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DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES

Dr. Anya Egwu & Dr. (Mrs) Edith Awogu-Maduagwu
Department of Languages & General Studies
Covenant University
15th February, 2016

Letter of Acceptance

Dear Dr. Egwu & Dr. (Mrs) Awogu-Maduagwu,

We have received the revised version of your chapter contribution entitled: "Aspects of Literature and Literary Appreciation" to our book project: *Communication in English*, and delighted to inform you that the paper has been accepted for inclusion as a chapter in the book.

We look forward to the completion of the project toward the end of the year (2016) or early next year.

Thank you for your fine contribution.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'I.E. Chilwa', written in a cursive style.

Prof. I.E. Chilwa
Department of Languages & General Studies
Covenant University, Ota
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Aspects of Literature and Literary Appreciation

Anya Egwu & Edith Awogu-Maduagwu

Introduction

This chapter is on literature. It will define it as well as identify and discuss its genres, elements, and its appreciation. At the end of the chapter, therefore, you should be able to define literature and differentiate imaginative literature from the other forms of literature; identify and discuss the various genres and sub-genres of literature; identify and discuss the elements of the various genres of literature, and appreciate literary works from a professional's standpoint.

Let us proceed by addressing the question, what is Literature?

Meaning of Literature

There are two senses in which the word 'literature' may be understood.

Written Works

The term 'literature' is derived from the Latin word *litterae*; meaning something written. The first sense therefore, in which we may understand literature is that it is any written or printed information. In this sense, all documented information on, say, history; medicine, religion, technology, and other fields of study may be termed literature. One can therefore speak of historical literature, medical literature, religious literature, and so on.

Literature as a Discipline

The other direction in which the term literature may be understood is in the more specific sense of a discipline. The discipline known as Literature is characterized by imaginative and artistic presentation of language, designed to attract attention.

The language of literature is mainly metaphorical. Language is said to be metaphorical when it is used suggestively, connotatively, or literarily. In other forms of writing, language is mostly used plainly, literally, or denotatively. *Denotative* language gives us the direct or dictionary meaning of words in an expression without deviation. The meaning is specific and does not make itself open to multiple interpretations. This also characterizes conversational, everyday language.

Connotative language is the language used in the discipline of literature. A connotation means that a given expression may be understood in more than one sense. Meaning in literature is therefore often implied and not stated. Words are not used to mean what their practical or dictionary meanings suggest. Rather, words and expressions are mostly symbolic. This is especially the case with poetry. For example, the first line of Robert Burns' 'A Red, Red Rose' reads: "O My Luve is like a red, red rose"; the plain, denotative, or literal meaning of this line would be that the speaker's love, or lover is reddish like a red rose flower. But this is not what the poet means here. The persona speaks metaphorically about his lover. The image of red rose here connotes beauty, freshness, sweetness, attraction, elegance, etc. What the persona seems to be saying, therefore, is that his lover is very beautiful, so fresh, so sweet and attractive like the red rose; in short, that his lover is ravishing. The literal or plain way that the speaker may have spoken about his lover is to say that she is beautiful or attractive without relating such qualities to the red rose. You can see that there is no mention of beauty, sweetness, freshness or attraction in the entire poem (See below), but 'red rose' suggests or implies all of these. Note also the repetition of red in this line. The idea is to use this sound effect to emphasize the qualities spoken of about the lover and to communicate a poet's emotional condition. This is what is meant by using language metaphorically, literarily, or connotatively.

A Red, Red Rose

By Robert Burns

O my Luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;