**Dr Badra Menouer**

**LMD 1 LECTURES**

**Lecture One**

**III Forms of Literature**

There are two major forms of literature:

* Oral literature
* Written Literature

1. **Oral literature:**

Oral literature can be defined as a body of verbal storytelling and poetic expression that is transmitted from generation to generation through spoken word rather than written text. It encompasses a wide range of forms, including folktales, legends, myths, proverbs, riddles, songs, chants, and other forms of traditional storytelling and poetry.

Oral literature is often deeply rooted in specific cultural and historical contexts and may reflect the values, beliefs, and traditions of a particular community or region. It is typically performed or recited rather than written down, and as a result, may be subject to variations in interpretation and retelling over time. Despite these variations, oral literature plays a vital role in preserving cultural heritage and transmitting knowledge and wisdom from one generation to the next.

1. **Written literature:**

Written literature refers to the body of works that are created through written language and recorded in written form, as opposed to being orally transmitted. It encompasses a wide range of forms, including novels, short stories, poetry, drama, essays, and non-fiction works such as memoirs, biographies, and histories.

Unlike oral literature, written literature can be preserved and distributed more easily, allowing it to reach a wider audience and potentially have a greater impact on culture and society. It also tends to be more fixed and permanent in its form and content, as the words on the page are less subject to variation and interpretation over time. However, written literature can also be subject to changes in interpretation and meaning as it is read and analyzed by different audiences in different historical and cultural contexts.

1. **The main difference**

The main difference between these two forms is in the authorship and audience, and in the mode of transmission and preservation. Oral literature is transmitted through spoken word from generation to generation and may be subject to variations in interpretation and retelling over time. It is often deeply rooted in specific cultural and historical contexts and reflects the values, beliefs, and traditions of a particular community or region.

On the other hand, written literature is created through written language and recorded in written form, allowing it to be preserved and distributed more easily. It tends to be more fixed and permanent in its form and content, but can also be subject to changes in interpretation and meaning as it is read and analyzed by different audiences in different historical and cultural contexts.

In summary, oral literature is passed down through generations via spoken word and is deeply rooted in specific cultural and historical contexts, while written literature is created through written language and preserved in written form, allowing it to reach a wider audience and potentially have a greater impact on culture and society.

**ORAL LITERATURE**

This is a form of literature presented through oral expressions (spoken or sung). Oral literature is a type of literature that is handed down or presented orally through word of mouth from one generation to another. It was mostly used before the invention of writing.

Oral literature is a spoken, acted, or performed art using words as a medium, also called orature, verbal arts, or oral tradition. It is transmitted verbally from one generation to the next. It has many Forms.

**Forms of Oral Literature**.  
There are three main categories of oral literature:

1. **Narratives**  2- **Song** 3- **Short forms**

Narratives include tricksters, dilemmas, legends, and myths. The short forms are riddles, tongue twisters, proverbs, and puns. There are many categories of oral songs.

**Narratives**: A narrative is a story or prose account of people, events, and places that may be fictional or factual. A narrative is also called a tale or folk tale. They are classified based on shared features like the manner of action of the main characters and the setting. A student can classify the narrative and gives reasons for his/her classification.

E.g. It is a trickster narrative because the story involves tricks:

**2. The Legend**  **4. Fable**

**1.The Falk Tale** **3**. **Myths** **5. Anecdote**

**7. Ballad** **9. Proverbs**

**6. Epic** **8. Riddles**  **10. Idioms**

1. **The Falk Tale**: This is a short narrative handed down through oral tradition, passed down from one generation to the next (human as characters).

Ex: Trickster Stories and Fairy Tale.

1. **The Legend**: It is a story handed down from the past, especially one that may not be true but it has historical derivational/historical background.
2. **Myths**: These are stories that originated in ancient times especially one dealing with ideas or beliefs about the origin of race, things or events.
3. **Fables**: They are short stories (tales) often with animals as characters which convey a moral lesson. The best known collection of fables is (Aesop’s Fables). Examples of Fables: The Hare and the Tortoise, The Lion and the Mouse and others.
4. **Anecdotes**: Most refers to the narrated incident in the life of an important person and should lay claim to an element of truth.
5. **Epic**: These are long narrative poems in an elevated style/ presenting characters of high position in adventures through their relation to a central heroic figure and their development of episodes.
6. **Ballad**: is a form of verse to be sung or recited and characterized by its presentation of dramatic in simple narrative form.
7. **Riddles**: they are puzzling questions, statements or description especially ones intended to test the cleverness of those wishing to solve them. E.g.: It walks in four legs in the morning, two legs in the noon, and three legs in the evening- Human being.
8. **Proverb**: Short well-known saying that state a general truth or give advice. Or they are compact fixed statements which imply question and answer.
9. **Idioms**: A phrase/ Statement whose meaning is not clear from the meaning of its individual words and which must be learnt as a unit.

**WRITTEN LITERATURE**

Written literature is a form of human expression through writing. That is to say, literature that is expressed or conveyed through written forms. Unlike oral literature, this literature began with the invention of writing.

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| **Imaginative literature**  Imaginative literature gives some entertainment, and it aims to arouse thoughts and feelings. The author, here, wants to express and communicate his ideas, his feelings, and his attitude to both things and people. He/she wants to communicate feelings, not facts or emotions, not information only. Imaginative literature has a deep sense than informative literature hence it is often regarded as Literature of Power. Imaginative Literature empowers the mind. |

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| **Informative literature**  Informative literature presents information that tells us about facts, history, real people, and so on. The main purpose of Informative literature is to offer knowledge and facts. We may otherwise refer to this as Literature of Knowledge. |

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