EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND LITERARY APPRECIATION SKILLS

A textbook for GES 201: Use of English II

NEW EDITION

ENGLISH SOUNDS

WRITING

READING

DRAMA

COMPREHENSION

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CORRESPONDENCE

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CONTENTS

5

GENERIC CONTEXT OF PROSE FICTION IN LITERARY APPRECIATION

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Introduction

Prose fiction is the most popular of the genres of literature in contemporary times. Its recognition stems from the fact that it captures human experiences in a narrative form. The study of prose fiction is very important. Appreciating or critiquing the literary and socio-political values that are retained in prose works across different categories requires being familiar with the basic concepts and principles in literature. Therefore, this chapter discusses these concepts and principles across the categories with reference to the definition, characteristics, evolution, functions, forms, and elements of prose fiction. It also attempts a literary appreciation of selected novels, using the listed categorisations as necessary templates.

Objectives

After reading through this chapter, students should be able to:

  (i)   describe prose fiction as a genre of literature;
  (ii)   identify different forms and elements of prose fiction;
  (iii)   identify renowned prose fiction writers across different continents of the world, particularly Africa, and also identify their literary prose works; and
  (iv)   critically analyse prose fiction works.

Content
Definition of Prose Fiction

Prose is derived from the Latin word "prosa", which means "straightforward". This implies that the nature of prose fiction is simply narrative. It is a body of knowledge that is directly passed across in a denotative form. Drama and Poetry can be traced back

to the classical times. However, it was during the late Medieval period that there was a shift from verse form of expression to prose.

The word 'fiction' is loosely translated as an untrue statement or expression. In the context of literary expression, fiction is an imaginative work of art. The combination of prose fiction translates, in terms of definition, as literary works of imagination borne out of the creative enterprise of the author. Prose fiction, therefore, is the story or tale which describes imaginary characters and events.

Therefore, can we state that fiction is assumed to be falsehood because it centres on events that actually did not happen in real life? It is true that in many cases the characters never existed, at least, in the context of the story told. However, prose fiction has a strong resemblance with reality because it is derived from the authenticity of human experiences. The beauty of prose fiction lies in the creativity or ingenuity of the writer in creating a world of characters that has a semblance of reality. According to C.J. Hallet (1996), fiction writers focus on the creation of acceptable untruths. Essentially, the focus of a writer is to establish meaningful insights into the human condition. Therefore, fiction is "untrue" in the absolute sense, but true in the universal sense. In summary, prose fiction depicts reality so well, even in its self-induced falsehood.

Characteristics and Evolution of Prose Fiction

One of the principal features of prose fiction is its storytelling form. Unlike drama and poetry which largely thrive on connotative interpretation, prose is usually deployed in a narrative way, but with symbolic interpretations. Prose fiction, therefore, can be defined as a literary work that is passed across using a narrative style. That is why the word 'prose' can be substituted with the words 'tale, 'story', and 'novel'.

The evolution of prose fiction can also be traced back to verse or poetry. Some schools of thought believe that prose fiction is distilled from narrative poetry. Narrative poems tell stories which revolve round certain characters and momentous events. For instance, the epic poem is a narrative tale which is an embodiment

of values that are peculiar to a specific environment. Epic poems, whether oral or written, revolve round a central character, a hero or heroine, who exercises unusual characteristics or traits. Examples of epic tales in Africa include *Sunjata*, an epic story of old Mali, transcribed and translated by D.T. Niane (1965) and *Mwindo Epic* of the Congo, which was edited by Daniel Biebuyck (1977), an anthropologist and one of the early leading scholars in African arts and culture.

However, another school of thought professes that the origin of prose fiction emanates from oral tales or stories, which were in existence long before the advent of writing. For instance, African societies of the pre-colonial times are known for their rich folklore which formed a part of their belief systems. "Folk" simply means people who share the same values, while 'lores' suggests knowledge or traditions of the people orally handed down from one generation to another. Forms of folklore include myths, legends, folktales, fairy tales and so on. The most popular of them all is the folktale. Examples include tales about tortoise, spider and hare which are common around West Africa. It is, therefore, believed that prose fiction also derives materials from these oral traditions.

There is no doubt that prose and poetry are different. However, one area of convergence, which can also be traced to the past, is the narrative mode of some poems. Folktales also play fundamental roles in contemporary prose fiction. Novels such as *The Palmwine Drinkard* by Amos Tutuola and *The Famished Road* by Ben Okri are known for utilising folkloric materials.

Functions of Prose
Prose, as a genre of literature, has many functions. One main function of prose is that it serves as a means of entertainment. Many readers find pleasure and relaxation in reading fictional works. Scholars have argued that this accounts largely for its popularity. Prose fiction fundamentally dominates one of the branches of literature referred to as "popular fiction". Many people are familiar with popular fiction basically because it is mostly entertaining and quite easy to relate to. Prose fiction provides the template for this unique form of literature, which is classified into

sub-groups, such as mystery, horror, crime, detective and romance. Examples of prose fiction writers in the popular category include Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of Sherlock Holmes series; James Hadley Chase; Sidney Sheldon; John Grisham; Agatha Christie; Nora Roberts; Edgar Allan Poe; Robert Ludlum and so on. Nigeria has also produced several popular fiction novels, written on the literary platform of *The Pacesetters Series.* These include Agbo Areo's *Director!*, Buchi Emecheta's *Naira Power*, David G. Maillu's *The Equatorial Assignment,* Valentine Alily's *Mark of the Cobra*, among others.

Apart from entertainment, prose fiction serves a more profound purpose. It imparts moral values and societal ideals on its audience. Prose fiction also helps with the preservation of cultures and values. Through it, readers are acquainted with societal norms and values. For instance, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* remains a classic work because it exposes its readers to African traditions and values which are sacrosanct. The use of proverbs and riddles portrays the richness of the Igbo language.

Prose fiction performs another important function. It is used to criticise certain issues that are detrimental to the development of the society. Many literary novels fall under this category. Literary novels are stories that have strong symbolic representations. Here, the novel assumes a higher dimension of intellectual comprehension, as the novelist seeks to address matters that affect the larger community. Sometimes, a novel re-represents significant historical events in a particular society. For example, the novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1848) by Alan Paton, is about racial protests against societal structures of the South African society which later led to apartheid. Also, *God's Bits of Wood* (1960) written by the famous Senegalese author, Ousmane Sembène, revolves round rail workers' strike in colonial Senegal in the 1940s.

Classifications of Prose
Prose is classified into two main categories, namely, fiction and non-fiction. Fiction, otherwise referred to as prose fiction, is a story that is characteristically imaginative. The settings and characters of this category of prose, even if they refer to real ones,

have been considerably recreated through the writer's imaginative and creative ingenuity. Non-fiction, on the other hand, is referred to as life writing or biographical literature/writing. This category of prose is true to life and based on reality and fact.

It is however important to note that the foregoing definitions are not without exceptions. Fiction, although an imaginative story, reflects reality in the sense that the characters, events and sometimes settings depict real life experiences. This means that salient issues discussed within the context of the novel are factual. Buchi Emecheta and Chimamanda Adichie both wrote *The Joys of Motherhood* and *The Purple Hibiscus* respectively. Both novels are fiction. However, the texts correctly portray the travails and pains of the female in African societies. Although Nnu Ego and Kambili are fictitious characters in the respective novels, they are retained in the imaginations of the readers because they truly represent many African females in pain whose voices would probably never be heard.

Non-fiction also is often used to describe literary texts which revolve round real life characters and events. These novels are based on real life experiences. Nonetheless, non-fiction novels also employ the ingenuity of the author. This means that in most cases, the author needs to improvise as it is impossible to recount every little detail about the past. In other instances, the author needs to avoid mentioning real names of characters, especially well known figures. It would be unethical to do so without permission. Therefore, non-fiction texts are not without some measure of imaginative prowess. Next, the sub-genres of both fiction and non-fiction categories are examined.

(a) Prose: Forms of Fiction
There are several forms of prose fiction, and these are usually basically discussed based on distinctive characteristics such as length and so on. Four of these types are discussed in this chapter and they are flash fiction, short story, novella and novel.

(1) Flash Fiction: This is the shortest form of fiction. Its word range is between 6 and 700 or thereabouts. It has a very simple plot, a simple subject matter and features very few major characters; about one or two but rarely up to five.

An example is "Golden Years" (2010) by Edith Perlman. The essential characteristic of flash fiction is brevity. Although extremely concise, a good flash fiction has the tendency to develop into a larger fictional work. Examples of flash fiction writers include Franz Kafka, H.P. Lovecraft, Yasunari Kawabata, Julio Cortázar, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Fredric Brown and Ernest Hemingway, the author of *The Old Man and the Sea* who is said to have written about 18 pieces of flash fiction in his first collection of short stories entitled *In Our Time* (1925).

(2) Short Story: The short story comes next in terms of length after flash fiction. It is quite short but longer than the flash fiction and can be read at one sitting. The length of the short story ranges between 2,000 and 7,500 words. Its page limit is between 5 and 25. A short story also has simple plot and subject matter, but these elements are not as simple as they are in the case of flash fiction. More so, short story has more major characters than flash fiction, and these characters are also relatively complex.

Examples of short story writers are Edgar Allan Poe, Jeffery Archer, Jomo Kenyatta, whose short story "The Gentlemen of the Jungle" remains one of Africa's most significant positions on colonialism. Nigerian writers who have collections of short stories include: Chinua Achebe, *Girls at War and Other Stories* (1972); Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Thing around Your Neck* (2009); Segun Afolabi, *A Life Elsewhere* (2006) and Molara Wood, *Indigo*.

(3) Novella/Novellete: The novella is also known as long-short story because its length is between that of the short story and the novel. This type of fiction is a work of at least 17,500 words but not up to 50,000 words, and its page range is between 60 and 170 pages. A novella has a complex plot that comprises a main plot and a few sub-plots. It also has a subject matter that is explored through few themes. More so, its major characters are more

developed than those of the short story. Examples include John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1973), Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* (1912) and Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952).

(4) Novel: This is the longest type of prose fiction. It has an unlimited word range and pagination which start from 50,000 words and 170 pages. A work under this type of fiction always has a complex plot that is made up of a main plot and numerous sub-plots. The themes through which the subject matter of a novel are projected and explored are also more in number than those of the novella. Examples of works by some Nigerian novelists include Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* (1966), Isidore Okpewho's *Last Duty* (1976), Ben Okri's *Famished Road* (1991), Wale Okediran's *Tenant of the House* (2009), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2006), Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street* (2009) and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* (2006). Others include Helon Habila's *Measuring Time* (2006), Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (2010), Abimbola Adunni Adelakun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roof* (2008), Chris Abani's *Becoming Abigail* (2006) and Teju Cole's *Everyday is for the Thief* (2007).

Other renowned novelists across the world are Charlotte Bronte, William Golding, Toni Morrison, Ngugi 'wa Thiong'o, Peter Abrahams, Meja Mwangi, Nadine Gordimer, Ayi Kwei Armah, Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, Dambudzo Marechera, J.M. Coetzee, Naguib Mahfouz, Andre Brink, among others.

(b) Prose: Forms of Non-fiction

There are two principal types of non-fiction; they are biography and autobiography. In addition to these two are others which include memoir, diary and letter. However, these other types can be generally subsumed under the two main types.

(1) Biography: Etymologically, biography is from the Latin words, *bio* (life) and *graphie* (writing). It is therefore synonymous to non-fiction itself. However, biography is specifically used to refer to the life account of a particular person written by another. Examples of works under this type of non-fiction include Martin Meredith's *Mandela: A Biography* (1997), William Lee Miller's *Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography* (2003), Nicholas Davies's *Queen Elizabeth II: A Woman Who is Not Amused* (1994) and Femi Osofisan's *JP Clark: A Voyage* (2011).

(2) Autobiography: Autobiography is also often referred to as self-writing. This is because in this type of non-fiction, the author and narrator of the life account is the same personality as the subject of narration. Thus, the author is the subject matter. Like the biography, an autobiography is supposed to give a full account of a person's life from a point of his life, which may be as early as the point of birth to the present time. Some works that could be identified under this type of non-fiction include Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (1994), Sikiru Adetona's Awujale (2010) and Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Watch* i-iii (2014).

(3) Memoir: A memoir is generally autobiographical because the subject of narration in it is the same person as the author and narrator. However, the temporal coverage of a memoir is not as long as that of autobiography. This type of non-fiction always focuses on a specific period in the life of the subject. More so, it also usually places emphasis on external events. According to Kathleen Kuiper (2012:208), 'the writers of memoir are usually persons who have played roles in, or have been close observers of, historical events and whose main purpose is to describe or interpret the events.' The autobiographical writings of Wole Soyinka for instance, are generally memoirs. These are *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (1986), *Ibadan: The Penkelemes Years,* and *The Man Died* (1972). Toyin Falola's *A Mouth Sweeter than Salt* (2004) and *Counting the Tiger's Teeth* (2014) are also memoirs.

(4) Diary: Diary is the anglicised form of the Latin word *diarium*, which is itself derived from *dies* (day). It is an autobiographical writing that began to flourish in the late Renaissance when the significance of the individual began to be highly priced. Kuiper defines it as frequently reserved documentation of the diarist's actions and thoughts.

(5) Letter: This is usually a collection of letters written and received by the author. It concentrates on describing or interpreting historical events and activities involving the author. Therefore, it covers the *personalis*, the Latinate term for private or personal letter, and the *negotialis*, the Latin word for a letter of public affairs.

Elements of Prose Fiction
(A) Subject Matter: The subject matter is an important part of a literary work. It is the summary of events in any novel. Every work of art that is classified as a prose fiction must have a story that it tells. Therefore, the subject matter is the overall idea that forms the bedrock of the writer's focus. It is usually very broad and is often the summary of a story. The subject matter aids the reader's understanding of a work of art. For example, Buchi Emecheta's novel, *Second Class Citizen*, is a story of Adah Ofili, a young woman who strives against all odds to gain access to education and self-sustenance. She faces extreme difficulties and challenges in her home country in Africa. The situation becomes worse even as she manages to migrate to England with the hope of finding greener pastures.

(B) Theme: This is one of the most important elements of any prose work; it is also usually referred to as the thematic preoccupation. The theme, sometimes referred to as the central idea(s), is what is said about the subject matter in the prose text. In the short story "Gentlemen of the Jungle", Jomo Kenyatta depicts the theme of social injustice and discrimination in the exploration of colonialism as a subject matter. Themes can also be interpreted as lessons learnt from any literary text. In Phil Nwoko's novel entitled *Dancing with the Ostrich*, selflessness and mentorship are

themes in the novel, as the female character, Benita, rises from grass to grace. This would perhaps be impossible without the dedication, love and support from Mazi Daniel and his son, Nonso.

(C) Plot: Plot is regarded as the series of events that make up a story, while the structure is the design or layout employed for such story. Plot therefore refers to the arrangement of the incidents and events presented in a work of art. The incidents that make up the plot are traditionally arranged in a manner of cause and effect. However, there is a growing tendency to discard this structure in modern writings. There are two types of plot structure: the linear/organic plot structure and the episodic/inorganic plot structure.

Linear Plot Structure: In a narration with an organic plot structure, there is a gradual movement in a chronological order from the beginning to the end of the story. The linear plot structure is also referred to as the chronological plot structure. The beginning introduces us to the plot and the various characters; then in the middle, there is a conflict, and it becomes more complex and interesting. Later, we arrive at the climax and gradually move to resolution of the conflict. Phil Nwoko's *Dancing with the Ostrich* utilises this plot structure.

Episodic Plot Structure: In this category, the story is told in media res, that is, the story usually commences from the middle, goes back to the beginning through the use of flashback, and then there is a resolution in which the story comes to an end. Here, the story is not tightly knitted together. This plot structure is commonly used because it provokes suspense in the novel. Popular fiction writers mostly employ this type of plot structure.

There are five elements of the plot structure, namely exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement.

- Exposition: This refers to the beginning of the story.
- Rising Action: Complication(s) arising from interactions between characters.

- Climax: This is the height of complications or sometimes face-off between protagonist/ hero and antagonist/villain in the story.
- Falling Action: Occurrence(s) after the climax leading to the end of the story.
- Denouement: Resolution which leads to the end of the story. The end could be a revelation or even a catastrophe.

(D) Character and Characterisation: Characters are fictional entities that perform various actions in the event of the story. They can be humans, animals, ideas or traits. Characterisation refers to the writer's portrayal or presentation of the characters in any given work of art. Therefore, characterisation is the process of making or forming characters. There are three ways of creating characters: naming, showing, and telling.

- Naming: This is the simplest approach. It is achieved through the names that the writer gives to the characters. The names could also be based on their attributes, behaviour, physique or traits.
- Showing: This approach is also referred to as the dramatic technique. Here, the author presents the characters, talking and acting. The reader is left to infer what their motives and dispositions are in the course of the story.
- Telling: This method is similar to the naming approach. In this case, the writer is the initiator who describes to the reader the true disposition of the character. The author even describes the features of the characters that even such characters are not aware of.

Types of Characters
There are various types of characters, but a few are discussed here.

(1) The Protagonist: This is the central character in a story. This is the character around whom the story revolves, such as Ihuoma in Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*.

(2) The Antagonist: This is the character whose actions are always in conflict with those of the protagonist, for example, Jack in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies.*

(3) Hero/Heroine: The male is called the hero, while the female counterpart is called the heroine. Unlike the protagonist, the hero/heroine's action has effects on the larger society. He or she usually becomes a victim and would have to pay with his or her life. e.g. the character, Snowball, in George Orwell's *Animal Farm.*

(4) Villain: He or she is also referred to as the anti-hero, only concerned with the destruction of the hero/heroine. An example is the character Napoleon in George Orwell's *Animal Farm.*

(5) The Eponymous Character: This is a character whose name is used as the title of the text. for instance, Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist.*

(6) Flat Character: This character is a two-dimensional character. He is unreceptive to radical personality change and it is relatively easy to predict his or her actions.

(7) Round Character: This character is also known as dynamic character. This is a character that we cannot predict most of his or her actions. He or she undergoes significant changes which may be physical, mental or psychological. He or she is a three-dimensional character.

(8) Foil Character: This character has the opposite features of another character. For example, we have Kambili and Amaka, Jaja and Obiora, Aunty Ifeoma and Uncle Eugene in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus.*

(E) Narrative Point of View: This refers to the position, perspective or the vantage point from which the events of a story are observed and presented to the reader. Examples include the First Person Narrative Technique and the Third Person/Omniscient point of view.

(F) Setting: Setting can be described as the physical or social environment within which the characters in a story operate. The setting can be spatial (space) or temporal (time). The author may choose real life geographical space; others may create an

imaginative setting for their stories. The time setting could be seasonal, like winter or summer; it could be a specific time of the day like morning or evening. Generally speaking, the setting of the story is the background against which the characters live out their lives. It can also be symbolic or allegorical as seen in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

Types of the Novel
The novel is the most popular of all types of prose fiction. This is because it has a wider reach. There are different types of the novel, based on distinctive characteristics that are connected to the elements of prose fiction. These include:

(1) Historical Fiction: This is a literary genre in which the story is set in the past. It focuses on historical events of the past, for instance, Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987).

(2) Mystery Fiction: This refers to stories that revolve round mysterious or crime related events. They often revolve round a protagonist who is a detective with the responsibility of solving a crime, such as Agatha Christie's *A Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920), Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1980) and Dan Brown's *Angels and Demons* (2000).

(3) Picaresque: This is a genre of prose fiction that deals with the adventures of a rogue protagonist. He or she ends up as a hero or heroine from a low class background. Examples include Thomas Smollet's *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901).

(4) Magical Realist Novel: In this category, the real world breaks open to accommodate imaginary characters. It is a novel of fantasy. Some examples are Amos Tutuola's *The Palmwine Drinkard* (1952), Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* (1991) and Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988).

(5) *Allegory:* An allegorical novel is that which has a symbolic representation. In other words, the elements of the novel possess metaphorical interpretations. For example, we have John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) and Plato's *The Allegory of the Cave* (2017).

(6) *Gothic Fiction:* This is a literary genre that deals with mysterious events and death. These novels are replete with ghosts, old buildings, vampires and other supernatural elements. Examples include Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1976).

(7) *Epistolary Novel:* Here, the story is told through correspondence such as letters, documents and so on. Most times, it is written in form of letters. Examples include Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), Mariama Ba's *So Long A Letter* (1979) and Daniel Handler's *The Beatrice Letters* (2006).

Literary Appreciation of Ernest Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea

Ernest Hemingway is one of the most renowned authors of the twentieth century. He was born on July 22, 1899 and died on July 2, 1961 at the age of 61. He was an American writer and wrote a number of prose works, particularly short stories. Examples of these short stories include "Indian Camp" (1924), "Soldiers Home" (1925), "The End of Something" (1925), "Hills Like White Elephant" (1927) and "The Killers" (1927). He wrote his debut novel entitled *The Sun Also Rises* in 1926 and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in 1940. But his most widely read publication, *The Old Man and the Sea*, was written in 1952, about nine years before Hemingway took his own life.

The Old Man and the Sea is a novella. It is a remarkable tale of adventure and test of human endurance in an environment that is treacherous, unforgiving and deadly. The story revolves round an

old fisherman named Santiago who had been unlucky not to land a catch for several months. He relentlessly tried again on the 85th day and heads out beyond his normal reach, far out into the Gulf of Mexico. Fortunately, he gets a massive marlin which he battles with for three days before he kills the large fish with his harpoon. Tired, hungry and drained of strength, he manages to secure the fish to his boat and heads home. However, the blood of the dead fish attracted sharks. Santiago battles them day and night. But by the time he gets home, his catch had been reduced to bones. The old man manages to drag himself back to his bed, falls asleep and dreams of lions on the shores of Africa.

One of the strong notions that this novella presents to its reader is the definition of success and conquest. Although everyone wants to be a success, this story demonstrates that success is not an end result but a process that is characterised by integrity, determination and hard work. It is disappointing that the old man did not get his fish home intact. However, Santiago, through his actions, represents the indomitable spirit in man. He does not cry over his predicament, hunger pang or thirst. He faces his greatest challenge all alone at sea without any help. He suffers deep cut in his hands; he calmly washes the blood off with the salty sea. The lesson here is that the quality of a man lies in his actions.

Another theme in this story is that man must not depend solely on luck. Santiago was nicknamed "salao" which is the worst form of ill-fate because he had been to the sea for eighty four days without a single catch. He was avoided by all, except the boy Manolin, who takes care of him despite his parents' disapproval. Rather than rely on luck, Santiago believes in his own ability. Even his young friend, Manolin admits this position: "To hell with luck," he thinks. "I'll bring the luck with me". Both characters do not believe or rely on chance or short-cuts. Santiago keeps his fishing line intact; he maintains his composure. The Old Man reminds us that success cannot be attained by simply waiting for luck to change things. He states; "it is better to be lucky. But I would rather be exact. Then when the luck comes you are ready."

The Old Man and the Sea is indeed a successful prose fiction. The novella earned Hemingway the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and the

Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. The story is truly captivating and has a strong influence on the reader on different perspectives about man's relationship with his immediate environment. The reader forever imagines Santiago, whose attitude towards survival against all odds in life is, undeniably, a source of inspiration to all and sundry.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, we have explored the significance of prose fiction as an integral genre of literature. The early part of the chapter focuses on the categorisations of prose, as well as the types and elements of prose fiction. Prose fiction has been discussed as the third genre of literature. Students must have a clear understanding of definition and origin, functions, types/forms, and elements of prose fiction. This would facilitate an appreciation or critical analysis of any literature of prose genre. Below are some questions that would validate the understanding of the topic discussed so far.

Essay Questions

(1) Attempt a critical discussion of the definition, origin and functions of prose fiction.
(2) Discuss in detail the categorisation of prose fiction.
(3) What is characterisation? Briefly discuss six types of characters you know.
(4) Using any prose work of your choice, explain the concept of thematic preoccupations.
(5) In not more than five paragraphs, attempt a literary appreciation of Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born.*

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