr. Frederick, a neighbouring farm owner and his band of men attack the Animal Farm and blow up the windmill. Although the animals win this battle, they lose many of their comrades. Boxer is wounded and although he recovers, he collapses while working on the windmill and is taken away in a knacker’s van. Boxer was the only character who is still clinging to Old Major’s hope. However, he is betrayed and killed. As the years go by, another windmill is constructed, and the farm earns more income. Aside the windmill, all the other plans Snowball drew for the Animal Farm were discarded because, according to Napoleon, they needed to live simple and happy lives. The other animals begin to realize the pigs’ new role as the political authority on the farm. The pigs, with Napoleon as the head, claim a greater portion of the farm produce for themselves. They steal the cow’s milk. They sell animal products to buy human luxuries like whisky.

The story reaches its climax when Napoleon decides to sell the hen’s eggs. Realizing this, the hens rebel, but they are unsuccessful and Napoleon has them executed. The pigs now emulate the tyrant Mr. Jones. They walk on two legs, wear clothes, drink alcohol and carry whips. They are even seen dining with men. In so doing, they breach the seven commandments. However, they are smart enough to amend the commandments to an abridged form which reads; “All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others”. The maxim was also changed from “Four legs good, two legs bad” to four legs good, two legs better”. All these were done to suit their new position. At the

end of the story, Napoleon abolishes all revolutionary practices and restores the name “Manor Farm”. The other animals can no longer distinguish between men and the pigs.

While some readers consider the novel from the author’s view of a disillusioned communist society, others look at it as an allegory of a totalitarian regime or as a fable that describes the betrayal of the animals on Manor Farm.

The Structure

Animal Farm is written in ten chapters. Each chapter is closely related to the plot of the story. Though the story is a simple plot and follows a direct thought, it shows internal structure (division). Chapters 1- 3 introduce the overall characters in the text, we are presented with the main theme through Old Major’s speech and the ideals of Animalism, the rebellion and the animals’ initial self-control. By the end of chapter 6, Snowball has been expelled and the first work on the windmill construction takes place. Chapters 7- 10 describe how the pigs eventually become like their corrupt human master.

Key Ideas

- The story is in three structural parts with each linking others to make a complete story.
- *Animal farm* is written by Eric Arthur Blair under the pseudonym, George Orwell.
- The title of the novel is the name the animals on Mr. Jones’ farm adopt for the farm after the rebellion against Mr. Jones, their human owner.
- The name “Animal Farm” actually comes to replace the original name which is “Manor Farm”.
- The story reaches its climax when Napoleon decides to sell the hen’s eggs.

Reflections

- How would I explain the title of the novella to a colleague?
- How relevant was Old Major’s dream to the development of the plot?

Discussion

- What is the climax of the story?
- Why did Arthur Blair adopt a false name?
- What is the place of Old Major’s dream to the development of the plot?

SESSION 2: CHARACTER AND CHARACTERIZATION

In this session, we are looking at our discussion on character and characterization in Unit One and relate it to the characters in the text. We must understand that the characters in *Animal Farm* are animals (fable) but each animal is given human traits and these traits are our focus. We shall examine major and minor characters and their roles in the story.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify and discuss the traits of character and show their roles in *Animal Farm*

2. Distinguish between major, supporting and minor characters in *Animal Farm*.

Characterization

Animal Farm comprises several characters. Each of these characters plays a significant role. Attention will be paid to the characters and the significant roles they play in contribution to the development of the plot.

- a. **The Major Characters**

This narrative has three major characters; Old Major, Napoleon, Snowball. Squealer, Boxer and Clover are considered as pseudo major characters. Do you know what a major character is? It is the character on whom the story revolves. If he is out of the story, the story ends. List all the characters you have come across in the story. A pseudo major character is one that is neither a major nor minor. Such is more prominent than the minor character.

- i. **Snowball**

Snowball is one of the pre-eminent two young boars Mr. Jones was rearing for sale. According to the narrator, "Snowball was a more vivacious pig than Napoleon, quicker in speech and more inventive, but was not considered to have the same depth of character." Aside Snowball and Napoleon, all the other male pigs were porkers. At the beginning of the story, he is depicted as a companion of Napoleon. These two pigs develop the concept of animalism out of Old Major's speech. They later spell out Old Major's ideas in the Seven Commandments. Snowball is credited with the maxim "Four legs good, two legs bad" which proves an easier version of the Seven Commandments for the sheep and the other less intelligent animals. However, this maxim becomes a means of sabotaging Snowball while he is delivering his speeches during their Sunday meetings. The interruptions happen to be the work of Napoleon. He is constantly challenging Napoleon concerning the control of the animals after the Rebellion. The two friends begin to develop an intense rivalry.

Snowball is portrayed as very intelligent and the most eloquent of the pigs. Like his name depicts, Snowball is a very smart pig. He is equally brave and instrumental in the Battle of the Cowshed. He doesn't appear to be as sneaky as his counterpart, Napoleon. In view of this, Snowball seems to be winning the trust and loyalty of the other animals. Snowball is more idealistic. He is the brain behind the windmill. It was designed to generate electricity that will make work on the farm less stressful for the animals. He had worked out other complicated schemes that would make work easy for the animals. He proposed a three-day a week work schedule as well as various animal committees all in aid of progress on the farm. Aside his good qualities, Snowball remains silent on the issue of milk and apples for the pigs. With this attitude, he is also exploiting the other animals. The rivalry between Snowball and Napoleon develops to an extent that Napoleon expels him from the farm on the animals vote to build the windmill.

Although he is no longer a visibly active character on the farm, Napoleon constantly refers to Snowball as a heinous character. He is always blamed for conspiracy whenever there is a misfortune on Animal Farm. With this attitude, Napoleon is able to defame Snowball. Consequently, any animal that is an ally of Snowball is executed.

ii. **Napoleon**

Napoleon is the main antagonist in the story. He is one of Old Major's disciples. He is one of the two boars whom Mr. Jones was breeding up for sale. The narrator describes this pig as "large, rather fierce-looking Berkshire boar, the only Berkshire on the farm, not much of a talker, but with a reputation for getting things his own way". This description sums up his entire activities on the farm throughout the narration. Together with Snowball, Napoleon leads the rebellion against Mr. Jones. Napoleon works with Snowball to develop the ideology of animalism after the successful revolt. These two pigs champion the spirit of animalism throughout the farm and its environs. However, Napoleon soon proves himself a cruel dictator. After the rebellion, he strategically begins to control all affairs on the farm until he grows into an undisputed tyrant.

During the conflict over the building of the windmill, Napoleon reveals his police force comprising nine dogs he had secretly trained since their infancy. With these dogs, he chases Snowball off the farm and installs himself as a totalitarian on the Animal Farm. In his new role, he demands unwavering loyalty from his subjects. By spreading misinformation through propaganda and intimidating the other animals, he earns himself outward displays of trust. Napoleon always makes some harsh pronouncements and sends Squealer, another pig, to convince all the animals that his actions are in the best interest of the animals. He is particularly interested in instituting an elite ruling class. His first move is to educate the dogs and later insisting on his thirty one piglets in a special school.

Napoleon holds himself in high esteem, above all other animals on the farm, he is paranoid and does not accept his faults. Instead, he blames Snowball for every mis-happening. At the end of the narration, Napoleon becomes the duplicate of the humans he fought against. He starves the other animals and make them helpless. However, he grows fat, more powerful, walks on his hind legs, sleeps in a bed, wears clothes, carry a whip, drinks alcohol and above all, parties with the humans he denounced.

iii. **Old Major**

Old Major is the oldest pig on the farm. He is a highly revered old boar. He dies at the age of 12 before the animals staged the revolt. A few days before his death, Old Major gathers all the animals and gives a speech concerning a dream he had. He lets the animals know what is wrong with their present world. He proposes that man is the greatest enemy of animals. This is because, man produces nothing but benefits from what the animals produce. He specifically points to Mr. Jones, and his

farmhands who have been cruel towards the animals. He teaches the animals the song, *Beast of England* which becomes the animal anthem on the farm. Moreover, Old Major's speech encourages the animals to fight for their freedom. Old Major's speech forms the basis for Animalism, a theory, that Napoleon and Snowball develop three months after Old Major's death. Although Old Major does not live to see his ideas implemented, Napoleon disinters Old Major's skull and sets it up on a stump at the foot of the flagstaff so that the other animals can walk past it reverently.

b. Supporting characters

The supporting characters in this text are those who are not necessarily the primary focus of the narrative but appear to play roles more than the minor characters. These are: Old Major, Squealer, Boxer and Clover,

i. Squealer

Squealer is the most popular male porker on the farm. He is a fat pig with a reputation as a skilled orator. This earns him the position of spokesperson for Napoleon. Through him, the pigs use rhetoric and language to twist the truth and maintain power. At first, he is devoted to both Snowball and Napoleon but later to Napoleon alone when the latter expels Snowball. As his name depicts, he passes all information concerning the decisions made by the pigs to the other animals. Due to his skillful nature as an orator, Squealer is often asked to address the animals during their Sunday meetings. Most often, he succeeds in effectively convincing the animals to accept whatever plans the pigs have. On other days, his messages are accepted because Napoleon's police dogs accompany him on his mission. He also represents the animals at meetings with the other farmers. Since he is a pig, he benefits from Napoleon's rule, just like all the other pigs. By the end of the narration, Squealer is seen walking on two legs and he teaches the sheep to bleat, "Four legs good, two legs better!"

ii. Boxer

He is a huge, gentle carthorse. He is not as intelligent as the pigs but is able to learn the four letters of the alphabets. He and Clover are two of Napoleon and Snowball's most faithful disciples. Boxer's physical appearance matches up to his hardworking attitude. Old Major's speech and the Seven Commandments excite him a lot. He proves himself very essential to the activities on the farm. Boxer is able to convince his peers to support the work on the farm. It is his hardworking nature that compels the animals to rebuild the windmill when it gets destroyed. Boxer adopts the slogan "I will work harder" whenever there is a problem at hand. During the course of time, he adopts the slogan, "Napoleon is always right", in addition to the first. However, he fails to see that Napoleon is rather the cause of the hardship on the farm. When he collapses, Boxer thinks Napoleon will take him to a veterinary for healthcare, however, his inability to read prevents him from understanding the inscriptions on the van. Boxer is sent to a glue factory and his death benefits the pigs.

iii. **Clover**

Clover is a very cool, compassionate yet powerful carthorse. She is a motherly horse who naturally shields the weaker animals. She also tries to help her close friend, Boxer after his collapse. Her compassionate qualities are echoed in the communal spirit the Seven Commandments hold. Clover supports the rebellion and the spirit of animalism. However, she is always suspicious of the pigs' violation of the commandments, yet she cannot be certain because she wasn't able to commit all the commandments to memory. Since she is not as literate as the pigs, she doesn't notice the major changes in the Seven Commandments. And so, she ignorantly support every decision of the pigs. When Napoleon takes over as a dictator, Clover is appalled. She is not as smart as the pigs to be able to resist them. However, she prefers the animals ruling her to Mr. Jones.

c. **Minor Characters**

The minor characters in this texts are those whose actions contribute to the development of the plot but are not focal point of the story. They also help to reveal the traits of the major characters. A good number of the characters in *Animal Farm* can be classified under the minor characters. These include: Mr. Jones, Mr. Pilkington, Mr. Frederick, The Cat, Mollie, The Sheep, The Hens, The Dogs and Muriel.

i. **Mr. Jones**

Mr. Jones is the first totalitarian leader in *Animal Farm* who runs Manor farm before the animals stage a rebellion. He is the original owner of Manor Farm. The narrator makes it clear what a fierce master he was in the years prior to the commencement of the story. When the reader first encounters Mr. Jones, he is presented as a drunk, careless, an unkind and ineffective farm owner. He is a very wicked and arrogant farm owner who no longer feeds the animals as often as he used to. He is constantly using the whip on the animals. He tries to whip the animals when they break the stores to feed themselves on the grains. His neglect of the animals is what sparks the rebellion leading to his expulsion and the animals taking over the farm. He attempts a comeback but he fails and loses the farm completely to the animals. Mr. Jones finally spends the rest of his time in Willingdon.

ii. **Mr. Pilkington**

Mr. Pilkington is the easy-going farmer who owns Foxwood, a neighbouring farm to the Animal Farm. Foxwood is described as "a large, neglected, old-fashioned farm, much overgrown by woodland, with all its pastures worn out and its hedges in a disgraceful condition". Mr. Pilkington has no time for the farm. He mostly spends his time hunting and on leisure activities than on the farm. He often gossiped about Animal Farm with the other neighbour, Frederick. Although he was almost on a friendly terms with Napoleon, he was never able to enter into a proper agreement with Napoleon on buying timber from Animal Farm. When Mr. Frederick schedules a time to collect the timber, Napoleon breaks his seemingly

friendship with Mr. Pilkington. Insulting messages are sent to Foxwood and the pigeons are advised to alter their slogan from “Death to Frederick” to “Death to Pilkington”. He pulls his support for Animal Farm when Napoleon double-crosses him. However, he is content with the latest developments on Animal Farm and congratulates the pigs for instituting class boundaries on the farm.

iii. **Mr. Frederick**

Mr. Frederick is a tough, shrewd man, perpetually involved in lawsuits and was noted for driving hard bargains. He is the owner of Pinchfield, the second neighbouring farm to Animal Farm. Rumours are that he treats his farm animals with an iron fist. Napoleon vilifies him as well. He decides to purchase timber from Animal Farm. However, he pays with fake bills and launches an unexpected attack on Animal Farm. He successfully blows up the windmill. Mr. Frederick happens to be at logger heads with Mr. Pilkington but the two find a common reason to gossip after the rebellion.

iv. **Benjamin**

Benjamin is the oldest animal on the farm and he is noted for his quick temper. He is a jaded donkey who hardly talks. But whenever he opens his mouth to talk, he never hesitates to make one or two cynical remarks. Although he is very devoted to Boxer, he is never inspired by the rebellion. He only looks on at happenings on the farm with a conviction. He maintains a skeptical view on an utopian society where life will be easier. As a result of this, Benjamin is not surprised when the pigs become corrupt and assume the totalitarian position of the master they overthrew. He is the only animal among the others who is well informed on the happenings in their animal society. However, he remains ineffective as he does not speak or do anything in support of the oppressed animals. He finally breaks his silence and tells the other animals what is happening on the farm however, this is at the wrong time since it becomes too late to save Boxer.

v. **The Cat**

The cat is a self-centred farm animal who is only interested in things that would benefit her. She always disappears when there is work to do. She only supports the rebellion and the spirit of Animalism if there is some benefit in it for her. Though she is not fully committed to animalism, she echoes its ideals to some birds she wants to eat. Before Napoleon becomes a dictator, the cat has already disappeared from the farm.

vi. **Mollie**

She is the white mare who pulls Mr. Jones’s cart prior to the rebellion. She loves human attention and always wants to be groomed. Molly loves eating sugar and wearing ribbons in her mare. After the rebellion, she flees from the farm because supporting the rebellion denies her all the pleasures she craves. She seeks solace in serving another human a few months after the rebellion.

vii. **The Sheep**

These are a group of less intelligent animals on the farm. They are mostly noted for chanting the maxim Snowball teaches them. They follow all Napoleon's orders. Because they are not literate, they are not able to question the decisions of the pigs.

viii. **The Hens**

They are a group of layers who form part of the less intelligent breed of animals on the farm. They are at first in full support of the rebellion. Laying hens on Animal Farm. They are initially fully behind the rebellion and the ideals of Animal Farm but their support negotiates a bend when Napoleon demands they surrender their eggs. They also stage an internal rebellion. This however proves unsuccessful and nine of them die.

ix. **The Dogs**

Jessie, Bluebell, Pincher, and the nine attack dogs born between Jessie and Bluebell are all instrumental in the affairs of the farm after the revolt. The first three are seen attacking the men during the Battle of the cowshed. However, they do not live too long in Napoleon's totalitarian state. The other dogs are the puppies Napoleon takes away to educate. No one hears of them until they surface one day as fierce dogs. These dogs provide the pigs with the brute force necessary to terrorize the other animals. They play an instrumental role in driving Snowball off the farm. For their reward, they are entitled to certain privileges on the farm which include sitting close to the pigs. They live a comfortable life because they support the pigs in implementing all policies.

x. **Muriel**

Muriel is a white goat. Aside the pigs, she is one of the few animals who becomes fully literate. She is very instrumental in the Battle of the Cowshed. Because of her intelligence and her dedication to the oppressed animals, she was always interpreting the commandments for the animals when it was realized the pigs were flouting the rules. She participates in all the activities on the farm. She is one of the animals who dies during Napoleon's rule.

xi. **Moses**

Moses is a tame raven on the farm who slept on a perch. He is a favourite pet of Mr. Jones and so, he does no work. He was always feeding on crusts of bread soaked in beer. This makes the other animals dislike him. He is the only animal who is reported absent during the meeting with Old Major. He earns a name on the farm as a spy, a tale bearer and a clever talker. Most of the animals believe his stories about Sugar Candy Mountain and the pigs have a hard time convincing the animals not to believe such stories. He flaps after Mrs. Jones during the rebellion. Moses suddenly reappears, unchanged after several years of absence from the farm.

xii. **Mr. Whymper**

Mr. Whymper is a human solicitor whom Napoleon hires to represent Animal Farm in the human world. He was a sly-looking little man with side whiskers, a solicitor

in a very small way of business, but very smart. The animals dreaded him, but were also amused at the sight of Napoleon who walked on four legs delivering orders to a man who walked on two legs. By the end of the novel, has done well for himself.

xiii. **Minimus**

He is the poet pig who writes propaganda poems and praise songs for Napoleon and Animal Farm. He is the one who writes the patriotic song “Animal Farm, Animal Farm” to replace the idealistic “Beast of England”.

xiv. **Mrs. Jones**

Mr. Jones’s wife. She is only seen running out of the farmhouse during the rebellion. Mollie mentions that Mrs. Jones dresses Mollie with ribbon. Her absence then affected Mollie so much that she had to leave the Animal Farm.

Overview

In this session, we have identified three sets of characters in *Animal Farm*. We have also discussed the role played by each one of them in the development of the plot.

Key Ideas

- There are three set of characters in *Animal Farm*. They are major, minor and supporting characters.
- *Animal Farm* has three major characters; Old Major, Napoleon, Snowball. Squealer, Boxer and Clover are considered as pseudo major characters.
- The supporting characters in this text are those who are not necessarily the primary focus of the narrative but appear to play roles more than the minor characters.
- The minor characters in this text are those whose actions contribute to the development of the plot but are not focal point of the story.

Reflections

- How would I describe Napoleon and Squealer as characters in *Animal Farm* to a friend?
- Share your views about how the human characters are characterized in the story.

Discussion

- Critically examine the role of Squealer in the text
- Who is your most admired character in the story?
- Contrast the character and role of Snowball and Napoleon in the development of *Animal Farm*.

UNIT 4: A STUDY OF GEORGE ORWELL'S *ANIMAL FARM* II

In this unit, we shall continue our discussion on George Orwell's novella, *Animal Farm* and relate our study to the basic principles of prose fiction discussed in Unit One and Two such as the plot, characterization, setting, point of view, and style of writing, the language of the text, the major theme and sub-themes in the text.

Learning outcome(s)

By the end of the unit, the participant will be able to:

1. Apply your understanding of the principles of prose fiction to the text under study.
2. Discussion the text as a prose fiction that reflects reality.
3. Make a judgement on the effectiveness of the approach used in delivering the message.

SESSION 1: SETTING AND POINT OF VIEW IN *ANIMAL FARM*

We have shared our understanding on the plot and structure of *Animal Farm*. In this session, we shall look at the setting in terms of time and place of the story. Also, we shall discuss the concept of point of view in relation to *Animal Farm*. We have indicated point of view or narrative perspective or narrative technique is a defining feature of prose narratives. Recall the narrative approaches we mentioned in Unit Two.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify the settings in the text using landmarks.
2. Discuss both the time and place setting of the story.
3. Identify and explain the point of view used in *Animal Farm*.
4. Discuss the literary significance of the point of view used in the text.

Setting as a place

Literarily, the story is set on an imaginary farm in (Europe) England with the nearby farms symbolizing other European countries in the neighbourhood (continent). This farm is first called Manor Farm, then the animals rename it Animal Farm to symbolize their freedom. The location as in England influences the entire life of the text. The names of places and people are pure English names. The songs, education, costumes, technology etc. are reflections of the English people. It must however be mentioned that in reality, the Manor Farm/Animal Farm symbolizes Union of Socialist Soviet Republic, a country that reflect Animal Farm during the reign of Snowball.

However, when Napoleon becomes their dictator, the previous name, Manor Farm, is retained. After the revolt, the previous owner of the farm, Mr. Jones flees to a town called Willingdon. Animal Farm shares boundaries with Pinchfield Farm which is owned by Mr. Frederick and Foxwood Farm which is also owned by Mr. Pilkington. It is on one of Foxwood farmhands where Molly is seen petting. The setting is a typical farmyard except that animals take over the management of activities on the farm. This setting is very important since it enhances the meaning

of the plot, making it more interesting. It has an influence on the characters as well. The setting enlightens the reader about the angry community of simple animal farms who revolt against their owner as well as all humans to form their own government. They have high aspirations which are drawn from Old Major's dream. The animals come up with their own rules to keep the revolt strong, to enhance free flowing activities on the farm and to ensure that all animals have equal treatment as well as equal share of everything. Their seven commandments are inscribed on the wall for everyone to see. These include, "All animals are created equal" and "Whatever goes on two legs is an enemy". Thus, with the spirit of animalism instilled in every animal, they build a windmill. This is an object of much contention on the farm that is rebuilt after being destroyed by a storm and subsequently by a group of farmers with "blasting powder".

Originally, the animals pledge to preserve the manor house as a museum, but as the power structure becomes more unbalanced, the pigs move into the house, which becomes their domain. The farmhouse symbolizes the new totalitarian rule of the pigs and is indeed indicative of the "revised" commandment: "All animals are created equal but some animals are more equal than others." With these new rules in place, the pigs begin to use the very things that are associated to man. Orwell, by restricting all the actions of the animal to the farmyard, creates a microcosm of society (symbolic of the then USSR).

However, the pigs begin to use everything on the farm, such as the farmhouse, the farm produce as well as the other animals themselves to bend the rules in their favour. This introduces the subplot of the common animals' quest for equality on the farm. The life there is presumably simple. It serves as a good site for the attainment of Old Major's dream. It is in this setting that Napoleon gets the opportunity to be a dictator. It is also an ideal platform for the implementation of development in the society. Allegorically, the setting is Soviet Russia. Orwell symbolizes Soviet Russia in this novella since the Russian revolution took place in a country where most of the inhabitants were peasants. Thus, the setting of the farm becomes ideal for this story.

Setting as a time

Although the story of *Animal Farm* takes place over a period of time and can be linked to the Russian Revolution, the timing is actually unspecified. The story actually depicts certain political events of the past and during the time it was being written. This allows the readers to date actions precisely. We can however make guesses as when the story is set. The period was witnessing ideological conflict; capitalism verses socialism, where England and Europe represented capitalism with Russia representing socialism. It can also be inferred that technology was at its growing stage. We read of Snowball championing the construction of windmill. The period also witnessed series of war of dominance. With these, we are guessing a period from the First World War through to the period USSR collapse for the region to embrace capitalism.

Point of View in *Animal Farm*

George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is written in the omniscient third person point of view. This narrator is never involved in the actions of the story. However, he seems to appear above everything that is happening. This means that the narrator knows and sees the things that the various characters know, feel, think or do on the farm. The narrator is never ignorant of anything that happens outside the farm since he follows the characters who go outside the farm. He is everywhere.

This narrator understands every happening in the story better than even some of the animals on the farm. As for the animals, they only understand what they hear and see. He equally knows the things prior to the start of the story. He is able to help the reader move freely within the story and draw a link between the previous activities and the current activities on the farm. He gives a vivid description of each character in the text and one can understand why a particular character acts the way he does. The use of the third person omniscient narrator helps the reader to understand the behaviour of each character in the story.

With this point of view, the narrator gets to understand dubious motives behind all the actions, utterances and decisions of Napoleon, the totalitarian leader and his accomplice, Squealer. The narrative style shows how easily the animals' collective decision and thoughts can be manipulated by their own kin and used to oppress them. This narrator draws the reader's attention to the hopes of the animals which are eventually dashed. Consequently, the reader becomes sympathetic towards the animals who now live in fear for their lives.

Also, the narrator reveals how the oppressed animals are used. And when they grow old and weak and are no longer useful, their new master, just like Mr. Jones, discards them off. Such is the fate of the likes of Boxer who toils day in and out for the hope of a better society. However, he does not live to see this dream materialize as he is sold to a glue factory when he loses his strength.

The point of view helps the reader distinguish between what a character thinks about himself and what the others think about him. For instance, the reader knows that Boxer believes he needs to work harder whenever there is a problem on the farm. The other animals found inspiration in his statement because he is always living up to his words. Also, the narrator helps the reader understand the character development of Napoleon, what he thinks about himself and what the other animals think about him. He is seen rising from the level of comradeship to the dictatorial fat pig. In this story, the sense of humour is not lost as the pigs are seen walking about on two legs.

Moreover, this point of view is very revealing, and it shows how easily the collective memory of the animals is manipulated into believing certain falsehood about the Battle of the Cowshed. Although the animals do not fully remember exactly what happened during that time, the reader is able to tell Napoleon is using propaganda to spread false rumours about Snowball's contribution to the battle.

The narrative point of view equally reveals the ironies that are created by the communal development on the farm. The animals find themselves in a pathetic situation when they put all their trust in the manipulative pigs. For example, the animals come back in the evening to see that the cow's milk is gone, but the narrator makes the reader know that Napoleon has taken it and the pigs are fattening themselves with it. Also, when Napoleon takes the new puppies away from their parents to "educate" them, the animals are left ignorant on what exactly happens. But the reader is hinted on the kind of education Napoleon actually gives the pigs. By emphasizing the gap between the knowledge of the inhabitants and the reader on procedures of the farm, the narration depicts how the trust of the common animal is ironically twisted into betrayal.

Literary Implications of the Point of View

There is objectivity in the narration. The technique in this text creates an unbiased commentary on the conduct of the characters since the narrator seems to be unaffiliated to any of the characters. Again, characters are revealed in their true nature as the narrator is able to get into their thought and follow them everywhere. On the blind sides of the animals, the narrator who is all seeing, provides the missing information. The reader therefore is more informed to make better judgement than any character in the text.

Key Ideas

- The story is set on an imaginary farm in (Europe) England with the nearby farms symbolizing other European countries in the neighbourhood (continent).
- The location as in England influences the entire life of the text.
- The period was witnessing ideological conflict; capitalism verses socialism, where England and Europe represented capitalism with Russia representing socialism.
- George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is written in the omniscient third person point of view.

Reflections

- How would I explain the settings and their effect on the roles play by characters?
- How relevant is the omniscient third person point of view?

Discussion

1. Discuss how landmarks influence the determination of the setting of the story.
2. Explain the relationship that builds between setting and culture of *Animal Farm*.
3. Citing examples from *Animal Farm*, discuss the literary significance of the point of view.
4. How is the point of view demonstrated in the text?

SESSION 2: THEME, SUB-THEMES, LANGUAGE AND STYLE IN ANIMAL

In this session, we will consider the main theme and sub-themes in the text we are studying. Also, we shall discuss how language is employed in the text. Finally, we will take a look at the style of writing.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Distinguish between the main theme of *Animal Farm* and the sub-themes of *Animal Farm*.
2. Discuss how both the theme and sub-themes are derived.
3. Discuss the language the writer adopts in *Animal Farm*.
4. Talk about the style of writing in *Animal Farm*.

Theme in *Animal Farm*

The central theme in animal farm is poor leadership breeds corruption. It is the main issue that runs through the story from the beginning where Mr. Jones is the owner of Manor Farm, till the end of the novel where Napoleon rules. This is drawn from the plot, setting and diction. The main theme in *Animal Farm* can also be derived from the characters' relationship on the farm. From the onset of

the novella, Mr. Jones is the owner of Manor Farm and so, he wields total power over the animals in it. He is a corrupt leader who produces nothing but takes everything the animals produce and leaves them with just enough to satisfy their hunger. It is realized that Mr. Jones constantly uses physical violence in the form of the whip to control the animals. He is particularly seen whipping the animals when they broke into the store shed. The animals joyfully sing about bringing an end to the crack of the “cruel whips” in *Beast of England* when the animalism ideal is sparked off in them. Consequently, the animals gang up to use this same violence in kicking out Mr. Jones and his farmhands. They are successful in destroying all of Mr. Jones’s whips.

Their revolt is successful, and they begin to work on building a society where all individuals are treated fairly. Initially, the animals are temporally liberated from the hunger and the whip. And all of them have an equal share of farm work and benefits. However, this equality remains an unfulfilled dream of Old Major because, the pigs turn to use their intelligence and power of rhetoric to control the other animals on the farm. The pigs appear to be serving the other animals, but they manipulate the unsuspecting animals to their own benefit. When Napoleon assumes Mr. Jones’s totalitarian leadership position, he is seen carrying a whip in his trotter, and the animals begin to fear him. The whip becomes a symbol of control. At the end of the story when the Seven Commandments are merged into the single commandment; “All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others”, all the whips that went into the flames were seen in the trotters of the pigs.

The text equally explores leadership leading to corruption. Starting from Mr. Jones, most of the characters who assume leadership positions eventually become corrupt. They capitalize on their position to exploit the others. For instance, the pigs deny the animals some delicacies, but they fatten themselves with it, arguing that they need milk and apples to develop their brains. Napoleon uses Squealer to persuade the other animals, and the dogs’ growl to silence them. The other animals only look on as the pigs sleep in beds with sheets, buy themselves wireless, install telephone system and subscribe to *John Bull*, *TitBits* and the *Daily Mail*, all of which are attributed to man. To emphasize the pigs’ corrupt attitude, they are seen drinking alcohol, and playing cards with men. The narrator satirizes the pigs with his description of their attempt to emulate man by walking on two legs.

Sub-themes in *Animal Farm*

a. Class stratification in society

Animal Farm offers commentary on the development of classes that were once unified against a common enemy - man. A division arises among the animals when the enemy is overthrown. When Mr. Jones is expelled, the leadership position become vacant and the elite pigs find it necessary to fill this power vacuum. They elevate themselves from the comrade position to the leader position as they make decisions and supervise works on the farm. This reinstates the previous division that existed between the elite supervisor and the naïve working-class individual. The class division is realized when some individuals claim belong to a better section of a community than others in the same community. This is reflected in the amended commandment that reads; “All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others”.

b. **The plight of naïve working class in a society**

Early in the novella, the pigs learn to read and write, and try to teach all other animals to do same. This is because; they realize that education is a very important factor in their communal life. Unfortunately, the other animals are not as smart as the pigs and so are not even able to master the commandments as the pigs have done. The pigs in turn capitalize on this ignorance and impose their will on the working-class animals. It is not very surprising to see Boxer always conclude that “Napoleon is always right” whenever they are faced with a dilemma. The working class in *Animal Farm* suffer the consequences of their inability to question the authority.

c. **The use of language as a manipulative tool in society**

In *Animal Farm*, the pigs learn at a very early stage about the power of language. The oratory is a powerful tool for manipulation. Squealer is the main character who has the ability to persuade in maintaining Napoleon in power. Squealer and Napoleon are able to alter the commandments without the animals noticing it. They only understand what they are told. This is because they can't read. For instance, the rules: “No animal shall drink alcohol” was revised to “No animal shall drink alcohol in excess” and “No animal shall sleep in bed” was altered to “No animal shall sleep in bed with sheets”. Although Clover couldn't remember the new additions, he isn't smart enough to point out the changes. The pigs added these extra words to change the rules in their favour. However, to the other animals, the fact that there is an inscription on the wall is enough. Again, Squealer and Napoleon are able to use the power of rhetoric to rewrite the history of *Animal Farm*. In their version, Snowball becomes a traitor of the animals and an ally of Mr. Jones. Consequently, anyone who sides with Snowball automatically becomes a traitor and is executed. Notably, the pigs manipulate language in order to ensure their continuous stay in power.

The language of *Animal Farm*

We discussed diction in Unit One as the choice of words and arrangement of such words for literary effect. What is your observation on the use of language in the story?

The language is simple and straight forward. The statements from the animals are often brief and loaded with devotion. Some of these become slogans that are often repeated by the speakers. Some examples of these are: “Forward Comrades”, “I will work harder”, “Napoleon is always right”. The speakers of these statements always put them into action, particularly Boxer. On the contrary, the elite are mostly found giving long speeches much of which are just vain promises. Orwell uses language to paint the necessary imagery, thus sending his desired message across to readers.

The language of the narration gives insight into the characteristics of each character. The diction hints on the pigs' intelligence. And this foreshadows how they eventually oppress the other animals. Although they are smart, they still spend a lot of time in understanding Old Major's principles of Animalism.

Style in *Animal Farm*

Every writer has a unique way of delivering his message. This is called style. Also, the subject of a story determines the style to adopt. *Animal Farm* is seen as a commentary on the struggle between

two political ideologies. Discussing such topics is likely to affect major political characters. To avoid this, George Orwell writes an allegorical novella in which he depicts these political situations of societies. He engages symbolic animal characters that reflect these ideologies. The writer also uses a false name. By these, he conceals the identities in the story and behind it. Fables are easily appreciated by all readers. We believe you have watched the cartoon movie on *Animal Farm*. Did you enjoy it? That is the effect of the style. The involvement of animals in crucial political ideologies creates awe in readers and thus deepens suspense. He depicts instances of political campaigns with the speeches made by Old Major and the other pigs. Old Major's speech is very significant as it leads to the rebellion. The song, "Beast of England" is sang as a rally song in the story. The tune adopted underlines the satire in the novella as it is a blend of two different tunes.

Orwell's writing is simple and straight forward. He makes the language simple to reflect the characters as he uses both dialogue and continues prose to keep the novella alive and interesting. The text is written in the past tense which indicates that the actions in the story have already happened and are being reported by the narrator. He hints on his satirical intent with instances such as Mollie admiring herself in a mirror, the pigs reading and writing as well as climbing a ladder, and the reader wonders how possible it is for a pig to put pen to paper. By this, Orwell also mocks corrupt elite leaders like the pigs who eventually walk on two legs, wear clothes and sleep in beds. Orwell uses satire in this fable to criticize the ills of communist ideologies by corrupt individuals.

Key Ideas

- The central theme in animal farm is poor leadership breeds corruption.
- The language is simple and straight forward.
- *Animal Farm* is seen as a commentary on the struggle between two political ideologies.
- Orwell uses satire in this fable to criticize the ills of communist ideologies by corrupt individuals.

Reflections

- How would explain the central theme of *Animal Farm* to your colleagues?
- How effective is the satire in this fable?

Discussion

- In the context of *Animal Farm*, examine the view that power breeds corrupt leaders.
- Identify three subject matters and develop a theme from each.
- How does the writer sustain your interest in reading the text?
- Examine the choice of words in the principle of Animalism and comment on it.

UNIT 5: A STUDY OF KWAKYE'S *THE CLOTHES OF NAKEDNESS*

In this Unit, we will study Benjamin Kwakye's *The Clothes of Nakedness*. The discussion will begin with a general background of the story, look at the title and present the plot of the story. Key elements such as the setting will be examined, looking at the types and its effects on the story and characters. We will also identify the major and minor characters. Point of view, a critical defining feature of the prose text shall be discussed. A journey through these well-structured aspects of the prose text will equip you with the skills to analyse any prose text.

Learning outcome(s)

By the end of the unit, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify and discuss the elements of prose fiction.
2. Discuss the content of *The Clothes of Nakedness*.
3. Identify and analyse the elements in Kwakye's *The Clothes of Nakedness*.
4. Apply the concepts and skills in analysing other literary texts.

SESSION 1: GENERAL BACKGROUND, THE TITLE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

This session seeks to show the link between the author and his story, and the social context that makes the story real. The concept of verisimilitude comes to play through this approach. It also attempts to provide the plot of the story. In The session further looks at the title of the novel, find its source and discuss its relevance to the development of the story. The session is built on the assumption that, in literature, every aspect of the text contributes to the complete understanding and analysis of the text.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. State the social context within which the story situates.
2. Narrate the story line of the text.
3. Explain the title as an Akan proverb.
4. Discuss the place of oral literature in a written text.

General Background to the story

Benjamin Kwakye is a Ghanaian, who left Ghana right after his secondary school education and continued at Dartmouth College in USA and Harvard Law School to train as lawyer. *The Clothes of Nakedness* is his first novel and it was published in the year 1998. In this novel, Kwakye sets out to write something uniquely Ghanaian, 'something that he might have not experienced in a long while. Or something he would have to second-guess. Maybe something that came from his memory'. This something would have to be born from filtration and emotional osmosis. It is an imaginative creativity that appeals to the realities of life especially life in the modern city. *The Clothes of Nakedness* is about power and corruption as well as class and society. The hint of its content is in the title. In the text, the author exposes the temptations that await the vulnerable in the modern urban communities. In the story he places two communities together and compares lives and how

people of one take advantage of the other. The major issue in the text the struggles the poor go through as elements of manipulation. In effect, *The Clothes of Nakedness* examines the complexities of human interactions and, in the process, offers a gritty expose of relations between rich and poor in modern Ghana.

The Story Line (Plot)

What picture do you see on the cover page? Does it suggest anything? At least we can see a drinking spot named “Kill me Quick” (I guess you know what kill me quick is). We can see both men and women drinking. There is also a man dressed in a suit and wearing a shade, standing beside a Mercedes Benz car. This gives us a clue to the two contrasting characters we are going to read about. Can you identify the broad groups of characters we are going to read about?

The story opens with Bukari, an out of job taxi driver, and his friend at the usual place of the unemployed in a close knit community – a drinking spot – to drink away their worries. It is during this time that an unfamiliar gentleman, described as “... a bored chameleon” appeared at the “Kill me Quick” spot and offered generosity and friendship. The nicely dressed gentleman gets to know of the predicaments of the people of the community and decides to offer help. He comes from the nearby affluent community as an assistant to a rich man. This gentleman promises and manages to get a taxi for Bukari to drive and give him a percentage of Bukari’s salary. The gentleman goes ahead to scheme how to get Bukari’s son, Baba, to be a newspaper vendor so that he exploit the young boy too. The gentleman also decides to offer and sell marijuana to a group of boys nicknamed “441”. Bukari’s allegiance to this gentleman opens doors for him to have access to Bukari’s household. He introduces Bukari to prostitutes at Nkrumah Circle. The worst to happen to Bukari is the attempt by this gentleman to rape Fati, Bukari’s wife. In all these, there were other friends of Bukari that he took advantage of. There is one friend that the gentleman could not take advantage of. Do you know his name and he could not be exploited? As we go through the text, you should be familiar with the names and roles of the characters.

The plot follows the basic structure of exposition, rising action to the climax, then through falling action to resolution. The twenty chapter book follows this consistently from chapter one where the major characters, key setting and the main conflict are introduced. Exposition in chapter one rises through the climax where the gentleman attempts to rape Fati to the last chapter where the resolution is reached, Kofi Ntim and Esi get married and live off the manipulation of the explorer.

The Title of the Story

What is the title of the text? Have you had someone using it? Do you understand it? Let us open our books to the sheet before page one. Let’s read together:

If Nakedness promises you clothes, hear his name
(Akan proverb)
It is the fool whose own tomatoes are sold to him
(Akan proverb)

The title *The Clothes of Nakedness* is culled from the Akan proverb above. The title, woven as an epigram provides a witty background within which the story and its main characters will be examined. Our understanding of the proverb makes the story relevant to us. As we read the story

questions that pop up are “what is nakedness”, “who is who is associated with nakedness?” and “what cloth is nakedness promising to provide?” the broader question is “how do the answers to the above questions play out in the story.

The second proverb, also an Akan proverb “It is the fool whose own tomatoes are sold to him” provides a preview of a person whose farm produce are harvested by someone and sold to him. Can you associate the second proverb with any character in the story?

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

(Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *A Psalm of Life*)

Can you explain Longfellow’s *A Psalm of Life* above in the light of the story? As you read the book, the meanings to the epigrams will become clearer.

Oral Literature in Written literature

Do you see a possibility of having oral literature in a written literature? The two have a beautiful relationship. What is the difference between the two? Discuss with your friends.

It’s evident that oral literature has been antecedent to written literature and in some cases; it serves to augment the written text. Oral literature provides a setting flavour in the text as well as introducing indigenous knowledge and consciousness into the otherwise alien practice. The author in addition, uses local terms, items and linguistic structures as a means of linking the text to its primary readership.

In *The Clothes of Nakedness*, the author plays a singular role of explaining and contextualizing the proverb. The use of the proverb and its contextualization makes the story real and easy to associate with. As you read the text, you will identify element of oral literature and discuss its relevance in the story.

Key Ideas

- The author aimed at painting a picture of life in an urban society; the plight of the vulnerable in the hands of the advantaged.
- The plot follows the basic structure of exposition, rising action to the climax, then through falling action to resolution.
- Exposition in chapter one rises through the climax where the gentleman attempts to rape Fati to the last chapter where the resolution is reached, Kofi Ntim and Esi get married and live off the manipulation of the explorer.
- The title is derived from an Akan proverb and that the entire story is an exposition on the proverb in context.

Reflections

- How would I explain the title of the novel to a friend?
- How does the plot develop in this story?

Discussion

1. State the social context within which the story situates.
2. What is the meaning of the title?
3. Who is referred to as “nakedness” and why?

SESSION 2: CHARACTER, SETTING AND POINT OF VIEW IN *THE CLOTHES OF NAKEDNESS*

In this session, we will first examine some characters we may describe as major and minor in the novel. These are very important blocks of the plot. Secondly, we shall identify the major chronological and geographical settings in the text. I hope you remember the importance setting in a literary text. The culture of a literary text is determined by the setting as the time and place defines the conduct of a people. Finally, we shall discuss the perspective of presentation in *The Clothes of Nakedness*. In discussing the elements of prose fiction, we mentioned that the major defining feature of prose fiction is the narrative technique (also called point of view or perspective of presentation).

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Explain the terms “major and minor character” in literary context.
2. Discuss the character and role of selected characters as major or minor characters.
3. Relate the setting with the characteristics of the characters.
4. Explain the perspective of presentation employed in the text.

What is a Major Character?

A major character in simple terms is described as any character on whom a story revolves; in other words, the major character is an indispensable character whose absence from the story renders the story void. Does the explanation bring to mind any such a character in the novel? We are going to characterize few of the major characters as a guide to help you characterize others.

a. **Mystique Mysterious**

The first character to talk about, is Mystique Mysterious, who is arguably “the protagonist”. A protagonist is the main or central character of a narrative work. We get attracted to this character as we enter the story. The narrative opens with a description of him that “He moved slowly, like a bored chameleon” (p.1) in the opening sentence of the novel. His name is symbolic of his strange and wily ways (Mwinlaaru & Nkansah, 2018). This is seen in the description of his movement at the opening of the novel.

“He moved slowly, like a bored Chameleon....”

A chameleon changes skin colour and blends in with its external environment as a camouflage.

Then finally, the narrator introduces him thus, “this is the man they called Mystique Mysterious” (p.1). That is, the figure around whom all the action revolves. As his name suggests, he is a character who is shrouded in mystery.

His physical appearance also draws attention. “It was impossible to tell, because his eye were always hidden behind a pair of dark sunglasses, his barrier against the curiosity of those were drawn by his unnatural quality of energy and power” (p.1). On the same page, we are told that in contrast to his usual slow movement, “the only swiftness in his movement was the sharp motion of his tongue, flickering through his lips and back again.” That is what this character is; what comes close to being his name— Mystique Mysterious.

Due to the economic status of Nima, Mystique Mysterious looks for avenues to become rich. This leads to his manipulative and deceitful ways. Later in the book, we are made aware that he drives “Range Rover” (p.137) a sign of richness. The people of Nima are ready to embrace anyone who provides them jobs and basic needs. It is evident that Mysterious owns nothing. He is a steward to Mr. Denyi so he has access to Mr. Denyi’s vehicles and (Mr. Denyi) asks him to recruit drivers. Like the chameleon, he then poses as a rich man. Mystique Mysterious helps Bukari and Kojo Ansah to get taxis to drive and they pay him percentages of their wages. He offers Baba the opportunity to sell newspapers and Baba pays Mysterious a portion of the commission. Mysterious introduces the 441 Crowd to drugs as an opportunity to sell drugs to them when they are hooked on it. He introduces Bukari to prostitutes and eventually ruins Bukari’s home. When Kojo Ansah tried to prove difficult to manipulate, he schemes to get him executed.

Mysterious is the brain behind all the criminal activities in the novel and like the trickster character, he escapes punishment but gets others punished for his crimes. Through Mystique Mysterious, one can establish several themes in the novel.

b. **Gabriel Bukari**

The next major character who contributes greatly to the story is Gabriel Bukari, the husband of Fati and has a son, Baba. Bukari is a migrant from the north (pp.22-24) whose arrival in Accra has seen several challenges. One of such challenges is his involvement with Fati which got Fati disowned by her rich father. He is a fine gentleman whose friends believed him to be a kind hearted but marked by sadness and discomfort as a result of several months of being unemployed.

Bukari is first seen in chapter one (p.3) when he is mentioned as one of the patrons of aunt Esi’s bar. Fati sees Bukari to be a great and brave husband; though he is unemployed, he appreciates what his wife does for him in the family. He is calm and objective in his responses to issues (p.6).

He lives in Nima and as Nima is perceived as a deprived area one could imagine his economic status. Because of the scene of hardship in his community, he falls prey to Mystic Mysterious when he offered him a job which he willingly accepted without thinking of the terms and conditions applied. Secondly, because of where he lives, he sees everyone who offered him an opportunity to live a comfortable life as a “smaller god” who has come to redeem him from his poor state (p.8). Bukari is offered employment by Mr. Denyi through Mysterious and he pays 15% of the wage. His sense of gratitude makes him so vulnerable to Mysterious that he obeys every word that Mysterious speaks. Mysterious takes advantage of this to influence him into drinking and womanizing. When Mysterious felt exposed in his attempt to rape Fati, Mysterious influenced Mr. Denyi who dismissed Bukari (p.188). He then gave in to drinking as he realized that the moment with Mysterious got him to disorganize his home. Bukari no longer took care of his wife and son as he had become promiscuous. Bukari lost his life when he was going to get Joojo to help him plead with Fati to accept him but unfortunately, Bukari was hit by a truck.

Bukari is the main character that brings the concealed evil in Mysterious’ benevolence. He plays a crucial role in the development of the plot just as much as Mystic Mysterious, in getting the conflict well advanced. Bukari reveals some subject matters in the novel such as a quest for survival, love, betrayal, indecisiveness among other.

c. **Kofi Ntim**

Another major character who features in the novel is Kofi Ntim. According to the narrator, Kofi Ntim is an ugly looking man who talks a lot and has greater level of knowledge as compared to the other characters. Ntim is a sanguine, witty, smart, and eloquent, and knows the craft of the trickster. But he uses his craft to protect his self-interest against the trickster. He is a friend to Kojo Ansah and Gabriel Bukari. He happens to be one of the victim of Mystic Mysterious who fall prey to his traps. Though he has been able to bargain with Mystic Mysterious to a lower percentage, he has still helped Mystic Mysterious to succeed in executing his plans. He is popularly known as “philosopher nonsense”. This is because he speaks recklessly to anyone and question everything that happens. He has played the role of a lover to Esi at the end of the story. This therefore adds to the subject of love that the writer tries to project. He sometimes appears as a comic character with his main conflict in the text. Thus, the cunning strategy of Mystique Mysterious gets Kofi into his realm as well as other characters which marks the inception of the main conflict in the novel.

Kofi Ntim has been a formidable friend to Kojo Ansah and Bukari. He provided a hiding place for Ansah and attempted defend Ansah until the threat become too scary for him. When Bukari was expelled by Mr, Denyi, Ntim was at hand to buy him a bottle of drink to calm and console him. He is dynamic character as he changes with the development of the plot.

Kofi Ntim’s role in the novel is to serve as a foil to Mystique Mysterious whose sole intent is to exploit and destroy his victims.

What is a minor Character

Minor characters can be described as characters who are not the main focus of a literary work but interact with the major characters to make the plot complete. The minor character is the catalyst that brings out the traits in the major character. The minor character therefore helps the major character to develop. Can you identify a character whose interaction with a major character reveals the inner traits of the major character?

a. Kojo Ansah

Kojo Ansah is another minor character worth discussing. He is quiet as against Kofi Ntim who is an extrovert. He is said to be a teetotaler (He doesn't drink). As a result of his nature, Mystique Mysterious finds it difficult to manipulate him like Bukari. He is very contemplative and speaks less. This makes Mysterious uncomfortable round him. He refused to make friends with Mystique mysterious when he approached him. Kojo Ansah seems to have suspected the interior motive that Mystique Mysterious has in trying to make friends with them. He is seen as treat (foil) to Mystique Mysterious as he watches the latter when he supplies hard drugs sneakingly to the 441 crowd in Nima. He tries to expose Mystique mysterious in order to become a hero. He foils Mysterious' attempt to rape Fati. These make him a target for Mysterious to eliminate. Mysterious instigate the 441 Crowd to suspect and implicate Kojo Ansah in the murder of Madman. The strong character of Kojo Ansah emerges when he proved a danger for Kofi Ntim to hide Kojo Ansah in his room. Kofi Ntim's advice for Kojo Ansah to run away to Apam was reject; a mark of a man whose conviction is firm. However, he is falls vulnerable to Mysterious as he accepts a job from Mysterious but tricks Mysterious in the commission he is to pay Mysterious. Again, he couldn't sustain his detest for alcohol; he gets drunk at a time he needn't drink. That is when his knife is used in killing madman; an evidence that sends him to the executioners. He is symbolizes character that symbolizes the challenges that sometimes make the work of the trickster difficult. Through Ansah's interaction with Mysterious, we learn that Mysterious is the character who will go all length to eliminate an obstacle.

b. Baba

One other minor character is Baba, son of Fati and Bukari. He is sixteen years old. We first encounter him when Mysterious identified Baba in a broken stall with some boys (pp.28-29). Mystic Mysterious sees Baba as a young man who can be easily manipulated. Mysterious immediately echoes Baba's vulnerability and gave him a bundle of cedi notes. Baba is an indisciplined character; he is affected by the setting (Nima) which is described as a society of indiscipline and lawlessness. This becomes evident when Baba urinates on the school wall and is confronted by an elderly man, Baba rains insult on him and tries to fool the man (p.40). baba is a high school truant (p.15). Again, Baba lacks the control of his parents. In crucial moments, Baba seeks advice from Mystique Mysterious and it is these that bring Baba out and makes him open to all forms of temptation and manipulations. As a teenager in love, he conceals his amorous adventures from his parents but seeks advice from Mysterious (p.141). Mysterious helps Baba to find jobs to make money just to take of Adukwei. Baba is an indecisive character; he does not know

whom to love. He is easily manipulated by Mysterious. An instance is when he contemplates on choosing between Janet and Adukwei (p.155). Mysterious' advice finally sends him to the police cell. All the above make Baba an easy tool of manipulation to destroy himself. His development in the plot makes the reader see how children are treated as objects, immature and ignorant, and are denied attention and recognition.

Baba also reveals the subject of love in the novel, when he goes the extra mile to work harder to prove his love for Adukwei and showers her with gifts. Baba shows a sign of maturing when his mother tells him of his father's death. Baba, immediately, assumes the role of responsibility in finding food for his mother. The child is at a crossroad in this novel. Is he given the opportunity to develop or destroy? Baba is symbolic of all teenagers who are in such dilemma.

c. **Fati**

Fati is the wife of Bukari and a mother of Baba. Fati exemplifies genuine love. Fati's father was a rich principled moslem businessman called Ahmed Yussef who lived at the Airport Residential Area in Accra (Read pp.66-70). She fell in love with Gabriel Bukari, a common driver to her father, and a Christian who got her pregnant at sixteen and she suffered the consequence of being out of her father's house. However, the love between Fati and Bukari has survived all difficult times. Though the family does not have much, he have lived happily. Fati has lived at the blind side of Bukari's promiscuity until Esi informed her. Fati appears a responsible mother as she spends time with her son. However, when she fails in this, Baba goes wayward. Fati's sense of naivety nearly gets her raped by Mysterious. Fati is a symbol of a sincere wife and loving mother whose yearn is to give spaces to husband and son to develop.

d. **Esi**

Another minor character in the novel is Esi. She seems hardworking and committed to her job, thus, there is no day recorded she absents herself from work. She is welcoming and has a lively nature which she uses in sustaining customers (p. 2). Her good attitude and relation with her customers always made them come back. Esi could be described as one with sympathy and this can be seen in the drinking competition between Kofi Ntim and Madman. Esi suggested that Mystique Mysterious stops buying drinks for them since she felt pity for the Madman. Also, her character could be seen as helping Fati to know the truth about her husband's change in behaviour when she told Fati's friend about what was going on in Bukari's life and felt pity for him and his wife as well. Though Kofi Ntim always quarreled with Esi, Esi proved a good inspiration and support for Kofi Ntim (p.221). Esi presented in the novel as the strength of woman that calms bad tempers and supports man to achieve greatness. She is symbolic in the text.

e. **Denyi**

Henry Danyi is also a rich man who lives in Kanda. He is a victim to Mystique Mysterious because he trusts Mystique Mysterious in such a way that, Mystique Mysterious uses him as a tool to find jobs for his victims or preys. Henry Danyi invites

Bukari and interviews for a job and all that Mysterious does is to vouch for Bukari (pp.31-32) and this attracts 15% of Bukari's wage without Denyi's knowing. When Bukari falls out with Mysterious, Mysterious manipulate Denyi to dismiss Bukari as his taxi driver. Mysterious again uses Joe and Janet, members of Denyi's household to punish Baba. Mysterious gets Baba to try his luck on Janet's love by getting Baba to a job as a gardener and sneaks into the house. Baba is caught and put in police cells. Henry Denyi is a manipulative tool in the hands of Mysterious.

f. **The 441 Crowd**

The 441 Crowd in Nima are also a group of young men with youthful exuberance. They meet at 441 and talk about their lives. Though the appearance of Mysterious to their meeting was a surprise, their gullibility made Mysterious use them for his selfish games. He offers them cigarette, discusses its "strength" and then introduces marijuana to the boys (pp.27-28). When they are hooked onto the drug, he enriches himself by supplying them marijuana. Upon the death of Madman, Mysterious instigates the boys against Kojo Ansah (p.202). The 441 Crowd becomes a group of organized young men who are manipulated to achieve personal selfish programmes. These acts of the 441 Crowd, greatly influenced by Mysterious exemplifies how such groups are financed by politicians and the powerful to protect their interest. The symbolic essence of 441 Crowd is their representation of all such groups and their predicaments.

g. **Madman**

Madman is one of the customers of Esi's "Kill Me Quick" bar. He sounds very comic and his words are not taken serious by other characters. Madman's biting comments Mysterious set him up to face the wrath of Mysterious. He goes into "akpeteshie contest" with Kofi Ntim but he loses. The death of Madman demonstrates gross callousness on the part of the murderer. The weaving of Kojo Ansah into the murder of Madman affirmed the evil nature of Mysterious.

Setting as Date/Time

Diyanni (2008) defines setting as the place or location of a story's action along with time in which it occurs. Let us remind ourselves of what we discussed in unit one. Setting comprises two types namely; backdrop and integral settings. Backdrop setting emerges when it is important for a story. Integral setting is when the place and time influence theme, characters and actions in a story. In this type, setting controls the characters in the sense that if the writer confines a certain character to a particular setting, it will define the character. According to Kennedy (1987), setting can make things happen. Prompt characters to act, bring them to realizations or cause them to reveal their innermost nature.

What do you think is the time setting the novel? Difficult to mention?

Though it is not mentioned in the novel, there are chronological landmarks that will guide us to make meaningful guesses. Can you give a hint of anything that could give us a clue? The narrator indicates that

"Most of the dwellings were built during the colonial period or soon afterwards, and although they had

aged, care and refurbishment had kept the structures and surroundings impressive and charming (p.30).

This indicates that chronological period is after the independence of Ghana. The image of Mystique Mysterious evoked contemporariness. We are told that "... his eyes were hidden behind a pair of sunglasses" (p.1) and he drives a contemporary car as in "When they were out of Nima, they stepped in Mystique Mysterious' Range Rover and drove in silence ... (p.137). There were other indications that point to the fact that the story was setting in the post-colonial period of Ghana. It is therefore proper to describe the story as a post-colonial story. As you read, identify the landmarks that support the view expressed above.

Setting as a Place

In *The Clothes of Nakedness*, the main settings are the contrasting Nima and Kanda in postcolonial Accra, separated from each other by a road that runs through them. Nima is noted for its influx of people from all parts of Ghana, especially from the northern part of Ghana – Bukari migrated from Wa – and other parts of West Africa. This explains why we have characters like Bukari, Fati, Baba, and Issaka among other reflecting the names in northern Ghana Nima is an impoverished, congested and badly laid out community with most of its inhabitants being unemployed.. Like any such community, it has a degree of lawlessness with all forms of social vices. An instance is the 441 group who were drug addicts and drunkards, and teenagers who are abandoned by their parents to fend for themselves. Bukari and Fati's relationship is an example. Though they couple was struggling to take care of their son, Baba, he had to sell newspapers to take of himself and his teenage girlfriend, Adukwei. The characters here are highly vulnerable and easy prey for predators. It becomes obvious then that Mystique Mysterious takes advantage of this situation to exploit every character he encounters from/in Nima.

Kanda on the other hand is place of affluence with its inhabitants being well-to-do, respectable people and also there is law and order. Kanda as a neighbourhood has a well laid-out plan of settle (Estate houses) with serene and calm environment (atmosphere). With these set of settings, the author determines and controls the characters due to the places they find themselves. Example, Gabriel Bukari who lives in Nima with his family, lives in a compound house where they share a common bathhouse. Also, the interior of his room describe in page 15, shows how impoverished he is. With few employment opportunities, Bukari has been unemployed for eight months. In contrast to Bukari, Henry Denyi is a well to –do business man who live in Kanda. He is so rich that, he even offers Bukari a driving job.

Also, the setting brings out some themes in the story. As Nima is an impoverished society and so they live in compound houses, a form of communalism and neighbourly love is seen among them. For instance, Bukari, his wife, the Jojo family and that of the Issaka always sit together in the evening to converse and interact. . Esi's "Kill me quick" drinking spot, we see Bukari and his friends, Kojo Ansah and Kofi Ntim sit and converse, tease and share their problems almost every evening. Kanda where everyone stays in their homes. This theme of friendship and solidarity is typical of a place like Nima. With Nima being an impoverished community, parents and guardians go about looking for their daily bread to feed their family and so parental control is not as effective

as that of the parents in Kanda. This is why Baba, the son of Bukari and Fati, drops out of school and roams about, he leaves and comes back to the house anyhow and at any time.

Lastly, as a lawless place, Mystique Mysterious exploits the vulnerable inhabitants of Nima as a result of their economic status. These exploitations include giving the 441 group drugs for free as a way of hooking and addicting them to the drugs, promising Kofi Ntim, Bukari and Baba works which he enjoyed interest from their wages. As a result of the nature of Nima, we are exposed to Mystique Mysterious' character which brings to light the theme of power and corruption. He succeeded in corrupting the better moral life of Bukari by luring him to become "promiscuous" chapter (p.84). He also turned Baba into a money searching child who worked for money in order to satisfy Adukwei's happiness so that he does not lose her to "older rich men"; (p.122). He again uses his power to order men to beat Kofi Ntim when he refused to pay his share of his wages as agreed (pp.128-29) and above all, he made moves on Fati, Bukari's wife, which eventually led to Bukari's dismissal and subsequent death. All these acts of Mysterious did not happen in Kanda due to the presence of law and order. An instance of law and order in Kanda can be seen on (p.193) when Joe saw Baba in the Denyi household. He refused to beat him but left him in the hands of the law, the police.

Point of View

Omniscient narrative approach

What narrative approach do you see used in the novel? Is the narrator a character in the story? Give reasons to support your answer. Reading through the text, it is evident that the narrator is not a character in the story but the narration of events and situations is done by an outside entity. In other words, the author presents the narration through the senses and thoughts of someone who is not in the story. The writer presents the actions, hopes, aspirations and other psychological and emotional states of the characters through an overarching godlike perspective that sees and knows everything that happens and everything the characters are thinking. What dominant pronoun is used in the story? There is an extensive use of the third person pronouns and all the variants. The story opens

He moved slowly, like a bored chameleon. **It** was as though **his** steps were a chore performed with difficulty but necessary for the accomplishment of compelling objectives (p.1)

The tone of the story clearly shows that the narrator is a distant away from the story. References to characters and situation or events do not reflect a close link with the narrator.

It must be stressed that as the story reflects dynamic human engagements, there are instances of other forms of communication such as dialogue between characters, characters reflecting/communicating through thought and even characters narrating events in the story. In of all these, it is the dominant approach that becomes the defining characteristic of the text.

Literary Significance of Omniscient Narrative Technique

The stories that have a great number of happenings and characters have to be narrated via omniscient narrator, because only he can see all the aspects and be aware of everything. In this narration, narrator has a general view towards everything and might present many issues that are not

much related to the story. Narrator not only does say what goes on in the minds of characters, but also criticizes them.

Omniscient narrative allows the author/narrator to distance himself/herself from the story. This imbues the story with truthfulness as the personal biases of narrator is minimized.

It also provides space for unsolicited information to be made available to the reader to enhance comprehensive understanding of the text.

The omniscient narrative approach permits the narrator comment on the attitude and thoughts of the characters. This broadens the scope of analysis.

The approach creates space for the other narrative approaches to find expression. The narrative technique allows for dialogue, limited omniscient narrative and even stream of consciousness. It opens door for multi-perspectival approach.

Key Ideas

- A major character in simple terms is described as any character on whom a story revolves; in other words, the major character is an indispensable character whose absence from the story renders the story void.
- Mystique Mysterious, who is arguably “the protagonist”. A protagonist is the main or central character of a narrative work.
- The minor character is the catalyst that brings out the traits in the major character.
- The main settings are the contrasting Nima and Kanda in postcolonial Accra, separated from each other by a road that runs through them.
- The narrative technique allows for dialogue, limited omniscient narrative and even stream of consciousness.

Reflections

- How do I identify a character in the novel as major or minor?
- What makes the settings describe in the novel realistic?
- How does the narrative approach help me to enjoy the story?

Discussion

- Why would you describe Mystique Mysterious as the protagonist of the story?
- Discuss the character and role of Kofi Ntim in the text.
- Discuss the character and role of Kojo Ansah in the text.
- How do the contrasting settings help the themes to develop?
- Discuss three factors that show that the narrative approach is omniscient.

UNIT 6: LITERARY APPRECIATION OF KWAKYE'S *THE CLOTHES OF NAKEDNESS*

In this Unit, we shall focus on the literary interpretations of some of the elements of Prose Fiction.

Learning outcome(s)

By the end of the unit, the participant will be able to:

1. Explain the literary representations of characters and settings in the text.
2. Identify the language and discuss the imagery employed.
3. Tease out the major issues exemplified in the text and discuss them.

SESSION 1: STYLE, SYMBOLIC CHARACTERS AND SYMBOLIC SETTINGS

In this session, we are looking at the approach the writer adopted to make his delivery effective. We are also going further to identify significant characters as representatives of social concepts and not entities in themselves. This will enable us broaden our understanding of literature as a reflection of society. Lastly, we shall delve deeper into the settings of the novel and relate the setting to the traits and conduct of the characters and thematic concerns that emerge from the setting. We are considering the settings as symbolic entities and not entities in themselves.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Explain the characteristics of the style and relate it to the text.
2. Explain the characters to reflect the concepts.
3. Relate the conduct of the characters to the setting
4. Draw in some thematic concerns that reflect the setting.

Style

Style is the unique and efficient ways a writer employs in his writing. The unique and efficient ways a writer employs depends on the use of language, setting, imagery, symbolism, thematic issues and characters, and among other technique which are employed in the story. The unique style Kwakye employs in *The Clothes of Nakedness* is the use of the trickster figure which is a popular character in Akan (and Ghanaian folklore) story-telling known as Anansesem. Share with the class a story that has a trickster character to illustrate. Efua T. Sutherland in her foreword in *The Marriage of Ananewa* defines the trickster character as “a kind of Everyman, artistically exaggerated and distorted to serve society as a medium for self-examination. He has a penetrating awareness of the nature and psychology of human beings and animals. He is also made to mirror in his behaviour fundamental human passion, ambitions, and follies as revealed in contemporary situations”. Basically, it is a situation when a character pretends helping others but gains from his cunning ways. Sometimes he is caught and punished while in most cases he goes uncaught. Finnegan (2012) also points out that the trickster character divert the punishment of his own misdeeds onto other, deceive them into endangering themselves or their own relations, scarce them away from harming him, gobble up their food and pretend innocent and finds a way to outdo larger animals in race.

The Clothes of Nakedness as a Trickster Tale

In view of the characteristics of the trickster character described above, any reader of this novel will quickly agree Mystique Mysterious shows such characteristics in *The Clothes of Nakedness*. It is evident that throughout the novel, Mysterious pretends offering helping hands to the needy and the vulnerable. However, reading the novel, one realizes that Mystique Mysterious does that to his benefit and those that he help rather suffer at the end. This is a trickster. It must also be indicated that anyone who stands in his way is dealt with in a manner no one can associate him with the crime. Recount the incidents of Mystique Mysterious' seeming benevolence. Show how this kindness benefitted him.

Mystique Mysterious is portrayed as a rich man at the beginning of novel. Mystique Mysterious according to the narrator is respected, feared and fascinated by the by all people including male, female, adult and children. He visits "Kill Me Quick" and meets three men he quickly takes advantage of. He helps Bukari and Ansah to get employment and gets 15% or 8% from them respectively.

Mystique Mysterious gives marijuana to the 441 boys as a kind gesture but through this he introduces them to drugs and gets them to buy from him. Influenced by the drugs, the 441 boys are employed to kill Madman in order to erase suspicion about him and his wrong deeds. Mystique Mysterious uses the 441 boys to divert the attention of the people and succeeds in accusing Kojo Ansah of the death of Madman. Mystique Mysterious cunningly gets Kojo Ansah executed, thus eliminating another big threat (Kojo Ansah) from his way (Chapter 19).

Mystique Mysterious' support to Bukari, Fati and Baba only resulted in a broken home. He introduces Bukari to promiscuous life and he dies at the end. Mysterious attempts to rape Fati after Mysterious had got Bukari to leave his wife to go after prostitutes at Nkrumah Circle. He is cause of the collapse of Bukari's family and loss of Fati's dignity as a woman, a wife and dignified member of the society. Mysterious introduces Baba to making money in order to take care of Adukwei. Mysterious also get Baba an employment at the Denyi's where Baba fall in love with Janet (a girl who has no love for Baba). Through Mysterious' machination, Baba is arrested as a thief, an act that portrays society as irresponsible. One may argue that Fati and Bukari were irresponsible leading to Baba's misfortune, however, African and especially Ghanaian values teaches that a child is for the society not only for the parent and family. Mystique Mysterious' bad influence on Baba has led the latter in endangering himself.

There are several such instances in the novel. Identify them and discuss with the class.

Literary Implication

The familiar nature of the approach sustains readers' interest in the novel.it thus creates suspense and readers read to the end. It also gets readers to identify with the story on two accounts. One, the trickster character is very common in the Ghanaian community. Students can even mention names of such entities. Two, it follows the folktale pattern where Ananse (among the Akans) and other such folkloric characters are easily identified. These make the approach effective and the story meaningful.

SYMBOLIC CHARACTERS

Mystique Mysterious

Throughout the story Mystique Mysterious has stood out as a unique character with name that is very different from all other names in the story. The name does not belong to any society but comes with its own narrative of mystery and manipulation. He is shrouded in mysticism as his dress code shows. Unlike the other characters, he is the only one that knows and operates within all the spaces and at all times of the story. He goes to Kanda to manipulate the people there and comes to Nima to exploit them. He then goes to Nkrumah Circle to destroy his victim, Bukari. He is seen where he is not expected to be seen. The drinking spot “Kill Me Quick” is not a place for a man in black suit and dark sunglasses (p.1) but he appears. During the execution of Kojo Ansah where no one was associating him to the scene, he appears. At the end of the story when many thought the resolution had been achieved that the struggles have ended, he shows his face. He is such a complex character that, embracing him is to fall prey to his diabolical machinations, while challenging or ignoring him spells one’s doom. He therefore represents the universal force that each character must struggle to contend with to endeavour to carve out one’s own destiny. Mystique Mysterious is not an individual human character but a configuration of several evil tendencies that easily come the way of every human who is in the race to make a way for themselves. He is forever with humanity (p.212).

Kofi Ntim

Kofi Ntim is one of the three friends who is an absolute foil to Mystique Mysterious. He is a symbol of resistance that yields good results. He is the only one among the three friends that did not fall into the traps of Mystique Mysterious. He is also called “Philosopher Nonsense”. He thus interrogates every act of benevolence (p.7). He holds the view that unwarranted favour is a source of imprisonment. It is apparent that all those who fell into Mysterious’ trap were lured with favours. Though it has been difficult for some characters to avoid Mysterious, it has been because they had received favours from him and were bound by an agreement. Kofi Ntim presents as an approach to avoid falling prey to unsuspected exploiters. The narrator describes him as “... the specimen of human ugliness” (p.7) however, he is the authorial voice on moral and social cohesion in the novel. What lessons do you learn from the life of Kofi Ntim in the novel?

The Woman in a Male Dominated Context

There are a number of women mentioned in the story however, our discussion will center on Esi. The narrator presents true reflection of life in Nima and the female characters in the novel are true to life. Esi exemplifies industriousness and fortitude in conduct. She is the owner of “Kill Me Quick” drinking spot (p.2). She is described as beautiful and looks younger than her forty years. Nima is a community of depravity yet full of opportunities. Esi works hard and she is meticulous of her profession; she is complimented by Mysterious. Her clients are awed by her sociability and sense of interaction (p.5). She takes the men on on issues that many perceive as male topic. Discuss Esi’s question on women and alcohol. What is your view on women and alcohol? Her resistance to male dominance is an attitude of concern. How do people perceive women who sell alcohol in your community? Are they represented in Kofi Ntim’s rebuke (pp.5-6)? Compare Fati to Esi. At the end of the novel, Esi is married to Kofi Ntim and they live happily thereafter (p.211). She provides a model for women in her context of existence and operation.

Groupings

The 441 Crowd is an example of groups of organized young men who are unemployed and are prone to political and social manipulations. Can you enumerate the crimes that Mysterious got them to commit? Do they compare with the organized crimes that prominent people contract young men to commit? Do you have such groups in your society? These acts of the 441 Crowd, greatly influenced by Mystique Mysterious exemplifies how such groups are financed by politicians and the powerful to protect their interest. The symbolic essence of 441 Crowd is their representation of all such groups and their predicaments.

SYMBOLIC SETTINGS AND RELATED ISSUES

Symbolic Settings and Related Issues

Do you remember the geographical settings we mentioned in Unit Five? These will form the basis for the discussion in this session.

As we know, the main settings are Nima and Kanda in postcolonial Ghana. Nima is an impoverished, congested and badly laid out community with most of its inhabitants being poor immigrants who are unemployed from other parts of the country particularly the northern part of Ghana, and even other national. This explains why we have characters like Bukari, Fati, Baba, and Issaka among other reflecting the names in northern Ghana. It is also a lawless place with all forms of social vices. For instance, the 441 crowd were drug addicts and easily drawn into criminal activities. In contrast is Kanda, a place of affluence with its inhabitants being well-to-do, respectable and law abiding. Kanda as a neighbourhood has a well laid out plan of settle (Estate houses) with serene and calm environment (atmosphere). These contrasting of settings, determine and control the character traits and conducts due to the places they find themselves. Example, Gabriel Bukari who lives in Nima with his family, lives in a compound house where they share a common bathhouse. Also, the interior of his room describe shows how impoverished he is. Bukari has been unemployed for eight months. In contrast to Bukari, Henry Denyi is a well to –do business man who lives in Kanda. He is so rich that, he even offers Bukari a driving job. His status makes it impossible for him to come Nima to employ workers, thus Mysterious becomes the middleman between the inhabitants of Nima and Kanda. The inaccessibility of the rich creates another social ladder; middlemen. Also, with Nima being an impoverished community, parents and guardians go about looking for their daily bread to feed their family and so parental control is not as effective as that of the parents in Kanda. This is why Baba, drops out of school and roams about (especially when the father got much involved in promiscuous lifestyle). He leaves and comes back to the house anyhow and at any time. Again, as an impoverished lawless setting, Mystique Mysterious exploits the vulnerable inhabitants of Nima as a result of their economic status and lawlessness. These exploitations include giving the 441 group drugs for free as a way of getting them addicted so as to sell drugs to them. He promises Kofi Ntim, Bukari and Baba works and he demands various percentages from their wages.

Thematically, the setting projects some themes in the story. As Nima is an impoverished society they mostly live in compound houses; a form of communal and neighbourly affection is seen among them. For instance, Bukari, his wife, the Jojo family and the Issaka family are seen sitting together in the evening to converse and interact. At Esi's "Kill me Quick" drinking spot, we see Bukari and

his friends, Kojo Ansah and Kofi Ntim sitting together conversing, teasing one another, and sharing their problems almost every evening. This theme of friendship and solidarity is typical of a place like Nima. At Kanda, everyone stays in their homes and there is a high sense of individual interest as against the communal welfare of Nima. Again, due to the nature of Nima, readers encounter Mystique Mysterious whose character highlights the theme of power and corruption. He succeeds in corrupting the better moral life of Bukari by luring him to become “promiscuous” (p.84). He also turns Baba into a money searching child who works for money in order to take care of Adukwei’s happiness so that he does not lose her to “older rich men” (p.122). Mysterious also uses his power to order men (from Nima) to beat Kofi Ntim when he refused to pay his share of his wages as agreed; (pp.128-29) and above all, he attempts to rape Fati. All these could not happen in Kanda due to the presence of law and order. An instance of law and order in Kanda is seen on (p.193) when Joe saw Baba in the Denyi household, Joe refused to beat him but handed him over to the police.

The story mentions Nkrumah Circle as a place Mysterious introduces Bukari to womanizing. As a popular place in Accra, known for its easy care free lifestyle, it does not surprise readers when Bukari’s morals deteriorated when he visited Nkrumah Circle. In fact it is this place that project the post-colonial urban Ghana and its taste and influences. This extends the theme that money power corrupts indeed.

Key Ideas

- The unique style Kwakye employs in *The Clothes of Nakedness* is the use of the trickster figure which is a popular character in Akan (and Ghanaian folklore) story-telling known as Anansesem.
- Mystique Mysterious is not an individual human character but a configuration of several evil tendencies that easily come the way of every human who is in the race to make a way for themselves.
- The main settings of *The Clothes of Nakedness* are Nima and Kanda in postcolonial Ghana.

Reflections

- What have I learnt about the style employed text studied in this session?
- How will I explain the effectiveness of the use of symbolic characters and symbolic settings discussed in this session?

Discussion

- Discuss the view that the novel is a trickster tale.
- Critically examine the role of women in the novel.
- Discuss three ways the setting influences the characters in the novel.

SESSION 2: DICTION, IMAGERY, THEMATIC ISSUES AND CHILD MOTIF

In this session, we are discussing the language of the text and also the nature and kinds of the imagery used in the story. We are doing this because the diction defines the literary quality of a literary text. We shall identify symbolism, simile, and proverbs for discussion here. I expect that as

you read, you look out for more and discuss their literary relevance in the text. We will also look at some dominant themes in the novel. Lastly, we shall attempt discussing the themes in the context of the novel.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1. Describe the choice of words and its organization.
2. Explain the effect of the nature of language on characters and setting.
3. Discuss and relate the thematic issues to the text.
4. Discuss three means of child exploitation in the novel

DICTION AND IMAGERY

Diction

Diction refers to a literary writer's choice of words and its arrangement for special effect. The diction of a literary work may be formal/informal, concrete/abstract, colloquial, among others. The structure may be simple or complex; with difficult words, phrases, clauses etc. Roberts (2008) mentions that "the effective diction is situational" (p.241). This means that the topic, people and context under consideration have influence on the diction of a text. He adds that "the use of right words bears the burden of controlling the ways in which readers respond to the material." (p.228). Diction helps to give identity to the works of a particular author. For example one can easily identify a Shakespearean text based on the diction. Diction can also help to give a distinct identity to a writer as well.

Now, what have you observed about the language of *The Clothes of Nakedness*? You can share with your class.

Kwakyee uses simple language in structures that are reflective of the discourse in *The Clothes of Nakedness*. The common and simple expressions in the novel as used by the characters helps the reader to fully understand what the writer wants to say. The narrator employs everyday familiar language items such as akpeteshie, kenkey, massah and among others which are mostly used by the indigenous reader. Indigenous languages include the names of characters such as Adukwei, Baba, Kofi Ntim, Kojo Ansah, Bukari, Fati, Jojo, Issaka, Esi and places such as Apam, Nima, Kanda and Nkrumah Circle among others. Each setting comes with its characters' names to make the story reflect its place and people. The diction thus, helps the reader to know the background of the story. It must also be observed that characters are made to speak languages that match their statuses and also the people one is interacting with. The scenic descriptions are presented in simple direct and familiar words which makes it easy to imagine.

The totality of the diction includes the types and manner of the imagery employed. Though the novelist attempts to be simple and picturesque, his choice of imagery adds to make the language easy to understand and effective. Let us then turn our attention to some imagery used in the text.

Some Imagery in *The Clothes of Nakedness*

Imagery is language use to create images in the mind of the reader. Imagery includes [figurative](#) and metaphorical language to improve the reader's experience through their senses. The main essence of imagery is to connect the reader to the subjective experience of the author. That is the reader is being able to connect (imagine) with exactly what the author intends to put across. This is because imagery provides all the "details of sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch" (Di Yanni, 2007:779) that enhances the depth and vividness of what the author wants present. Imagery is, however, not just about the presentation of images but the sensory details can also add a deeper layer of meaning to the text. Jain and Singh (2016) state that authors use imagery "to help their readers understand the fictitious world and these images can be read symbolically" (p.3).

In *The Clothes of Nakedness*, Kwakye uses imagery to portray the modern Ghana and the situations in Ghanaian urban societies. Now, let's turn our attention to some of the imagery in the text.

a. Symbolism

The author employs so many symbolisms in the novel. A symbol, according to Holt and Winston (2003) is "an ordinary object, event, person or animal to which we have attached extraordinary meaning or significance" (p.515). A symbol in a literary work therefore becomes some form of a substitute for the object or thing that is being signified. Roberts (2008) identifies two types of symbols. These are cultural or universal symbols and contextual or authorial symbols. According to Roberts, a cultural symbol is one that embodies "ideas and emotions that writers and readers share" (p.323). These symbols usually carry meanings that are generally accepted. He defines contextual symbols on the other hand as those symbols that derive their meanings from the context and circumstances of individual works" (p.323). It must be stated that symbols employed by Kwakye in the novel are mainly contextual in nature.

i. Kill Me Quick

"Kill Me Quick" is another name for the locally brewed alcoholic drink called Akpeteshie but in the novel "Kill Me Quick" is the name of the kiosk in which Esi sells Akpeteshie and other alcoholic drinks. In the novel the Kill Me Quick is not just a place where drinks are sold, but it signifies a place of social bonding and a kind of problem solving centre. The three friends: Bukari, Kofi Ntim and Kojo Ansah meet at Kill Me Quick almost every day in the evening to talk, bond, share their experiences and admonish themselves as friends; to symbolically kill their problems. Although Kojo Ansah is a teetotaller, he goes to Kill Me Quick frequently just to go and meet with his friends and talk with them. Symbolically, we are made to see the effect that comes on Bukari when he broke away from his friends and stopped visiting Kill Me Quick. His life starts to go wayward. The attempts by Kofi Ntim and Kojo Ansah to stop Bukari from going out with Mystique Mysterious and come to Kill Me Quick clearly confirms the true value of Kill Me Quick as place of bonding and friendship.

ii. The 441 Crowd

The 441 crowd is the next symbol under consideration. 441 is an actual suburb of Nima where the novel was set. Kwakye however used the 441 crowd to represent a

socio-economic margin (symbolic of places where groups of unemployed young boys meet to discuss their worries away) in the Ghanaian society. They are a representation of the living conditions and the hardships that the average unemployed Ghanaian faces. The fortunate one work all day and are paid less. Their conversations touch on “the problems of ordinary men” like themselves and to “the selfishness of rich folks” (p.25). The 441 crowd presents a picture of the economic background of the people that live in Nima as compared to the residents of Kanda. It must be noted that although the 441 crowd meet to talk and share their problems, the noticeable and important feature about them that gets projected is their economic standing and how vulnerable it makes them.

iii. **Drugs.**

Drugs represent control over an individual’s senses as well as his whole personality in the novel. Some of the drugs that are mentioned in the novel include akpeteshie, marijuana and cocaine. By supplying drugs to his victims, Mystique Mysterious is able to have control over them especially the 441 crowd. He is able to get this control because the drug dull the senses of the victims and undermine their ability to take wise and firm decisions. Mysterious says that he does not want to drink akpeteshie because “it dulled the intelligence” (p. 2) and he needed to preserve the keenness of his mind. Receiving free drugs in the form of marijuana, cocaine and the strong alcoholic drinks make the victims become indebted to the giver. The narrator tells us that the tongues of the friends at Kill Me Quick loosened and they began to talk freely after they had consumed the free drinks that Mystique Mysterious bought for them. Similarly, the 441 crowd after smoking the marijuana that was offered to them by Mystique Mysterious livened up and started talking freely among themselves. Drugs therefore represent some form of control over the senses and for that matter the individual. It is thus symbolic of loss of control over oneself.

b. **Simile**

An instance of imagery can be seen in the picture that the narrator presents of the appearance and movement of Mystique Mysterious at the opening of the novel. The novel opens thus He moved slowly, like a board Chameleon. It was as though his steps were a chore performed with difficulty.. At his sides, his arms swung steadily, unhurried like noiseless pendulums.. His eyes were always hidden behind a pair of sunglasses, his barrier against those who were drawn by his unnatural by his unnatural quality of energy and power. (p.1)

The narrator makes use of some similes to create a picture of Mystique Mysterious. His movement is compared to that of a Chameleon, his movement is noiseless and his eyes are hidden behind a sunglasses. These create a picture of Mystique Mysterious but it also gives us a hint about his personality as well as his character. From these images we imagine a character that will be unpredictable and elusive, and this is exactly what he turns out to be.

c. **Metaphor**

Another instance of the use of imagery seen when the narrator tells us that the crowd at the scene of Kojo Ansah “were cheering and chanting for his demise.” This appeals to our sense of hearing and it creates an image in the mind’s eye of a criminal that must be executed. We are drawn into the text because we are aware that the victim is innocent of the crime he is dying for; a situational irony. The narrator adds that “the crowd roared again and the guns fired” (p.208). Once again, though the roaring appeals to the sense of hearing, it evokes in us the image of the lion; the crowd thus assumes the nature of the lion, ready to devour its victim. The imagery do not only give us the mood at the scene of the execution but shows us the irony of the justice system in postcolonial Ghana. The crowd are chanting and calling for the blood of an innocent person while the true criminal walks freely among them.

d. **Pun**

Names generally suggest meaning; names are personal narratives. “Mystique Mysterious” introduced in the second paragraph, (p.1) has a sense of awe as both names share the same root and semantic significance. Its pronunciation creates a rhyme and a play on a name. This makes the name a pun. However, the simultaneous use of the two creates hyperbole in exaggerating the attributes of the name; deepening the mystery surrounding him. Mystique Mysterious then connotes mixed attitude of respect, fear and the fascination they felt for the person behind the shades. Throughout the text, every one finds it difficult to outdo him or ignore him. It is this perception that holds his interacts with the society and even, at the end of the story when everyone thinks that he is gone, he mysteriously resurfaces.

e. **Proverbs**

Proverbs are oil with which words are eaten (Achebe). This shows that proverbs are a common feature of language use among Africans. We have already mentioned that the title of the novel is couched from an Akan proverb. Identify some of the proverbs used and discuss its importance in the story. Proverbs generally add indigenous linguistic flavour to the text since they are basically transliterative and reflect the socio-cultural views of the people. It also conceals the message for readers to plod further for interpretation coupled with its possible multiple meanings.

THEMATIC ISSUES

Some Themes in *The Clothes of Nakedness*

Benjamin Kwakye’s *The Clothes of Nakedness*, is a gripping story told with utter liveliness and candour which reveals how corruption could subtly eat deep into the fabrics of men and women alike. It shows the relationship between the rich and the poor in urban Ghana and how the position of the rich could easily influence the poor in taking decisions. *The Clothes of Nakedness* examines the complexities of human interactions and in the process, offers a gritty expose of relations between the rich and the poor in modern Ghana.

Let us mention some subject matters in the story. Money, Corruption, Care, Friendship, Riches, Power, Depravity, Parenting etc. You can add to these. We are going to generate themes from some of these subject matters.

a. **Caring for one another and being each other's keeper.**

One of the African cultural value is communal fellowship (Wiredu, 1980). African societies place importance on communal ownership and collective responsibility to ones neighbour. This is evident between Fati and Issaka. Issaka say "But as a good neighbour I know that you know that new babies means new mouths to be fed". This tells us that we owe each other a responsible amount of responsibility and security. Also how Kojo Ansah and Issaka came to the rescue of Fati from Mystique Mysterious' devilish sexual desire. There is therefore the need to preserve ourselves and the needs of others as well.

b. **Money as a disintegrative tool**

Another significant theme that is depicted in the novel is that 'money is a integrative tool'. Money has been said to be the root of all evil and this is clearly seen in the novel. Gabriel Bukari lived peaceful with his wife though he was unemployed. They enjoyed their marriage and were so much content with what they had but this was short lived when Mystique Mysterious got Bukari a job and introduced him to drinking and womanizing. Thus he is further drawn away from his family because he now has money and does not even spend time with his wife and a growing son who needs his father's advice and counsel. Baba's love for money also saw him drifting from his family. Like his father, money gave him power to go after girls. The combining effects of money and women ended him in police cells.

c. **Enduring nature of Love**

There is the love story between Fati and Bukari who had a successful marriage though Fati was disowned by her father when Bukari got her pregnant at an early age while (Bukari was) working for her father. This also borders on the rich-poor relationship as Fati's wealthy father could not comprehend why her daughter would allow herself to be impregnated by a common driver. There is also the love story between Baba and Adukwei, this love story is a representative of the gradual changes in modern societies. These evoke romantic subplots of Baba and Adukwei and Kofi Ntim and Esi. The story ends with these bonds still holding firm (pp.210-211). The conversation between Fati and Baba indicated the love between a child and mother and father.

d. **Depravity and vulnerability as bedfellows**

The 441 crowd is thematically significant to the socio economic margin in the Ghanaian society. The boys are deprived of any good livelihood and they become easy prey to anyone who comes with help. Mysterious notes their depravity and takes advantage of them by introducing them to drugs and organized crimes. It is a representation of the ordinary Ghanaian youth and the economic hardships they are confronted with in a money-driven society. Thus the economic instability and social insecurity are seen as moving together.

e. **True friendship is costly**

This is depicted in the novel when Kojo Ansah and Kofi Ntim called Bukari as genuine and concerned friends to talk to him about the path he had chosen with Mystique Mysterious which was going to be his downfall. True friends do not sit back and watch their friends waste their lives and so they called him and advised him as they saw fit. True friendship and companionship is also seen when Jojo' mother told Fati what she had heard about Bukari rather than have an outsider tell her with enmity. We also see Ntim protecting Ansah against the search gang of Mystique Mysterious which nearly cost him his life. Ansah's effort in preventing Mystique Mysterious from raping Fati ultimately cost his life. In all these, the friends took the risks in the name of true friendship.

f. **Parenting as a social responsibility**

The role of parents in our contemporary society is also seen in the novel. Looking at the family of Issaka, Issaka spent most of the time with his wife and children. Thus his presence alone serves as a shield and security. As a result Mystique Mysterious could not come out with his evil schemes on his family.

Though our thematic discussion has dwelt on life in Nima, we can broaden our examples to include some from Kanda. For example, we can examine the Denyis' role in all the thematic issues we have identified. Let us reflect on the main theme of the novel. Can we conclude that the issues raised above are sub-themes? With reference to your reading of the novel, try and connect some of the issues we have discussed into major ones.

CHILD MOTIF

Motif

What is motif? Have you come across it in your readings? Now let us try to have a basic understanding of 'motif'. The word motif has a French origin, meaning "pattern." A motif is a symbolic image or idea that appears frequently in a story. Motifs can be [symbols](#), sounds, [actions](#), ideas, or words. Thus, a motif is a recurring image in a work of literature. They have metaphorical and symbolic values often supporting a theme or an important idea. Motifs strengthen a [story](#) by adding images and ideas to the [theme](#) raised in the text. Whereas themes hover above a story as ideas, motifs dive into [prose](#) and [poetry](#) with clear and repetitive images, ideas, and symbols throughout. In their repetition, motifs emphasize what is most important about a story. Motifs provide compositions with a traceable pattern: if a red dress or the idea of guilt or even a song continues appearing throughout a narrative, chances are, that it means something. Motifs allow writers to create a more poetic and structured narrative, directing readers and audiences to symbols of larger ideas.

Child Motif in *The Clothes of Nakedness*

Can we then say that the constant use of a child in a book to project some vital ideal or theme is what we will say is child motif? Can you identify the children mentioned in the novel? Which of these children attracts your attention for a deeper discussion?

The presence of children in a community determines the future of that community hence an attempt to destroy a child in a family implies the destruction of the family. This is since the child grows to pick up parental responsibilities when the parents are old or probably absent.

In, *The Clothes of Nakedness*, Baba and Adukwei in addition to the 441 youth group help us to arrive at the concept of child motif. We examine the manner of manipulation Mysterious puts them to and the effect it leaves on the child. Mysterious uses the innocent Baba through his love for Adukwei after he had succeeded in destroying his father, Bukari. Mysterious' extending his evil deeds to innocent Baba is an attempt on Mysterious' part to destroy the Bukari family which has Baba as its future. This explains why Fati was worried about the where about of Baba too had met his adventure" (p.200). Similarly, Mysterious' manipulation of the indecisive 441 group in the novel also depicts his effort in destroying the future of Nima. The 441 group which is made up of several youths in Nima represented the basis of the development of Nima. Destroying these youths by making them become drug addicts and abusers amounts to destroying the future of the community.

You can review Mysterious' manipulation of Adukwei and Janet. Discuss the effects of Mysterious' grip over them. Did the girls fall for his manipulations? Could they have escaped because of where they were (Kanda)?

Again, the children (particularly the boys at Nima) in the story are treated as objects. Baba is a classic example as his father hardly notices his presence at home. This apparent lack of notice stems from the adult's belief that the children are immature and ignorant of what transpires in the real world. They do not feel their presence because they have no voice. Where they find voice as in the case of Adukwei who argues with her mother, they are tagged as rebellious. Their seeming ignorance and child-like innocence make them fall prey to manipulation as seen in the case of Baba (in the hands of Mysterious).

Moreover, the unquestioned love relationship between Baba and Adukwei also shows how children are neglected in the novel. As usual to every responsible parent, love relation between children of tender age as that of Baba and Adukwei would not be embraced as the parents did in the novel. Do you recall the attitude of Fati's father when Fati fell in love with Bukari? This shows how poor the parents cared for their wards in *The Clothes of Nakedness*.

We can also look at the liberation they finally get from Mysterious. Baba returns home from police cell to hear that his father has died. He grows suddenly but with irreparable regret. He now has a tainted image and never got the opportunity to learn wisdom from his father.

Literary Implication

If we see these instances as symbolisms, then we can extend the message to the broader Nima, Kanda societies, and the generality of Ghana. The children in the novel then become symbolic representatives of Ghanaian children who identifies with Baba, Adukwei and 441 boys. We also can see Mysterious in most men and women who take undue advantage of vulnerable children in the society. We then see the novel as having extended meaning.

Key Ideas

- The diction of the novel has been described as informal and simple.
- A symbol in a literary work therefore becomes some form of a substitute for the object or thing that is being signified.
- Through themes, the author gives his readers an insight into how the world works, or how he views human life.
- Themes in Kwakye's *The Clothes of Nakedness* which include true friendship and companionship, the enduring nature of love, money as a disintegrative tool and caring for one another and being each other's keeper.
- A motif is a symbolic image or idea that appears frequently in a story.
- Motifs can be [symbols](#), sounds, [actions](#), ideas, or words. Thus, a motif is a recurring image in a work of literature

Reflections

- What have I learnt about the diction of the text studied in this session?
- How relevant are the themes and the child motif of the text studied in this session?

Discussion

- Discuss how the language reflects the setting
- Explain the imagery used in projecting the characters.
- Discuss how the novel exposes the relationship between rich and poor in modern Ghana.
- What lessons are there for parents to follow regarding how to take care of their children?