

# Studying Literatures in English

"Ivrs oe wol wore flynt, oit tee o fsm,,  
ti ovv wove o, oirav te nag omnt. my  
en nat m wet b b or vntee oit, oir on  
an oi har, ei woi o ti e tartt, on ot m a,  
vri one friheva tore boy mrotehot



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STUDYING LITERATURES IN ENGLISH:  
An Introduction to the Analysis of the Literary Text

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Mirna Radin Sabadoš

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LITERATURES  
IN ENGLISH

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
THE ANALYSIS OF THE  
LITERARY TEXT

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# FOREWORD

This book is an attempt to approach the process of learning about academic aspects of literature as both collective and individual experience rooted into the contemporary setting with the overwhelming abundance of resources. It is also an attempt to demonstrate that even for the first-year student it is possible to find a way through the incessant flow of information. The topics discussed and the approaches to the study of literature are based on the traditional structures and themes that the students may have already encountered, with a shift of focus towards articulation and definition of the subject matter and towards the skills required to approach it.

The textbook is designed to accompany the first-year course in English Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, *Introduction to the study of anglophone literatures*. It is done with a hope that it would provide students with tools with which they will readily assume a position on the issues regarding study of literature, the one grounded in sound argumentation.

The traditional approach to the study of literature (trusting authority, textbooks and authors) is complemented by the crowdsourcing practices (focusing on high quality information in web accessible resources), by the open source books and publications and by introducing a practice of conversing with a OpenAI ChatBot GPT 3 tool as a method of assessment one's own skill of fact-checking and resource management.

I would like to express my gratitude for this new perspective on learning; to Julianne Hammink from the University of Arizona for introducing me to open access teaching resources, especially LibreText Humanities website, and to Professor Roy Ciampa from Samford University, Alabama and to Professor Tvrtko Prčić from my own department, for being among the first in the academic community to express hope for the new approach in learning using GPT 3 ChatBot as a teaching resource.

Special thanks to my dear colleagues who were reviewing the textbook, for their patience, time, effort and support.

Finally, I would like to invite my students to build on this publication and the texts that accompany it by adding their own findings making their studies a truly collaborative effort and a unique experience.



## UNIT 1

# LITERARY STUDIES, MAJOR ISSUES AND RESEARCH DOMAINS

### AIMS

- identify the subject-matter of the study of literature
- offer definitions of literature
- establish criteria for literary analysis
- specify elements that define genres and text types
- approach literary theory: define models, methods, terminology

# DEFINING LITERATURE

## WHAT DO WE STUDY WHEN WE STUDY LITERATURE?

*Literature* is a subject in school – texts that we are obliged to read in order to be educated. It can also be about reading books for pleasure and entertainment, for the enjoyment in universes arising from inspired minds of authors who speak to us across time and space and across language barriers.

WHICH BOOKS BELONG TO THE POOL WE WOULD LABEL LITERATURE? WHO IS THE ONE TO MAKE THE CHOICES?

The concept of literature typically refers to written works that are considered valuable, although the definition of value can vary depending on various factors. Value may be determined by a visible or invisible authority, known as a canon, which is a collection of works that reflects the specific social and cultural contexts of a particular period. These works generally represent the experiences and perspectives of the dominant social groups during the time they were written or when they gained significance (including ideological, political, and cultural factors). Alternatively, value may be determined by the shared collective experience of contemporary readers or by the voices that have been marginalized from mainstream culture, often due to class, race, or gender differences.

Literature is a term that refers to written and sometimes spoken artistic and cultural works, ranging from novels and poems to plays and songs. It serves various purposes, such as telling stories, expressing emotions and ideas, and conveying messages. Literature can entertain, educate, and inspire readers and listeners, and it is created in a variety of styles, genres, and forms that can appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds. To understand the context of a literary text, we must first recognize it as a product of interaction between a group of creators and its intended audience, conveyed through specific channels of communication.

## LITERARY CANON

The literary canon is a term used to describe the body of works that are considered to be the most important and influential in literature. The literary canon is often seen as problematic because it is generally comprised of works by white, male, European authors, and thus excludes the voices and perspectives of many marginalized groups. It has been criticized for being too narrow and exclusive, and for failing to adequately represent the diverse range of voices and perspectives in literature. Many critics argue that the literary canon reinforces and perpetuates the dominance of white,

male, Eurocentric perspectives, and that it excludes the voices and experiences of women, people of colour, and other groups outside the dominant power structures.

While the literary canon has traditionally been seen as problematic for its exclusivity and lack of diversity, efforts to challenge and expand the literary canon have helped to create a more inclusive and representative body of works now more inclusive, diverse and heterogeneous in terms of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality.

Starting from the late 18th century, the term "literature" became restricted to a certain type of artistic or aesthetic writing that was considered highly imaginative and creative. This kind of writing was mostly fictional and not based on facts or historical events. It was believed to be produced by exceptionally talented and gifted individuals called authors, who were sometimes even referred to as geniuses. Consequently, from this narrow view of "literary," any writing that was considered factual and historical was seen as less creative and imaginative and was therefore stigmatized as "nonliterary."

## LITERARY CONVENTIONS

Literary conventions are the accepted rules and standards that govern the writing and reading of literature. These conventions can include the use of language, the structure and organization of the text, and the ways in which characters and plot are developed. Literary conventions can also include the expectations and assumptions that readers bring to a text, such as the assumption that a novel will have a beginning, middle, and end. Understanding literary conventions can help writers create effective and engaging works of literature, and it can also help readers better understand and appreciate the texts they encounter.

Literary conventions are the agreed-upon rules and practices that **writers** and **readers** use when creating and interpreting literature. These conventions can take many different forms, and they can vary depending on the genre, style, and culture of the literature being produced. Examples of literary conventions include the use of plot, character, and setting in a narrative work, the use of rhyme and meter in a poem, and the use of stage directions and dialogue in a play. Literary conventions provide a common language and framework that writers and readers can use to create and understand literature. Understanding and using literary conventions is essential for writers to effectively convey their ideas and messages, and for readers to appreciate and interpret the works they encounter. In addition, defiance/subversion of conventions also results in creative processes reinterpreting the interplay of readers' and writers' expectations (for example in experimental literature).

## WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES OF THESE CONVENTIONS?

We begin with the premise that we construct disciplines to categorize texts and subject areas, which are crucial in distinguishing "literature" from a pool of other writing practices (book production). Literature emerges as a distinct textual practice, supported by the general assumption that cultural production is divided into high and low, based on the prospective audience's expectations, which often indicate boundaries of social hierarchy, such as class, race, or gender. However, this view of cultural production is now an outdated convention due to postmodernist practices and media convergence. Today, we use the term "texts" instead of "literary works," which implies a value judgement, and we foreground socio-historical and power dimensions of different types of writing by analysing "discourses" instead of labelling them as literary or non-literary, fictional or factual.

Contemporary literary studies overlap with cultural studies and often challenge traditional concepts of literature by examining various texts from different perspectives that incorporate models and methods from linguistics, critical theory, philosophy, and politics. Therefore, the approach to literature includes questioning the category itself and challenging the conventional understanding of literary works and their place in English studies.

# LITERATURE IS A CULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF REALITY

To comprehend the connection between literature and culture, and therefore the assertion made in the subtitle, we must view "culture" as a broader context, of which literature is just a part. We must also take into account the idea of "communication" as a process that involves "mediation."

## CULTURE

When we examine the discipline of studying literature, we typically begin with the term's historical evolution. The word "culture" originates from the French language and is derived from the Latin word "cultus," which primarily means "the nurturing of growth." The root verb for this term is "colere," which means "to grow."

The concept changed through history; initially signalling the practical and concrete: the term "culture" originated from the idea of tending to growing things and nurturing nature, with its earliest English meanings related to farming, agriculture, and horticulture. "Cultivation" is a related term that initially referred to the cultivation of fields, before later being used to refer to the cultivation of people's minds and manners from the seventeenth century onwards. This connection between "culture" and "cultivation" in relation to the tending of natural growth is critical to traditional debates on the relationship between "nature" and "nurture," as well as the broader "human/nature" debate. This connection is also relevant to the critics of Anthropocene who see culture and civilization as a consequence of human action detrimental to the nature and humanity.

This opposition dates from the eighteenth century: there has been a perception of human civilization as being in conflict with the rest of nature rather than existing alongside or in harmony with it. This view sees human culture as the result of human activity that opposes nature.

Finally, as artistic and aesthetic activity involving the realm of symbolic: from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, there has been a prevalent view that culture is separate from practical activities that serve primarily instrumental purposes. This understanding is closely related to changes in the meanings of literature and art.

The consequence of such understanding of culture is the establishing of the already mentioned division of categories; in the past, there was a clear division between high culture (also known as court, elite or dominant cultures) and popular culture (also

known as folk, mass or sub-cultures). However, this dichotomy has become less prominent since the 1960s, due in part to the influence of Marxist, feminist, multicultural and postmodernist critics. The current approach is to reject fixed categories and instead acknowledge a variety of cultural differences, and to continually reassess the value of different cultural forms.

## COMMUNICATION

The term "communication" comes from the French language and ultimately from Latin, where it means "to share", "to make something common", and "to impart" or "convey" information or goods.

We usually see the process of COMMUNICATION either as one-way, or as two or many-way process which involves exchange as well as change and takes place with the aid of a medium within a particular context.

When information is transmitted from one person or source to another, it creates a one-way process, where the sender (addresser) transmits the message to the receiver (addressee). This model of communication is referred to as a uni-directional, linear or transference model of communication. In terms of language, it corresponds to monologue. One-way communication is often found in social situations where there is a power imbalance, such as traditional sermons or lectures, where the speaker is given institutional power to speak without interruption or audible response.

Communication that involves two or more individuals is a collaborative and shared process, which is known as a multidirectional or interactive model of communication. This type of communication involves feedback and is characterized by a dialogue between the participants. The dialogue might be interrupted or overheard, and this spilling over is not considered as an excess or noise, but represents an essential part of the communication process. Many-way modes of communication are typical in conversations.

The idea of communication as exchange emphasizes the symbolic or semiotic aspect of communication, which means that when something is communicated, it is not simply transferred from one person to another, but it is transformed in some way. In essence, communication is a process of transformation and exchange, rather than a simple transfer of information.

## MEDIUM, MEDIATION

To properly comprehend mediation, we must recognize it as both a mechanism and a course of action. The term media refers to two related yet distinct things: modern communication technologies that allow people to communicate from a distance, such as print media (especially newspapers and magazines), various forms of telecommunications, film, video, cable, satellite, and the internet; and the organizations that possess and oversee these technologies, as well as the people who work for them, including newspaper owners, television and film companies, advertising agencies, governments, reporters, camera operators, editors, producers, presenters, and so on.

Mediation is the act of one person or group receiving and relaying perceptions and information to another. Although there are propositions which claim that the medium and the mediator can be unbiased, objective, or innocent, such views either overlook or conceal the fact that every transfer of information involves a transformation, and every exchange entails a change. Therefore, there is no such thing as a mediation, medium, or mediator that purely presents or reflects reality, as they all represent and alter versions of reality in some way.

## LITERARY TEXT

As part of language-based communication, literature was originally associated with education, with the term "littera" referring to the alphabet and literature being linked to knowledge of the books available to those who were literate. However, since the 18th century, literature has been more closely linked to creative or imaginative writing that is aesthetically pleasing. Today, literature is widely regarded as an art form that can be appreciated for its aesthetic effect (resulting in an emotional response from the audience), as well as for the information and ideas it conveys. Furthermore, literature can serve as a means of documenting the experiences of a particular social group during a specific time period, as well as preserving a culture's beliefs, values, and customs.

There are many features of a literary text that can be identified and studied. Some of these features include the use of figurative language, such as metaphor and simile, as well as other literary devices like imagery, symbolism, and irony. The structure of a literary text, including the way it is organized and the way it progresses from beginning to end, can also be considered a key feature. Other features of a literary text might include the use of dialogue, the development of characters, and the setting

in which the story takes place. Overall, the specific features of a literary text will depend on the genre and style of the writing.

## IDENTIFYING LITERATURE

### **Features of the literary text**

A TEXT (primarily written, printed, final)  
assumed to be:

Artistic or aesthetic

Creative or imaginative

Telling fictional (not factual) STORIES (with exceptions)

Produced by an AUTHOR

Produced for an AUDIENCE

Verbal in nature (using language)

# LITERATURE AS COMMUNICATION

Communication involves transmission of messages through a channel using a common code shared by the sender (addresser) and the receiver (addressee).

**MESSAGE** – refers to **form** and **context** (aspects of extralinguistic reality)

**CHANNEL** – material **medium** through which the message is sent to reach the addressee.

**CODE** is a system of **rules** that enables the interpretation of linguistic signs.

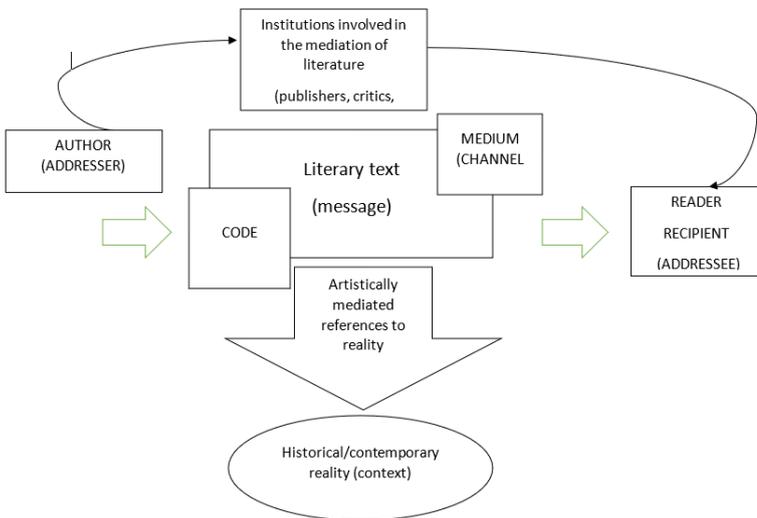


Figure 1 Model of literary communication. Based on Nunning 2009:13

In the process of communication understanding the ‘code’ is not equal to speaking/reading the language. The text is a construct which is either made according to conventions (known also to the reader) or designed to deliberately break the convention. For the examples consider James Joyce’s [Finnegan’s Wake](#) and Lewis Carrolls’ [Jabberwocky](#).

# ON COMMUNICATION AND FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

An important digression

<sup>1</sup>Roman Jakobson – Functions of language (STRUCTURALISM)

In an act of linguistic communication, by focusing on different factors in the process, different text types are generated.



## AXIS OF SELECTION AND AXIS OF COMBINATION

Jakobson's axis of selection and combination is a theory that is often used in the study of literature and language. The theory suggests that there are two main ways in which language can be used to convey meaning: through selection and through combination. Selection refers to the process of choosing particular words and phrases to express an idea or message. This can involve choosing specific words that have a particular meaning, or choosing words that are associated with a certain concept or emotion. Combination, on the other hand, refers to the way in which words are put together to form sentences and larger units of meaning. This can involve combining words in different orders to create different meanings, or using syntax and grammar to create more complex and nuanced meanings. Overall, Jakobson's axis of selection and combination helps to explain the ways in which language is used to convey meaning in literature and other forms of communication.

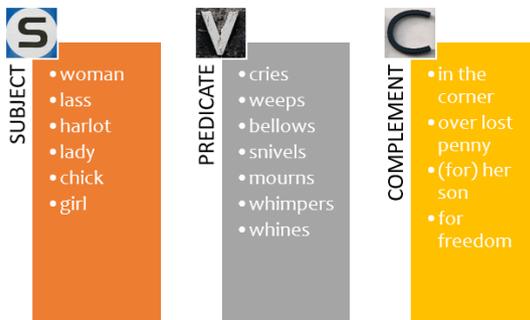


Figure 2 Jakobson's axes

<sup>1</sup> Philweb Bibliographical Archive

[http://www.phillwebb.net/history/Twentieth/Continental/\(Post\)Structuralisms/Structuralism/Jakobson/Jakobson3.jpg](http://www.phillwebb.net/history/Twentieth/Continental/(Post)Structuralisms/Structuralism/Jakobson/Jakobson3.jpg)

## POETIC FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE

Jakobson's poetic function of language is a concept that is related to his theory of the axis of selection and combination. The poetic function of language refers to the ways in which language can be used to create meaning in a literary or artistic context. This can involve using language in creative and imaginative ways, such as through the use of figurative language, imagery, and other literary devices. The poetic function of language also involves using language to express emotions, ideas, and experiences in a way that is aesthetically pleasing and evocative. Jakobson's theory suggests that the poetic function of language is an important part of what makes literature and other forms of art so powerful and engaging.

## POETICS

Poetics is a term used to refer to the study of literature. This can involve examining the **techniques and devices** used by writers to create their works, as well as the effects of those techniques on the reader.

Poetics can also involve considering the history and development of literature, as well as the ways in which literature is tied to other forms of art and culture. Additionally, poetics can involve analysing the meaning and significance of particular works of literature, and considering the ways in which they reflect and comment on the world in which they were produced.

## FORM MATTERS – A LINK TO LINGUISTICS

(Adapted from Nicholas)<sup>2</sup>

### UNDERSTANDING SELECTION AND COMBINATION

In structuralist linguistics, there are two structural mechanisms underlying how language works. The syntagmatic relationship is about how words and phrases are combined to produce larger meanings. It's syntax. The paradigmatic relationship is about which words can be used in the slots of sentences. It's the relationship between all nouns, or all verbs, or all adjectives. It's lexicon.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.quora.com/What-does-Roman-Jakobson-mean-about-poetry-the-projection-of-the-principle-of-equivalence-from-the-axis-of-selection-to-the-axis-of-combination/answer/Nick-Nicholas-5>

Meaning in structural linguistics is tied up the paradigmatic relationship. Once you've worked out which words do the same syntactic job (nouns, verbs, pronouns), you can focus on the meaning differences between those words. In fact, the meaning of those words is defined by the available options in the paradigmatic relationship: dog = not a cat; me = not you.

That focusing on the meaning differences within an equivalence class (words doing the same job in a sentence) is the principle of equivalence.

## FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

Jakobson's enduring contribution to linguistics is identifying the core functions of language. Communication is not the only function. Two functions that Jakobson pointed out, that needed pointing out, were the phatic function (keeping the channel open: "hello", "how are you", "ok?"), and the poetic function.

The poetic function is not just poetry: in fact, it's not even just literature. A lot of humour is covered by the poetic function.

But the important thing about the poetic function is, that the form you use is a big part of the point of what you're saying. It's not just about the meaning of the words; it also about the fact that the words have metre, or rhyme, or punning similarities, or similar sounds. And so on.

## THE TWO AXES

Remember: in structural linguistics, meaning is tied up with the choices of words: the paradigmatic relation. (The axis of selection.) If you use a choice of a different word, you're expressing a different meaning. While there is also a component of meaning in the syntagmatic relation (how you put sentences together), it's not felt to be as interesting: we've got nouns, we've got verbs, there's a limited way of putting them together. (Remember, this is pre-Chomsky.)

Jakobson is a structuralist, and he wants to say that the poetic function of language cares about language form. So he says it in structuralist terms: We've been telling you that meaning is all about the axis of selection. But in poetic language, the syntagmatic relation (the axis of combination) is also a critical component of the meaning. The fact that you've put together words that rhyme, or that words that form a metre, or words that echo each other is just as important in the overall meaning as your initial choice of words (the strict meaning you intended to convey as a plain text communication).

We saw the principle of equivalence is how you work out the meaning of words: me = not you, dog = not cat. Different metres have different meanings too. So do different rhyming schemes. So there is a principle of equivalence at work in poetic structures as well. But it is a principle of equivalence that works on how words are put together, rather than just choices of words. So poetic language projects the principle of equivalence, from the axis of selection, to the axis of combination.

Structuralist linguistics (first half of the XX century) was the last time literature scholars and linguists were on speaking terms. So it was an important message for literature scholars to take in from structuralist linguistics, that poetic language is all about how you put words together, and that how you put words together separates poetic language from normal language.

## LITERARY MODES OF TEXTUAL COMMUNICATION

Literary modes are special cases of general linguistic communication with peculiar features:

- Time lag (deferred contact of addresser and addressee)
- The text is the medium and the only link between them
- No direct influence from the addressee (no feedback)
- Form and genre of communication – distinguishing features establishing conventions

## LITERATURE AS COMMUNICATION – SUM-UP

An author (addresser) produces a literary text (message) which is simultaneously the material basis of medium (channel) via which the message reaches the recipient (addressee).

If the addressee is to understand the text, he or she must share a common language and similar generic conventions (code) with the addresser.

Literary texts generally incorporate references to historical or contemporary reality (context), but these references are subject to techniques of aesthetic mediation (they are not direct references, e.g., *Game of Thrones*, *The Expanse*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Poldark*).

## HOW TEXTS INTERCONNECT NETWORKS OF INFLUENCES

Texts can be seen as products which exist in a particular timeframe and medium (manuscript, printed, performance, film or otherwise recorded versions) Texts

involve reproduction and reception: groups of people involved in making and responding to the text at various moments?

Texts indicate their relations to the rest of the world: they reflect various frames of reference and contexts (political, religious, social, etc.) as well as ‘world-views’.

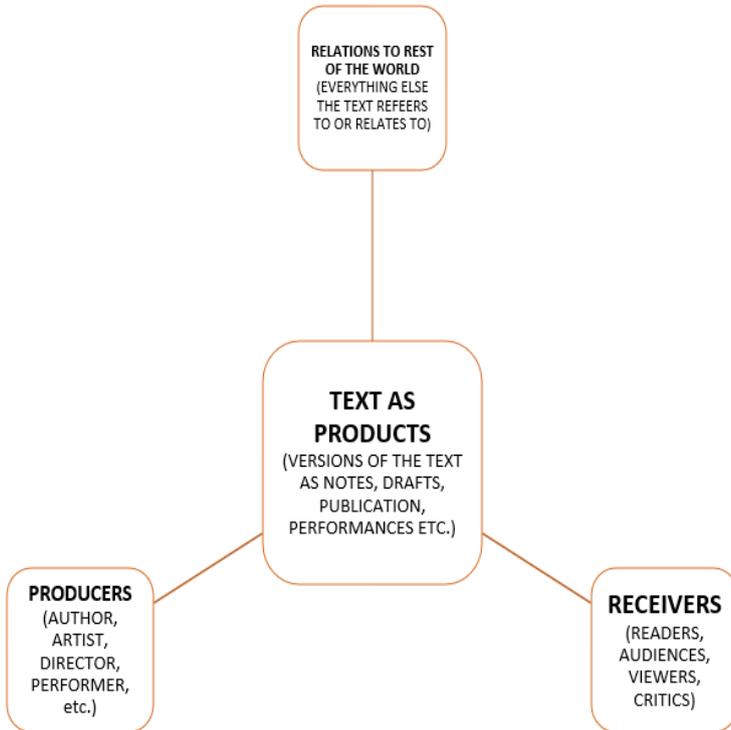


Figure 3 Texts as products. Based on Pope 2012:131

## EXAMPLE: THE CASE OF ‘SHAKESPEARE’S HAMLET’

(Based on Rob Pope 2012: 132-135)

In a strict sense, as a verbal text 'Hamlet' exists in three early printed versions: the First Quarto (1603), which was based on a transcript of an actual performance or the scripts used by actors; the Second Quarto (1604), which was a significantly longer text that is thought to be connected to a later performance; and the First Folio (1623), which was part of the posthumous collection of Shakespeare's plays published in one volume for reading instead of performance. None of these texts features Shakespeare's signature nor was written by him. They have all been employed, sometimes individually and often in combination, as the basis for later printed editions.

A play titled 'Hamlet' (likely written by Thomas Kyd) was known to exist in the late 1580s, which preceded Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. There were also performances of Shakespeare's Hamlet before the First Quarto, and various versions of the play have continued to be performed with adaptations from the 17th century up to the present day. These adaptations include theatrical parodies, rewrites, and extensions, such as Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966, adapted for film in 1991, which tells the story from the perspective of two minor characters), or Ivo Brešan's *Predstava Hamleta u selu Mrduša Donja*, adapted for film in 1973 and directed by Krsto Papić. Filmically, *Hamlet* has existed for film and TV viewers in numerous heavily cut and adapted versions.

‘Shakespeare’s Hamlet’ cannot be seen as solely a creation of Shakespeare himself, but rather a work that has been produced and reproduced by a wide range of individuals throughout history. These individuals include Saxo Grammaticus, who first recorded the Hamlet story in the twelfth century, Belleforest who retold Saxo's version in the *Histoires Tragiques* in 1582, and Thomas Kyd who is believed to have written an earlier version of the play. Additionally, the various directors, actors, designers, camera crews, editors, and other individuals involved in the production and reproduction of Hamlet must also be considered. On the other hand, the text of “Hamlet” is a part of global cultural heritage and the pool of literature as a work in translation where we may study it placed in a very different context of national literatures by studying the trajectories of translation and the presence and the influence of translated and re-translated texts. Therefore, when we refer to ‘Shakespeare’s Hamlet’, we must acknowledge the collective effort of the vast number of individuals who have contributed to its creation and preservation as well

as the context and the circumstances that surrounded each particular version of the text.

The phenomenon of 'Shakespeare's Hamlet' is highly intricate and fluid. Rather than a singular object, a finite text, we can see that it is actually a collection of products and processes and that fact is what sets the scope and the boundary of the literary study of any text. As students and scholars, we may look at products and processes in terms of texts, reproduction, reception, and their relation to the broader world, taking into account variations in time, location, and social context. Therefore, when we are faced with a literary work, it is a complex and intricate network of influences involving many variables, gaps and contradictions. For that reason, we have to get involved with theoretical models.

# LITERARY THEORY

When we consider literary theory, we need to be aware that it is not characterized by a well-defined collection of theoretical statements regarding literature. The most prominent feature of literary theory is the possibility of asking questions about the text in front of us in more universal and conceptual terms. These queries may include the following:

- What constitutes literature?
- What distinguishes a literary work from a non-literary one?
- Can we differentiate between various types of literature, and if so, how?
- How is literature related to its historical, social, cultural, and natural context?
- What is the function of authors, texts, and readers in literary communication?
- In what way does literature intersect with concerns of gender, ethnicity, politics, ecology, or ethics?
- What is the connection between literature and other forms of media, such as orality, literacy, print culture, images, sound, performance, and audio-visual media such as film and television?

These inquiries originate from fundamental questions about the essential components of what is commonly referred to as "literature" or "literary communication" (queries regarding poetics and aesthetics) and progress into more intricate questions regarding the position, role, and significance of literature in contemporary society (queries regarding politics and ethics).

Currently, literary theory's range can involve analyses of not only the works of Shakespeare or the novels of Joseph Conrad but also psychoanalytic musings on the films of Orson Welles or feminist readings of television series such as 'The Handmaid's Tale'.

Theory provides a collection of techniques that you can acquire to enhance your ability to read and analyse literature and culture. In the humanities, theory is a method of mapping (to find out what is out there and make a record of it) rather than provide an overall and finite explanation. It is a tentative and investigative process that commences with a series of fundamental assumptions (for example, regarding authorship or the reader's function), which are then linked to observations (such as specific interpretations of literary texts). The outcomes of this process may be more or less credible and convincing to others, therefore need to be presented in a form of an argument (providing evidence to support claims) but they cannot be objectively confirmed or refuted.

# TYPOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF APPROACHES, METHODS AND THEORIES

- author-oriented
- text-oriented
- context-oriented
- reader-oriented

	Text-oriented approaches I: Structuralism	Text-oriented approaches II: Poststructuralism	Author-oriented approaches	Reader-oriented approaches	Intermediality and intertextuality studies	Context-oriented approaches
Method:	Exact description of the structural, text-intrinsic features of a literary text, disregarding the context.	Exposing the blank spot' within texts where ideologies are at work showing the hidden meanings of a text;	Analysis of the biography of the author and the psychoanalytic dimensions of the text; archival work on the original documents by the author	Shifting the focus from the text itself to the act of reading (and the interactions between reader and text)	Investigating the connections between literary texts and other media (film, opera, etc.); looking at how a text's meaning is shaped by references to another text	Concentration on the relationships between literary texts and their historical/social/cultural contexts
Keywords:	'Grammar of Literature', Hermeneutics, Unitary Meaning, New Criticism, Self-Sufficiency of the Text, Text-Immanent Interpretation, Techniques of Representation	Ambiguity & Contradiction, 'Death of the Author,' Deconstruction, Destabilized Meaning, Difference/Différance, Fragmentation, Multiple Meanings, Postmodernism.	Author, Autobiography, Biography, Production, Oeuvre, Psychoanalysis	Aesthetics, History of Effects of Works (Impact on Real Life), 'Literature as Symbolic Action,' Misreading, Reader-Response Criticism, Reception	Adaptation, Dialogism, Hypertextuality, Parody, Postmodernism, Translation, Transtextuality.	Feminism, Gender Theory, Marxism, New Historicism, Performance Theory, Postcolonialism, 'Text-Historical Reality,' Queer Theory
Representatives:	M. Bakhtin, G. Genette, R. Jakobson, J. Mukarovsky, C. Lévi-Strauss, T. Todorov.	R. Barthes, J. Baudrillard, P. de Man, J. Derrida, G. Deleuze, U. Eco, M. Foucault	W. Booth, S. Chatman, S. Freud, K. Lynn, R. Stein.	R. Barthes, K. Burke, U. Eco, S. Fish, W. Fluck, N. Holland, W. Iser, H.-R. Jauss, S. Mailloux	G. Allen, M. Bakhtin, J. Frow, G. Genette, L. Hutcheon, J. Kristeva, T. Leitch, M. Riffaterre	T. Adorno, H.K. Bhabha, J. Butler, H. Cixous, S. Greenblatt, J. Habermas, G. Lukács, G. Spivak, R. Williams

Table 1 Theoretical Approaches and Methods in Literary Studies

## LITERARY DISCOURSE

Literary discourse is a term used to refer to the way in which writers and readers engage with literature. This can involve the ways in which writers create their works, as well as the ways in which readers interpret and respond to those works. Literary discourse can also involve the ways in which literature is studied and discussed, as well as the ways in which it is used to explore and understand the world. Additionally, literary discourse can involve the ways in which literature is connected to other forms of art and culture, as well as the ways in which it reflects and influences the broader society in which it is produced. In general, literary discourse encompasses the full range of activities and practices associated with literature.

Literary discourse also refers to the ways in which literature is discussed and studied. This can include the critical analysis of literary works, as well as the theories and frameworks that are used to interpret and understand them. Literary discourse can involve the ways in which literature is taught and studied in academic settings, as well as the ways in which it is discussed and debated in popular culture.

## LITERARY GENRES

A literary genre is a category of literature that is defined by a particular set of characteristics. Traditionally, examples of literary genres include poetry, drama, and fiction. Each genre has its own set of rules and conventions, which writers use to create their works. For example, poetry is a genre of literature that is defined by its use of rhythm, rhyme, and figurative language, while drama is a genre that is characterized by its use of dialogue and its focus on character development. Understanding the different literary genres can help readers better appreciate and analyze the works they encounter.

However, we may consider a genre as a category defined by a set of characteristics which in addition to structural features (how the text is constructed) may rely on characteristics that focus around the intended audience and their expectations: those may include the style of writing, the subject matter, and the types of themes and ideas that are typically explored in works of that genre. The best example of the classification which is audience oriented are perhaps the “bookstore” genres, or the grouping of the texts to correspond with the established marketable features (thriller, mystery, fantasy, SF, chick-lit, lad-lit etc.). In order to be considered a member of a particular genre, a work of literature must exhibit the key characteristics

that define that genre. However, much poetry uses no rhythm or figurative language; much drama doesn't involve dialogue or character development; prose isn't necessarily characterised by events or story (e.g. short story "The Balloon" or "novel" United States of Banana).

	Necessary	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
POETRY	verse	rhyme	assonance	Regular foot/meter	
DRAMA	action	Direct speech	verse	characters	dialogue
PROSE	events/story	narrator	setting	characters	dialogue

Table 2 Minimum necessary features defining mega-genres

## LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary analysis is the process of examining a literary work in order to better understand and appreciate it. This can involve analysing the work's structure, characters, themes, and symbols to understand the author's message and the ways in which the work explores universal ideas. Literary analysis can be applied to a wide range of literature, including poetry, novels, plays, and short stories. It can also involve making connections between the work and other literary works (**intertextuality**), as well as between the work and the world outside of literature (intermediality). This can involve comparing the work to other works in the same genre, or to works by the same author, as well as considering the historical, cultural, and social context in which the work was produced. It is often performed by literary critics, who write reviews and essays analysing the works they study. However, anyone who reads a literary work can engage in literary analysis to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the text.

## CLOSE READING

Close reading is a method of literary analysis that involves carefully examining a short passage of text with an intention to gain a deeper understanding of its meaning. This involves reading the text carefully and paying attention to its details, such as its

language, structure, and literary devices; reading the passage several times, noting the words and phrases that the author has chosen, and considering how these choices contribute to the overall meaning and effect of the text. Close reading also requires making inferences and interpretations about the text, based on what is explicitly stated as well as on what is implied. This can involve considering the context in which the text was produced, as well as the intended audience and the themes and ideas that are presented. It is a process of negotiating meaning that can help the reader to identify the themes, symbols, and literary devices the author has used, and to establish relationships between the different contexts and the potential variations in their meaning between the moment of writing and the moment of reading. This method can be applied to any type of literary work, from a short poem to a novel or play.

## INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality refers to the relationship between texts, and how they connect, refer, or allude to one another. This term is used to describe the way in which one text draws on, references, or makes use of other texts to create new meanings. Intertextuality can refer to the relationship between literary texts, such as novels, plays, and poems, but it can also refer to the relationship between different forms of media, such as film, television, and art.

Intertextuality can take different forms, such as:

- Allusion: A reference to a historical, literary, or mythological figure, event, or work that is made in a text, usually for the purpose of creating meaning or establishing a context.
- Quotation: The use of a direct or indirect citation of another text, often used to comment on the original text or to establish a connection between the two texts.
- Parody: The use of an existing text to create a new work that imitates, mocks, or critiques the original text.
- Adaptation: The process of creating a new work by using elements from an existing text, such as a novel, play, or film.

Intertextual dialogue: The relationship between texts that engage with one another, responding, challenging, or building upon the ideas of the other text.

Intertextuality is a central aspect of postmodern literature as it allows for the expansion of meaning and the creation of new perspectives. It is used to question the boundaries of the text, to challenge the notion of originality, and to create a sense of continuity and tradition. It also allows authors to make connections between different texts, genres, and literary traditions, and to explore the ways in which texts are influenced by the cultural and historical context in which they were created.

## SYMBOL

A literary symbol is an object, character, or event that is used to represent something else, often with the intention of creating a deeper meaning or significance. Symbols can take many forms, and they can be found in all types of literature, including poems, plays, and novels. For example, a wedding ring might be used as a symbol of eternal love and commitment, while a raven might be used to symbolize death or impending doom. Symbols can be powerful tools for writers, as they allow them to add layers of meaning to their works and enrich the reading experience for their audience.

A literary symbol is an object, person, or idea that has a deeper meaning and significance than its literal sense. Symbols are often used in literature to add layers of meaning to a story and to create a more complex and nuanced understanding of the world the story is set in. For example, a rose might be used as a symbol of love and beauty, while a snake might be used as a symbol of temptation and deceit. The specific symbols used in a literary work will depend on the context and the themes that the author is trying to explore. THEY CAN BE CULTURALLY GROUNDED.

## LITERARY MOTIF

A literary motif is a recurring idea, image, or symbol that is used throughout a work of literature. Motifs are often used to reinforce a central theme or idea, and they can help to create a sense of unity and coherence in a literary work. For example, a motif of darkness and light might be used to represent good and evil, or a motif of water might be used to represent cleansing and renewal. The specific motifs used in a literary work will depend on the themes and ideas the author is trying to explore.

They are often used by writers to add depth and complexity to their stories, and to help the reader understand the underlying ideas and messages that the writer is trying to convey. For example, the motif of betrayal might recur throughout a novel, with different characters betraying each other in various ways, highlighting the theme of the corrupting influence of power. Understanding the motifs in a literary work can help the reader gain a deeper understanding of the story and its meaning.

## LITERARY THEME

A literary theme is an underlying message or idea that is expressed through the events, characters, and settings in a story. Some common themes in literature include love, betrayal, redemption, and the corrupting influence of power. Themes can be expressed directly, through the words and actions of the characters, or they can be implied, requiring the reader to think critically and draw their own conclusions. Understanding the theme of a literary work can help the reader gain a better understanding of the story and its significance.

A literary theme is a central idea or message that is explored and developed throughout a work of literature. Themes are often universal, meaning that they can be applied to people and situations outside of the specific story in which they are presented. They can also be abstract, making it necessary for the reader to interpret and think deeply about the meaning of the theme. Themes are often related to the human experience, and they can address a wide range of topics, including love, loss, friendship, and the human condition. Understanding the themes in a literary work can help the reader gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of the story.

## CRITICAL APPROACHES

### FORMALISM

Russian formalists and early structuralists were predominantly, and sometimes exclusively, interested in **form**.

These rules would be general rather than particular; the Russian formalists for the most part focused on intrinsic (formal) properties that distinguish literary texts from other types of text, for instance from newspaper reports, personal letters or advertisements. These properties that set literature apart are located, first and foremost, in literary language as a special kind of language.

Viktor SHKLOVSKY in an influential essay on “Art as Technique” (2004 [1917]) argues that the specific formal features, the so-called devices (syntax, meter, figurative language, rhyme), distinguish literary language from other uses of language. Whereas everyday language is used for practical purposes of communication, literary language is deliberately constructed and artificial.

## DEFAMILIARIZATION (FORMALISM)

The principle of estrangement, also known as the principle of alienation or the principle of defamiliarization, is a concept that is often used in the study of literature and other forms of art. The principle of estrangement suggests that by making the familiar strange, or by presenting the world in a way that is unfamiliar or unexpected, artists can help the audience to see things in a new light and to gain a deeper understanding of the world around them. This can involve using techniques such as exaggeration, distortion, and unconventional perspectives to create a sense of disorientation or dissonance. By creating a sense of estrangement, artists can help their audience to break out of their preconceived notions and to look at the world in a more critical and thoughtful way. The principle of estrangement is often associated with the Russian formalist critic Viktor Shklovsky, who first introduced the concept.

### ACTIVITY

Read WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS's poem

["The Red Wheelbarrow"](#)

(Based on Berensmeyer 2009)

Formalists argue that, through the use of language, a poem can alter our perception of ordinary objects such as a wheelbarrow, rainwater, and chickens by introducing something out of the ordinary.

The literary devices used to achieve this effect relate to the form of the poem. In this particular case, the poem consists of four short stanzas, each containing the same number of stressed syllables. Enjambment between lines slows down the reading and encourages the reader to focus on the visual images constructed in those lines.

Formalists believe that openness to interpretation is an effect of defamiliarization, which is precisely what makes this text literary. The particular meaning associated with the wheelbarrow and its alleged importance is not as important as the fact that we now perceive and respond differently to everyday objects in the poem. The objects become the subject of a work of art, rather than just items on an inventory.

### FOREGROUNDED FEATURES

When examining literary devices, their function cannot be determined by the device itself, but rather depends on the context in which it is used. For example, in a poem where only the final two lines rhyme, this device will be particularly noteworthy and will stand out as a prominent feature. However, if the entire poem rhymes

throughout, the rhyme in the final two lines will not have the same effect, as it is not exceptional or unique and thus does not challenge the reader's expectations. The dominant device in a text is the one that is most prominent and central to the organization of the work of literature.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Literary theories are intellectual tools that allow you to understand and explicate texts in a variety of ways. By learning different literary theories, you will become more confident in assessing novels, stories, poems, plays, and essays in class and beyond.
- Different schools of literary theory prioritize certain concerns for talking about literature while deemphasizing others: for example, readers' responses, gender, sexuality, or race.
- Literary scholars usually engage with their theories through academic argument; they make claims, support those claims with evidence, and respond directly to the ideas of other critics.

## EXAMPLES

[Sound in Shakespeare's "Tempest": A Formalist Approach](#)

## CONTRIBUTORS, ATTRIBUTIONS

Libretext: Creating Literary Analysis, ch 1

[https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Literature\\_and\\_Literacy/Book%3A\\_Creating\\_Literary\\_Analysis/1%3A\\_Introduction\\_-\\_What\\_Is\\_Literary\\_Theory\\_and\\_Why\\_Should\\_I\\_Care/1.11%3A\\_End-of-Chapter\\_Assessment](https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Literature_and_Literacy/Book%3A_Creating_Literary_Analysis/1%3A_Introduction_-_What_Is_Literary_Theory_and_Why_Should_I_Care/1.11%3A_End-of-Chapter_Assessment)

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## UNIT 2

# UNDERSTANDING POETRY

### AIMS

In this section we learn how to

- identify criteria that qualify texts as poetry
- describe formal features of poetry
- discuss the use of figurative language in poetry

# DEFINITIONS

## WHAT IS POETRY?<sup>3</sup>

Poetry is a condensed art form that produces an experience in a reader through words. And though words may appear visually as symbols on the page, the experience that poems produce in us is much more physical and direct. The elements of poetry permit a poet to control many aspects of language—tone, pace, rhythm, sound—as well as language’s effects: images, ideas, sensations. These elements give power to the poet to shape a reader’s physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual experience of the poem. Because form and function are so closely intertwined, it is impossible to paraphrase a poem (Bonczek Evory 2018: 25). A poet makes the invisible visible. The invisible includes our deepest feelings and angsts, and also our joys, sorrows, and unanswered questions of being human. How is a poet able to do this? A poet uses language in a way that makes it fresh and original, and is more interested in how the arrangement of words affects the reader rather than language standards. The poet thinks about how words sound, the musicality within each word and also how the words come together.

Like fiction writers, poets mostly *show* rather than *tell*. They describe the scene vividly using as few words as possible and prefer to describe rather than analyze, leaving the latter to the people who read and write about poetry as you are doing in this class.

Poetry can take many forms, including rhymed and unrhymed verse, as well as free verse, which does not have a set rhythm or rhyme scheme. Poetry can be written on a wide range of topics and can be used to express a wide range of emotions and ideas. Poetry is often considered to be a form of art, and it can be appreciated for its aesthetic value as well as for the insights and emotions it conveys.

## WHAT IS A POEM?<sup>4</sup>

- Poem: A made thing, a verbal construct, an event in language. The word *poesis* means “making;” and the oldest term for the poet means “maker.”

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<sup>3</sup> From Ringo and Kashyap

[https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Literature\\_and\\_Literacy/Writing\\_and\\_Critical\\_Thinking\\_Through\\_Literature\\_\(Ringo\\_and\\_Kashyap\)/06%3A\\_About\\_Poetry/6.01%3A\\_What\\_is\\_Poetry](https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Literature_and_Literacy/Writing_and_Critical_Thinking_Through_Literature_(Ringo_and_Kashyap)/06%3A_About_Poetry/6.01%3A_What_is_Poetry)

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from *Naming the Unnameable: An Approach to Poetry for New Generations* by Michelle Bonczek Evory, sourced from SUNY, CC-BY-NC-SA

- William Carlos Williams defined the poem as “a small (or large) machine made of words.” (He added that there is nothing redundant about a machine.)
- Wallace Stevens characterized poetry as “a revelation of words by means of the words.”
- In his essay “What is Poetry?” linguist Roman Jakobson declared: “Poeticity is present when the word is felt as a word and not a mere representation of the object being named or an outburst of emotion, when words and their composition, their meaning, their external and internal form, acquire a **weight** and *value* of their own instead of referring indifferently to reality.”

Two basic metaphors for the art of poetry in the classical world were carpentry and weaving. “Whatsoever else it may be,” W. H. Auden said, “a poem is a verbal artifact which must be as skillfully and solidly constructed as a table or a motorcycle.”

The true poem has been crafted into a living entity. It has magical potency, ineffable spirit. There is always something mysterious and inexplicable in a poem. **It is an act—an action—beyond paraphrase because what is said is always inseparable from the way it is being said.** A poem creates an experience in the reader that cannot be reduced to anything else. Perhaps it exists in order to create that aesthetic experience.

Of the many ideas provided here in this definition, perhaps the one to emphasize most is that **the poem is “an event in language.”** It is also one of the harder to understand concepts. **“A poem creates an experience in the reader that cannot be reduced to anything else”.** Especially not through paraphrase. This means that in order to “experience” a poem, **a reader needs to read it as it is.** The poem is itself a type of virtual reality.

Jeremy Arnold, a professor of philosophy at the University of Woolamaloo in Canada, likens the poem to the “pensieve” device in the Harry Potter series: “A poem allows someone to preserve a mental experience so that an outsider can access it as if it were their own.” When coming to poetry, there may be nothing more important to understand because nothing can shape your perspective more on *how to write and for what purpose*. Poetry requires a reader, an audience; therefore, the poet must learn how to best engage an audience. And this engagement doesn’t happen by sharing ideas, feelings, or experiences, by telling the reader about your experiences — **it happens by creating them on the page with words that evoke the senses.** *With*

*images*. These, then, are how the literary genres speak. Images are their muscles. Their heart. Images are poetry's body and soul.

## HOW TO CONDUCT A CLOSE READING OF A POEM<sup>5</sup>

### THE TITLE MATTERS

Reading a poem, we start at the beginning—the title, which we allow to set up an expectation for the poem in us. A title can set a mood or tone, or ground us in a setting, persona, or time. It is the doorway into the poem. It prepares us for what follows. How would you describe the tone of each of the following titles?

### DISCUSSION

Look at the following titles and discuss the reactions and expectations they create:

- Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening
- Happiness
- Wishes for Sons
- Riot Act, April 29, 1992
- Reckless Sonnet
- Pissing Off the Back of the Boat into the Nivernais Canal
- How Much Is This Poem Going to Cost Me?
- The Turtle
- A Blessing
- Girl Friend Poem #3

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<sup>5</sup> Bonczek Evory 2018: 27-39

## THE FIRST TIME THROUGH

Upon a first reading, it's important to get an idea of what it is you are entering. *Read* the poem out loud. *Listen* for the general, larger qualities of the poem like tone, mood, and style. *Look up* any words you cannot define. *Circle* any phrases that you don't understand and *mark* any that stand out to you. Some questions we may ask ourselves include:

1. What is my first emotional reaction to the poem?
2. Is this poem telling a story? Sharing thoughts? Playing with language experimentally? Is it exploring one's feelings or perceptions? Is it describing something?
3. Is the tone serious? Funny? Meditative? Inquisitive? Confessional? Here is a list of tonal descriptors that may help you pin down what you're hearing:

- Abrasive, accepting, admiring, adoring, angry, anxious, apologetic, apprehensive, argumentative, awe-struck
- Biting, bitter, blissful, boastful
- Candid, childish, child-like, clipped, cold, complimentary, condescending, critical
- Despairing, detached, didactic, direct, discouraged, doubtful, dramatic
- Fearful, forceful, frightened
- Happy, heavy-hearted, horrified, humorous
- Indifferent, ironic, irreverent
- Loving
- Melancholic, mysterious
- Naïve, nostalgic
- Objective, optimistic, peaceful, pessimistic, playful, proud
- Questioning
- Reflective, reminiscent
- Sad, sarcastic, satirical, satisfied, seductive, self-critical, self-mocking, sexy, shocked, silly, sly, solemn, somber, stunned, subdued, sweet, sympathetic
- Thoughtful, threatening
- Uncertain, urgent
- Whimsical

These initial questions will emotionally prepare you to be a good listener.

## IMAGES AND TONE

After an initial introduction to the poem, read slowly and allow the meanings to emerge as you move from line to line, paying attention next to images and tone. Before moving ahead, ask what your emotional response is at the end of each line, as lines can create different meanings and give the poem complexity.

## FIND CONNECTIONS AND ASK QUESTIONS

After moving through the poem and noting images, their effects, and the tone or places where tone changes, the next question that is helpful to ask is: What does x remind me of? Or, what associations am I making? Usually the connections I would suggest making would be within the poem itself and the patterns it creates—between lines, images, repetitive words or themes, diction (word choice)... What other connections and patterns can we see? And what questions can these patterns raise in us?

## LOOK CLOSELY AT DICTION

When reading a poem, you should always look up words you do not know, but sometimes it can help to look up words that you do know when they have more than one meaning, too.

## FORMAL FEATURES OF POETRY

The formal structure of a poem refers to the way in which the poem is organized and composed. This can include elements such as the poem's rhyme scheme, meter, and stanza structure. The formal structure of a poem can have a significant impact on its meaning and effect, and it is often closely tied to the poem's themes and ideas. The specific formal structure of a poem will depend on the literary conventions as much as on poet's intentions and the subject matter being explored.

## ARCHITECTURE<sup>6</sup>

In poetry, there are three levels of structuring: words, lines, and stanzas. As with all forms of writing, syllables and words comprise the most basic level of form. But what makes poetry unique as a genre is verse—lines—which work as both a unit of sensibility and music. Lines assemble into stanzas, or “rooms” in Italian. Sometimes poems can have sections, too, where stanzas are confined yet relate to one another, and sometimes poems can break from line and stanza into what we call prose poems.

## THE LINE: ROWS

Originally, poetry was used as a way to remember stories, which were delivered orally by a speaker or “the poet” to an audience. The units created verse, which in Latin translates to “line,” “row,” or “furrow,” musical measures that were easier to remember. Poetry existed before writing; and even after writing was invented most people could not read. Poetry has been a way throughout human existence for people

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Bonczek Evory, 2018: 89-104

to pass on history, news, entertainment, and wisdom from one generation to the next. With the spread of literacy, the function of lines began to take on more complexity, increasing auditory and visual impacts. By the twentieth century, typeface allowed poets to place visual form at the centre of their art.

The line is a unit of measurement different from that of sentences. A line can ignore syntax and grammar to create interesting effects. For instance, a line can end on a verb and suspend the object onto the next line. This move can increase speed, or the pace, of the poem, as the reader is propelled forward to complete the thought. The line break can also create an image or idea that can transform when the reader reaches the next line.

Deciding where to break a line can be determined by a number of things: rhythm, rhyme, emphasis, pace, or the way a poem looks on a page. Classic forms predetermine the form a poem takes, and include rules concerning meter, rhyme, and repetition. Some forms like the Shakespearian sonnet include the element of a turn, or a volta, in which there is a marked change in the speaker in thought, emotion, or rhetoric.

Today, poetry is written in free verse, or *vers libre* in Latin, which may come across as the absence of rules, but in fact complies to some principles usually peculiar to the poem or poet in question. Robert Frost famously referred to writing free verse as “playing tennis without a net.”

## ACTIVITY

Choose a poem from the Poetry Foundation and erase the lines by placing the poem into complete sentences. Rewrite the poem experimenting with different line breaks. How much of a difference do your new lines make? What happens to tone? Images? Mood? Music?

## STANZAS: ROOMS

In *classic forms* stanza lengths are predetermined. A *ballad* is written in quatrains, or stanzas containing four lines; a *roundel* has three stanzas; and a *villanelle* five tercets, or stanzas containing three lines. But in free verse, the poem’s stanzas are determined by the poet. The decisions are based on personal taste with consideration to how it looks on the page, how it affects rhythm and pacing, and what it emphasizes in the poem.

Depending on the number of lines in the group we speak of:

Couplet: a stanza of two lines

Tercet, or Triplet: a stanza of three lines

Quatrain: a stanza of four lines

Cinquain, or quintain, or quintet: a stanza of five lines

Sextain, or sestet: a stanza of six lines

Septet: a stanza of seven lines

Octave: a stanza of eight lines

## WHAT STANZAS DO

Stanzas dictate the way space is used on the page, create unity and separation. Even if the motive is to break a poem into stanzas to make the poem easier to read on the page—a huge chunk of text can be intimidating and heavy—or even if the motive is to control the music of the language by adding longer pauses—breaking a poem into stanzas invites the ideas of division and unification into the poem.

Usually stanzas are built on more than one idea, for more than one reason (like all aspects of a poem). Lines are part of stanzas, and words are part of lines. These three elements—words, lines, and stanzas—work together to cause all sorts of effects from creating music to drawing parallels between ideas and images. Stanzas can organize time (past, present, future), signal the difference in location, indicate shifts in mode (narrative, lyrical, description, commentary) or voice, emphasize different aspects like patterns and repetitions, etc.

## VERSIFICATION – HOW LANGUAGE SOUNDS

Rhythm is integral to poetry and a mark of what poetry actually is. In learning to interpret poetry's structures and sound patterns, in free verse, our ears attune finely to tone, cadence, pitch, rhythm, and silence. In formal verse, we employ a particular language to help us talk about rhythm.

Versification is the study of the formal organization of sounds in poetry. This involves analyzing the patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem, as well as the ways in which those patterns are organized into larger units like feet and lines. Versification can also involve considering the rhythmic and sonic qualities of a poem, such as its use of rhyme and alliteration. The specific features of versification will depend on the type of poem being studied and the poetic tradition it belongs to. For example, a Shakespearean sonnet has a specific metrical structure, with each line consisting of ten syllables and a particular rhyme scheme, while a free verse poem may have a more flexible and varied metrical structure. Understanding the

versification of a poem can help the reader appreciate and analyze its form and effects.

## THE ISSUE OF STRESS

In poetry, a foot is a unit of measurement that consists of a specific pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. In metrical verse, we use this structure of feet to describe how lines are constructed using lengths and rhythm to produce sound (sensory) effect.

In English each foot contains either two or three syllables. For example, an iamb is a foot that consists of two syllables, with the first syllable unstressed and the second syllable stressed (be-hold). A trochee, on the other hand, has the opposite pattern, with the first syllable stressed and the second syllable unstressed (ty-ger). Anapest (com-pre-hend) and dactyl (ho-nest-ly) are feet constructed by combining three syllables. Spondee (two stressed, cup-cake) and pyrrhic (two unstressed of-the) patterns are most used for variation.

## STRESS PATTERNS

Depend on the language as do the rules of structuring verse. In English poetry from Anglo-Saxon period to contemporary times we also detect changes in the patterning as well as in sound effects which reflect the changes taking place in the development of the English language.

## ACCENTUAL VERSE

Accentual stress in Old English poetry refers to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. In Old English poetry, the number of syllables in a line was not fixed, as it is in many modern metrical forms. Instead, the poet would arrange the words in a line to create a pattern of stresses, with each stressed syllable carrying a certain amount of metrical weight. This would create a rhythmic effect that contributed to the overall sound and structure of the poem. Anglo-Saxon verse was a form adopted to oral presentation: the line was called *stich* [stik] and it had four stressed syllables divided by a pause which created two semi-sichs. The stress was indicated by alliteration (repetition of a consonant cluster in the initial position of the accentuated syllable) in two or three stressed syllables. (Eg. “Beowulf”)

## SYLLABIC VERSE

Syllabic verse is a type of poetry in which each line contains a specific number of syllables. This is different from accentual verse, in which the number of stresses or accents in each line is fixed. Some examples of syllabic verse include haiku, which has

three lines with five, seven, and five syllables, respectively, and tanka, which has five lines with five, seven, five, seven, and seven syllables. Some other forms of poetry, such as free verse, do not have a fixed syllable count. In English poetry syllabic verse represents the influence of French language. (Eg. Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*).

## ACCENTUAL-SYLLABIC VERSE

In modern English it is a fusion of Germanic and Romance influences. The verse is marked by fixed number of stresses and a fixed number of syllables.

Accentual-syllabic stress refers to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem, as well as the way in which those syllables are organized into larger metrical units like feet and lines. In accentual-syllabic stress, each line of a poem is made up of a specific (fixed) number of syllables, and each syllable is either stressed or unstressed. The pattern of stresses and unstresses creates a rhythmic effect that contributes to the overall structure and sound of the poem. Accentual-syllabic stress is a common feature of many types of poetry, including traditional forms like the sonnet and the ballad, as well as more modern forms like free verse, although the regularity of repetition varies.

## SCANSION

The analysis of formal elements through which a poem establishes regularity of stress patterns, and therefore the rhythm as its effect is called scansion. The regularity of a line of verse should be in congruence with the lines of the poem preceding and following the one we are scanning. That means that the pattern should be the same for a group of lines (or stanza), we cannot say for example that one line is iambic while the next is anapestic.

It is necessary to point out that the regularity of stress pattern is never absolute, that is, we determine the pattern according to **maximization principle** which says that the dominant metrical pattern is the one that has to make the *least exceptions*. That means that is possible to find slight variation in the distribution of stressed and unstressed syllables that we treat as “an anomaly” or as “a catalectic (unfinished) foot” etc.

## DETERMINING THE PATTERN

FOOT is the stress distribution pattern. Only ONE syllable in the foot is going to be stressed and the syllables creating the foot do not have to belong to the same word!

FOOT	ADJECTIVE		
IAMB	IAMBIC	unstressed/stressed	be • hold
TROCHEE	TROCHAIC	stressed/unstressed	ty • ger
SPONDEE	SPONDAIC	stressed/stressed	cup • cake
PYRRIC	PYRRIC	unstressed/unstressed	of • the
DACTYL	DACTYLIC	stressed/unstressed/unstressed	ho • nest • ly
ANAPEST	ANAPESTIC	unstressed/unstressed/stressed	comp • re • hend

METRE is the count of/number/ of feet per line (Greek numerals)

Lines named according to the number of *accents/stresses* they contain

- 1 accent **monometer**
- 2 accents **dimeter**
- 3 **trimeter**
- 4 **tetrameter**
- 5 **pentameter**
- 6 **hexameter**
- 7 **heptameter**

- **8 octameter**

To determine the pattern:

- Look at the line
- Count the syllables
- Look for polysyllabic words (figure out the order of stresses or look it up)
- Align the stresses and use maximization principle:
  - ONE line, ONE (dominant) foot
- Pyrrhic and Spondee could be used for variation to avoid sing-song effect

Examples:

Robert Frost, "[Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening](#)"

William Blake, "[Tyger](#)"

George Gordon, Lord Byron, "[The Destruction of Sennacherib](#)"

Alfred Tennyson "[The Charge of the Light Brigade](#)"

## SOUND EFFECTS: MUSIC AND RHYME<sup>7</sup>

In addition to line length and rhythm, we also categorize lines by rhyme, especially in formal verse where an extended pattern is maintained. In formal poetry it occurs more frequently as end-rhyme, when two or more words that end lines rhyme. In free verse, the rhyme is more likely to be internal, not necessarily occurring at the end of lines.

Let's look at an excerpt from William Wordsworth's poem "The Daffodils":

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

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<sup>7</sup> Adapted from Bonczek Evory, 2018: 108

Here we can see the first and third lines rhyme; the second, fourth and sixth; the fifth and sixth. There is definite rhyme scheme. When we refer to the rhymes in this stanza, we diagram the rhymes with matching letters like this: ABABCC.

I wandered lonely as a cloud (A)  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills, (B)  
When all at once I saw a crowd, (A)  
A host, of golden daffodils; (B)  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees, (C)  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze. (C)

Rhyme may be an element in less formal poetry that would not be as prominent as in Wordsworth – internal rhyme, slant off (not exact) rhyme, still presents the musical quality of poetry that is perhaps more subtle.

As an example read the poem "[They Feed They Lion](#)" by Philip Levine and perform a close reading with your ears. Note places of assonance and rhyme. How do these patterns affect your reading of the poem? How do these sounds work to create the poem's tone of voice?

Poems will often emphasize the sound effect and their musicality through the use of other formal elements, such as consonance, assonance, alliteration, line length variation, enjambment or caesura.

# THE RESULTING FORM

FORM<sup>8</sup> of a poem relies on the combination of structural elements – here are some of the best known examples:

## BLANK VERSE

A form that lends itself well to a meditative voice, **blank verse is written in iambic pentameter lines that do not rhyme**. For example, Shakespeare’s plays and John Milton’s “Pardise Lost”.

## HAIKU

The Japanese form that is three lines long and comprised of **unrhymed, unmetered** lines with a **5 7 5 syllable count**. Traditionally, the haiku’s subject matter relates to nature or seasons.

“Mother’s Day”

One Sunday in May  
Mothers answer mothers’ calls  
We are all children

## PROSE POEM

The prose poem, which can be any length, isn’t broken into verse, but contains many of the elements of poetry: figures of speech, musical language, internal rhyme, repetition, condensed syntax, and imagery. There is some debate over the form, as there are some poets who do not consider the form a poem, per se, but something more akin to flash fiction, or at least a genre of prose rather than verse. (Example Zbigniew Herbert, [History of Minotaur](#)).

## SONNET

The sonnet is a strict form that has fourteen lines and contains a volta, or a turn in thought, which can sometimes be indicated with the words “but” or “yet.”

Shakespearian: Comprised of three quatrains and a couplet, this sonnet is composed in iambic pentameter and rhymes A B A B–C D C D–E F E F–G G. The volta appears

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<sup>8</sup>Adapted from Bonczek Evory 2018: 117-129

either between lines eight and nine or between lines twelve and thirteen. Petrarchan: This sonnet contains two stanzas: one octet that rhymes as A B B A–A B B A, and a remaining sextet with varying rhyme schemes. The volta occurs between the stanzas.

Spenserian: This sonnet modifies the Petrarchan to contain a rhyme scheme of A B A B–B C B C–C D C D–E E.

## VILLANELLE

This French form consists of 19 lines; five tercets and a final quatrain. The rhyme scheme is ABA ABA ABA ABA ABA ABAA and the repetition involves a refrain where the first and third lines of the first tercet alternate as the last lines of the remaining tercets. In the last stanza, a quatrain, these two lines appear again as the final two lines of the poem.

One of the most famous examples of a villanelle is Dylan Thomas' "[Do not go gentle into that good night](#)".

## ACTIVITY

### Exquisite Corpse

Invented by the Surrealists, this is a form that is amusing as a group activity.

Each person writes two lines, then folds the paper so the next person writing can see only the second line; the next person writes two more lines and folds the paper so that only the second line is visible; and so on.

Another Surrealist game is called "If This, Then That." Each person writes without knowing what the other person is writing. The first person writes a phrase on one side of a piece of paper that begins "If..." and then passes the paper to his or her partner. Without looking at the "If" statement, the partner then writes a statement beginning "Then..."

# FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN POETRY

Figurative language is a type of language that uses words and phrases in non-literal ways to create vivid images and expressive effects. Figurative language is often used in poetry and literature to create more engaging and interesting descriptions, but it can also be used in everyday speech and writing. Some common types of figurative language include metaphors, similes, personification, and hyperbole.

**Metaphors** are one type of figurative language that compares two things that are not literally the same but have some similar characteristics. For example, someone might say "The road ahead is a long and winding path" to describe the challenges and obstacles that they expect to encounter in the future. In this example, the road is being used as a metaphor for the challenges and obstacles that the person will face.

**Similes** are another type of figurative language that compare two things using the words "like" or "as". For example, instead of saying "The road ahead is a long and winding path", a person could say "The road ahead is like a long and winding path" to make the same comparison.

**Personification** is a type of figurative language in which non-human things or concepts are described as having human qualities or characteristics. For example, someone might say "The sun was smiling down on us" to describe the warm and friendly feeling of the sun's rays. In this example, the sun is being personified as a person who is smiling.

**Hyperbole** is a type of figurative language that uses exaggeration to create emphasis or emphasis. For example, someone might say "I've told you a million times to clean your room!" to express their frustration with someone who has not been listening to them. In this example, the use of "a million times" is an exaggeration that is used to create emphasis and make the point more dramatic.

## CONCEPTS AND POETRY

*Arbitrary nature of language*

*Figurative language use*

*Conceptual fields*

## Charles Sanders PEIRCE

**Charles Sanders Peirce** was an American philosopher and logician who is best known for his contributions to the field of **semiotics**, the study of signs and symbols.

According to Peirce, a sign is anything that stands for something else, whether it is a word, a gesture, or a physical object. Peirce identified three different types of signs: *icons, indices, and symbols*.



An icon is a sign that resembles the thing it represents. For example, a picture of a tree is an icon of a tree because it looks like a tree.



An index is a sign that is directly connected to the thing it represents. For example, the smell of smoke is an index of a fire because it is produced by the fire.



A symbol is a sign that is arbitrary and conventional, and its meaning is determined by social convention or agreement. For example, the word "tree" is a symbol for a tree because it is not directly related to the physical appearance or characteristics of a tree, but its meaning has been agreed upon by speakers of the language.

According to Peirce, these three types of signs are not mutually exclusive, and many signs can be considered to be icons, indices, or symbols to varying degrees. Peirce's theory of signs has been highly influential in the study of language and communication, and his ideas continue to be discussed and debated by semioticians and philosophers today.

## Ferdinand DE SAUSSURE

Ferdinand de Saussure was a Swiss linguist and semiotician who is best known for his contributions to the study of language and communication. According to Saussure, a **sign** is the fundamental unit of language, and it is composed of two parts: the signifier, which is the physical form of the sign (such as a word or a sound), and the signified, which is the concept or meaning that the sign represents.

Saussure's concept of the sign is central to his theory of language, which is known as **structuralism**. According to structuralism, language is a system of signs that are organized according to their relationships with each other, rather than being simply a collection of individual words and phrases. Saussure argued that the meaning of a

sign is not inherent in the sign itself but is determined by its place within the overall system of language. For example, the meaning of the word "dog" is not determined by the letters that make up the word, but by its relationship to other words in the language, such as "cat", "pet", and "animal".

Saussure's theory of the sign has been highly influential in the study of linguistics and semiotics, and his ideas continue to be discussed and debated by scholars and researchers in these fields.

## Roland BARTHES

Roland Barthes was a French philosopher and literary theorist who is best known for his contributions to the study of **semiotics and cultural criticism**. In his book ***Mythologies***, Barthes discusses the concept of myth, which he defines as a type of discourse that naturalizes or disguises social and cultural values and beliefs.

According to Barthes, myth is a way of representing the world that hides or distorts the social and cultural reality behind a seemingly natural and self-evident facade. For example, the myth of the nuclear family (a married couple with children) naturalizes the idea that this is the only acceptable and normal form of family, even though there are many other ways of organizing family life.

Barthes argues that myth is not simply a false or mistaken belief, but a powerful tool that is used to maintain and reinforce dominant social and cultural values. He also suggests that myth can be critically analyzed and deconstructed by examining the language and symbols that are used to create it. By exposing the hidden meanings and social implications of myth, Barthes suggests, we can gain a better understanding of the world and the way it is constructed.

# FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE FEATURES

## THE FORMAL STRUCTURE OF METAPHOR

The formal structure of a metaphor consists of two parts: the **tenor**, which is the subject of the metaphor, and the **vehicle**, which is the object or *concept* that the metaphor uses to describe the tenor. The tenor is the thing that is being described or explained using the metaphor, while the vehicle is the word or phrase that is used to make the comparison.

For example, in the metaphor "Time is a thief", the tenor is time and the vehicle is a thief. In this metaphor, the qualities and characteristics of a thief (such as stealing and sneaking) are used to describe and understand the concept of time.

The structure of a metaphor can also be represented using the formula "X is Y", where X is the tenor and Y is the vehicle. This formula highlights the way that the metaphor uses one concept (Y) to describe and understand another concept (X).

The formal structure of a metaphor is important because it helps to clarify the meaning and implications of the metaphor. By identifying the tenor and the vehicle, we can better understand the comparison that the metaphor is making and the implications of that comparison.

## EXTENDED METAPHOR

An extended metaphor is a metaphor that is developed and continued throughout a text, rather than being just a single word or phrase. In an extended metaphor, the comparison between the tenor and the vehicle is sustained and developed, and the metaphor becomes an important part of the overall meaning and structure of the text. Extended metaphors can be found in many different types of texts, including poetry, prose, and plays. They can be used to explore complex ideas and themes in a creative and imaginative way, and they can also add depth and richness to the language and imagery of a text.

## CONCETTO

In Italian, the word "concetto" means concept or idea. It is used to refer to an abstract or general idea that is formed by the mind and is not directly associated with a specific object or thing. For example, the concetto of justice is the general idea or concept of what justice means, without being tied to any particular case or situation.

In general, the concept of conceit emphasizes the idea that our understanding of the world is based on mental representations or concepts, rather than on direct sensory experience. It suggests that our minds play an active role in organizing and interpreting the information that we receive from the world, and that these mental representations are an important part of how we make sense of our experiences.

## CONCEIT

A conceit is a figure of speech that is characterized by the use of an elaborate and extended metaphor. It is a type of extended metaphor, in which a comparison is sustained and developed over the course of a text, and becomes an important part of the text's overall meaning and structure.

Conceits were often used in Renaissance poetry, where they were used to explore complex ideas and themes in a creative and imaginative way. For example, in John Donne's poetry. Today, the term "conceit" is often used to refer to any extended metaphor, regardless of its specific characteristics or the time period in which it was used. It is a useful way of describing and analysing the use of extended metaphors in literature and other forms of language.

## OBJECTIVE CORRELATIVE

The objective correlative is a literary term coined by T.S. Eliot to refer to a group of objects, events, or experiences that are used to represent or evoke a particular emotion or feeling. It is a way of using specific and concrete details to create a particular emotional effect, and it is often used in literature to convey the mood or atmosphere of a scene or character.

For example, in a novel, the objective correlative might be a stormy sky, a broken vase, or a character's clenched fist. These objects and events are not directly related to the emotion being expressed, but they are used to create a feeling of anger, frustration, or sadness. The idea is that these specific and concrete details can evoke an emotional response in the reader, even if the emotion is not explicitly stated or described.

# AGAINST FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

## IMAGISM

Imagism was a literary movement that emerged in the early 20th century and emphasized the use of precise and clear language, as well as the direct presentation of sensory images. It was particularly associated with poets such as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Hilda Doolittle (H.D.), who sought to use language in a way that was fresh, direct, and uncluttered by traditional poetic conventions.

## THE MAIN FEATURES OF IMAGISM

**Precision and clarity:** Imagist poets sought to use language in a precise and clear way, avoiding abstract or vague words and phrases. They believed that language should be used to create vivid and concrete images, rather than to express complex or abstract ideas.

**Direct presentation of sensory images:** Imagist poets emphasized the importance of presenting sensory images directly, without the use of figurative language or poetic conventions. They believed that the use of metaphors and similes, for example, could obscure or distract from the underlying images.

**Rejection of traditional poetic forms:** Imagist poets rejected traditional poetic forms such as rhyme and meter, which they saw as limiting and artificial. They preferred to use free verse, which allowed them to create more flexible and varied rhythms and forms.

**Focus on the individual experience:** Imagist poems often focused on the individual experience of the poet or the person being described, rather than on larger social or historical themes. This focus on the personal and the particular was seen as a way of capturing the essence of a moment or experience.

Overall, Imagism was a movement that sought to challenge traditional ways of using language in poetry, and to create a more direct and immediate form of expression. Its emphasis on precision, clarity, and sensory imagery has had a lasting influence on modern poetry.

## EKPHRASIS

Ekphrasis is a literary technique in which a work of art (such as a painting, sculpture, or photograph) is described or discussed in words. It is a way of using language to

represent, interpret, and respond to a work of art, and it often involves the use of vivid and imaginative language to capture the visual qualities and meanings of the art.

Ekphrasis can take many different forms, including poems, essays, and plays that describe and interpret works of art. It can also be found in the form of annotations or captions that accompany a work of art, or in discussions of art in books and other texts.

Ekphrasis has a long history, dating back to ancient Greece and Rome, where poets such as Homer and Virgil used it to describe works of art. In the Middle Ages, ekphrastic poems were used to illustrate manuscripts and other works of art. Today, ekphrasis is still a common literary technique, and it is often used to explore the relationships between art, language, and meaning.

## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN ENGLISH POETRY FROM RENAISSANCE TO ROMANTICISM AND BEYOND

Although it is often thought to be revolutionary aspect of Saussure's linguistics, the relationship between concepts and their materializations in language was a subject of philosophers' and poets deliberations for hundreds of years.

It often prevailed that **poetry**, or sometimes literature in general, is a discourse which uniquely **motivates** or naturalizes the relationship between the signifier and the signified, sound and sense, word and idea, form and meaning in order to rely on the aesthetic effect that arises from sharing the collective experience.

Arbitrary nature of language has been understood differently at different historical moments. Attempts to overcome it take different forms, according to different **philosophical, theological and ideological** assumptions which inform poetic theory at any particular time.

In Renaissance the collective experience was a shared concept of using *topoi* as petrified comparisons, which were very similar to templates that were a part of formal education rather than shared sensory perceptions. Shakespeare's [Sonnet 73](#) exhibits the use of *topoi* in a manner that brings into fixed interpretations a breath of ambiguity and renewed interest. On the other hand John Donne's [Valediction: Forbidding Mourning](#) introduces a set of conceits, a rather unlikely comparisons that open the poem to become an interpretation of life. In Neo-classical period, Age of Reason overwhelmingly rejected figures of speech as treacherous devices, being in

favour of rational argumentation and sensory experience reflected in empiricism. The relationship between the concept and language is illustrated by Alexander Pope's articulations of the relation between sound and meaning in English poetry:

'The Sound must seem an Echo to the Sense'  
When Ajax strives, some Rock's vast Weight to throw  
The Line too labours, and the words move slow  
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the Plain,  
Flies o'er th'unbending Corn, and skims along the Main.

However, it was soon denounced as "mechanistic poetry" and subsequently rejected by the Romantic poets who on the one hand claimed that it is not essential to accommodate poetic language to the poetic form or metre (P.B. Shelley), or that metrical form has a function to produce an effect of spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings (William Wordsworth and John Keats). Romantics were primarily concerned to make the signifier a 'constituent part' of the signified or the 'incarnation of the thought' (which counters the idea of the *arbitrary nature of the sign*).

#### ACTIVITY

Ode to the West Wind (P.B. Shelley)

Read the [poem](#) and identify the metaphors for wind.

Some of the possible interpretations in "Ode to the West Wind," include a number of metaphors to convey the power and majesty of the wind. Consider if the claims in the examples are valid

1. The wind is compared to a "wild Spirit" that "drivest all before thee" (line 1)
2. The wind is described as a "destroyer and preserver" (line 4)
3. The wind is compared to a "Tempest" that "roars" and "shakes the very door of Heaven" (lines 10-11)
4. The wind is described as a "dirge" for the "dead leaves" that it "scatters" (lines 15-16)
5. The wind is compared to a "prophet" (line 66)
6. The wind is described as a "winged seed" that "soars" (line 7)

7. The wind is compared to a "tyrant" that "crushes" the "ocean-wrack" (lines 37-38)
8. These metaphors are used to convey the power, majesty and destructive force of the wind, and how it has a vital role in the cycle of life, death and rebirth.
9. Shelley uses the wind as a metaphor for the power of nature and the forces of change.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century poetry exhibits textures of the language in a dynamic relation to metric form; linguistic and poetic patterning stand as formal equivalent to the living textures and tensions of the natural landscape featuring in poems. On the one hand it extends spiritual organicism of the Romantics to include every aspect of poetic form since metre and clusters of sound effects are treated as an 'inscape' or the very soul of art. On the other hand, it foregrounds form – paving the way for XX century theories about the relationship of poetic form and meaning, New Criticism and Formalism and the theories that will be developed from these two confronted approaches (Eg. Gerard Manley Hopkins, Matthew Arnold).

#### ACTIVITY

Read the poem by [Adrienne Rich "Song"](#) and consider how the metaphors are used. Consider the salient features and the abstract concepts being conveyed. Make note how metaphors are used to discuss abstract notions in concrete ways -feelings, experiences, ideas; how metaphor requires effort of analysis and imagination to be understood and which emotive effect (provocative, disturbing) it produces.

## LIST OF RESOURCES/ FURTHER READINGS

Bonczek Ivory, Michelle. 2018. [\*Naming the Unnameable: An Approach to Poetry for New Generations\*](#). Geneseo NY: Open SUNY Textbooks.

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## UNIT 3

# FROM TEXT TO PERFORMANCE – INTRODUCING DRAMA

### AIMS

- describe the elements of drama
- identify drama-specific literary devices
- perform drama-specific literary analysis

# DRAMATIC TEXT

The relationship between a dramatic text and a performance is a complex and dynamic one. A dramatic text, such as a play, is a written script that contains all of the dialogue, stage directions, and other information necessary to produce a performance. A performance, on the other hand, is the live realization of the text, with actors interpreting and bringing the script to life on stage.

The relationship between a dramatic text and a performance is one of both dependence and autonomy. On the one hand, the performance is dependent on the text, as the actors and other members of the production team use the script as a guide and reference to create their performance. The text provides the framework and structure for the performance, and the actors must follow its instructions and cues in order to produce a cohesive and coherent show.

At the same time, the performance also has an element of autonomy, as the actors and other members of the production team are not simply reciting the text but are interpreting and bringing it to life in their own way. The performance is not a carbon copy of the text but is a unique and dynamic interpretation of it. The actors bring their own personalities, experiences, and interpretations to their roles, and the performance is shaped by their choices and decisions.

Overall, the relationship between a dramatic text and a performance is one of mutual dependence and collaboration, with the text providing a framework and the actors and other members of the production team bringing it to life through their interpretation and performance.

## DRAMA AS COMMUNICATION – THEATRICAL MODES

Theatrical modes refer to the various ways in which a play or other piece of theatre can be presented and performed. These modes can include traditional stage performances, multimedia productions, site-specific performances, and other forms of experimental and innovative theatre.

One of the most common and well-known theatrical modes is the traditional stage performance. In this mode, the play is performed on a stage with a set, costumes, props, and lighting, and the audience watches the performance from their seats in the theatre. This mode is often associated with classical theatre and plays that follow a linear, well-defined structure and plot.

Another popular theatrical mode is multimedia performance, in which the play is performed with the use of video, sound, and other multimedia elements. This mode allows for a more dynamic and immersive experience, and it allows the playwright and director to incorporate a wider range of sensory and emotional experiences into the performance.

Experimental and site-specific performances are also becoming more common in contemporary theatre. In these modes, the play is performed in an unconventional space, such as a park, a warehouse, or a public square, and the space itself becomes an integral part of the performance. These modes often challenge traditional ideas about theatre and allow for more interactive and engaging experiences for the audience.

Theatrical modes refer to the various ways in which a play or other piece of theatre can be performed, and they can range from traditional stage productions to more experimental and innovative forms of theatre.

## THEATRICAL CODES (AUDIO-VISUAL)

sound, light, mise-en-scene, costume, text, body language, voice, non-verbal interaction

Audio-visual codes refer to the various elements of sound and visuals that are used in a play or other piece of theatre to convey meaning and create an overall aesthetic. These codes can include the use of music, sound effects, lighting, costumes, and other elements to create a specific atmosphere and mood, and to help convey the emotions and intentions of the characters.

One of the most important audio-visual codes in drama is the use of music. Music can be used to create a mood and set the tone for a scene, and it can also be used to indicate a change in the action or to signal a character's emotional state. Another important audio-visual code in drama is the use of sound effects. Sound effects can be used to create a realistic and immersive environment, and they can also be used to indicate a character's actions or emotions. For example, the sound of a car horn might be used to indicate that a character is angry or frustrated, while the sound of a baby crying might be used to indicate that a character is feeling overwhelmed or stressed. Lighting is also an important audio-visual code in drama. It can be used to create a specific atmosphere or mood, and it can also be used to indicate a change in the action or to highlight a particular character or object. For example, a dim and atmospheric lighting scheme might be used to create a sense of mystery or suspense, while a

bright and cheerful lighting scheme might be used to indicate that a character is feeling happy and optimistic.

Audio-visual codes are an essential part of drama, and they are used to create a rich and immersive experience for the audience and to help convey the emotions and intentions of the characters.

## DRAMA AS TEXT

### PRIMARY AND SECONDARY TEXT

In a play, the primary text is the dialogue spoken by the characters. This is the main text of the play and is typically written in regular font, as opposed to the secondary text (stage directions) which is often written in italics. The primary text is what the characters say to each other and to the audience, and it is the main means by which the story is conveyed and the characters' personalities and motivations are revealed.

The secondary text is the text that appears in the stage directions, which provide information about the movements and actions of the characters, as well as the setting and other details that are not conveyed through dialogue. This text is often written in italics to distinguish it from the dialogue spoken by the characters. The stage directions can include descriptions of the characters' actions, their movements around the stage, and any other relevant details that help to convey the story and create the desired atmosphere.

### ACTIVITY

Read the first two pages of Peter Shaffer's play "[Amadeus](#)" and explain the difference between the information communicated in the primary and the secondary text.

### ACTION/EVENT, CONFLICT (BREATH)

In drama, action refers to the events that take place in the play and drive the story forward. This includes the plot, conflicts, and resolutions that make up the narrative of the play. The action in a play is usually presented through dialogue and stage action such as movement and gestures.

In traditional dramatic structure, the action is divided into three parts: the setup or exposition, the rising action, and the resolution or climax. The setup introduces the characters, the setting, and the main conflict of the play. The rising action is where the conflict is developed and the characters struggle to resolve it. The resolution is where the conflict is resolved and the play comes to a conclusion.

Dramatists use the action to create a sense of tension and suspense, to reveal character motivations and development, and to create a commentary on the society and culture in which the play is set. The action also works together with other elements of the play such as dialogue, setting, and characters to create a coherent narrative that engages the audience.

It's important to note that the action in drama is not limited to the physical actions, it also refers to the emotional, psychological and mental actions that take place in the play, which contribute to the overall experience of the story.

#### ACTIVITY

1. Watch the video of Samuel Beckett's "[Breath](#)" then compare the performed action to the [script](#) of the play.
2. Review the structure of action with the help of the diagram, "[Freitag's pyramid](#)", and conduct your own analysis of the structure of action in the fourth section of the film *Wild Stories* (Relatos salvajes 2014) "Bombita".

## CHARACTERIZATION

In drama, characterization is the process of creating and developing the characters that appear in the play. This involves giving the characters unique personalities, motivations, and goals, and determining how they will speak, move, and interact with each other and the other elements of the story. Characterization is an important part of the playwright's art, as it helps to create engaging and believable characters who will drive the action of the play and draw the audience into the story. There are many different techniques that playwrights can use to develop their characters, including giving them unique dialogue and mannerisms, providing background information about their lives, and showing how they react to different situations and challenges.

## AUTHORIAL/FIGURAL

Authorial characterization is a term used in literary criticism to refer to the way in which a character is presented by the author of a work of literature. This type of characterization is often used in drama, where the characters' actions and words are used to convey their personalities and motivations. In authorial characterization, the author provides the reader with explicit information about the characters, such as their backgrounds, personalities, and goals, and also shows how the characters behave and interact with each other and the other elements of the story. This type of characterization is often contrasted with figural characterization, which relies more on the characters' physical appearance and behaviour to convey their traits.

Figural characterization is a term used in literary criticism to refer to the way in which a character's physical appearance and behaviour are used to convey their personality and traits. This type of characterization is often used in drama, where the characters' actions and movements on stage can provide important clues about their personality and motivations. In figural characterization, the character's appearance and behaviour are used to create a figurative, or symbolic, representation of their inner self. For example, a character who is always neatly dressed and well-groomed might be interpreted as being organized and disciplined, uptight or mean, while a character who is dishevelled and messy might be seen as careless or disorganized, but also as easy-going and artistic. All of this is also culturally conditioned and changes with time.

## IMPLICIT/EXPLICIT characterization

Implicit characterization is a term used in literary criticism to refer to the way in which a character's personality and traits are inferred by the reader based on the actions, words, and behaviour of the character in the story. This type of characterization is often used in drama, where the characters' actions and words on stage can provide important clues about their personalities and motivations. In implicit characterization, the author does not provide explicit information about the characters, but instead allows the reader to infer their traits based on what they see and hear. This type of characterization can be subtle and requires the reader to pay close attention to the character's words and actions in order to understand their motivations and personality.

Explicit characterization is a term used in literary criticism to refer to the way in which a character's personality and traits are directly stated by the author or other

characters in the story. This type of characterization is often used in drama, where the characters' words and actions can provide important information about their personalities and motivations. In explicit characterization, the author provides the reader with direct and explicit information about the characters, such as their backgrounds, personalities, and goals. This can be done through the characters' dialogue, thoughts, and actions, or through other characters' comments and observations. Explicit characterization makes the characters' traits and motivations clear to the reader and helps to create a more complete and nuanced understanding of the characters.

### ACTIVITY

Review the section of the film [Richard III](#) and explain how is audience introduced to the nuances of Richard's character through his soliloquy.

Read excerpts from the plays "Bald Soprano" by Eugene Ionesco and "Look back in Anger" by John Osborne. Explain the difference in the process of characterization.

## TEXTUAL FORM AND FUNCTION

In drama, discourse refers to the way in which characters speak and interact with each other. This can include the words that the characters say, as well as the tone, pace, and rhythm of their speech, and how they respond to each other and to the events of the play. Discourse is an important aspect of drama, as it is through the characters' words and interactions that the story is conveyed and the characters' personalities and motivations are revealed. In some plays, the discourse can be very formal and stylized, with characters speaking in carefully constructed and elaborate speeches. In others, the discourse can be more natural and conversational, with characters speaking in a more casual and colloquial manner.

### MONOLOGUE/SOLILOQUY/ASIDE

A **monologue** is a long speech given by a single character in a play. It is different from regular dialogue, in which multiple characters speak to each other, as it is a single character speaking to the audience or to another character on stage. Monologues are often used in drama to provide important information about a character's thoughts, feelings, and motivations, and to advance the plot of the play. They can be spoken by a character who is alone on stage, or by a character who is speaking to another

character. Monologues can be serious and dramatic, or humorous and lighthearted, depending on the tone and style of the play.

A **soliloquy** is a speech given by a character in a play who is alone on stage and is not speaking to any other characters. It is a way for the character to express their inner thoughts and feelings to the audience, and it is often used to reveal important information about the character's motivations and beliefs. A soliloquy is different from regular dialogue in a play, as it is not intended to be heard by the other characters on stage. Instead, it is a way for the character to speak directly to the audience, providing them with insight into the character's mind and inner world. Soliloquies are a common feature of many plays and are often used to provide important information and to advance the plot of the play.

An **aside** is a short remark made by a character in a play that is not intended to be heard by the other characters on stage. It is a way for the character to speak directly to the audience, providing them with information or thoughts that are not meant to be shared with the other characters. An aside is different from regular dialogue, in which the characters speak to each other, and their words are heard by all of the characters on stage. An aside is a way for the character to share their inner thoughts and feelings with the audience, and to provide important information that is not revealed through the regular dialogue of the play.

## EXPOSITION, INTRODUCTION, CHARACTERIZATION

**Exposition** is a literary term used to refer to the part of a story in which the setting, characters, and other important background information is introduced and explained to the audience. In drama, exposition is often conveyed through dialogue, as the characters speak to each other and provide information about the setting, their backgrounds, and the events leading up to the start of the play. Exposition is an important part of any story, as it provides the audience with the necessary information to understand the events of the play and the motivations of the characters. Without exposition, the audience may be confused or lost, and the story may not be as effective.

In drama, the **introduction** is the beginning part of the play where the setting, characters, and other important background information are introduced to the audience. This can include the characters' names, their relationships to each other, and the setting in which the play takes place. The introduction is an important part of the play, as it provides the audience with the necessary information to understand the events of the play and the motivations of the characters. The introduction can be

conveyed through dialogue, stage directions, or other means, and it often sets the tone and mood for the rest of the play.

## DIALOGUE – INTERACTION, CONFLICT

A **dialogue** is a conversation between two or more characters in a play, novel, or other work of literature. It is the words that the characters speak to each other, and it is a way for the author to reveal the characters' personalities, motivations, and relationships. Dialogue is an important part of storytelling, as it is through the characters' words and interactions that the plot is advanced and the characters' personalities and motivations are revealed. In drama, dialogue is often the primary means by which the story is conveyed, and it is through the characters' words and actions that the audience learns about the events of the play and the characters' reactions to them.

## ACTION

In drama, the action of the play refers to the events and happenings that make up the story. This can include the characters' words and actions, as well as the events and conflicts that drive the plot of the play. The action of a play is what keeps the audience engaged and interested, and it is through the action that the characters' personalities, motivations, and relationships are revealed. The action of a play can be conveyed through dialogue, stage directions, and other means, and it is an essential part of the playwright's art.

## PLOT

Plot structure is the way in which the events and happenings of a story are organized and arranged. It is the framework or skeleton upon which the events of the story are built, and it is a crucial element of storytelling. Plot structure can take many different forms, but some common structures include the three-act structure, in which the story is divided into a beginning, middle, and end; the hero's journey, in which the protagonist embarks on a quest and faces various challenges and obstacles along the way; and the rising action, climax, and falling action structure, in which the story builds towards a climactic event and then resolves the conflict and brings the story to a conclusion. Understanding the plot structure of a story can help the reader or audience to better understand the events of the story and to see how they fit together to create a coherent and satisfying whole. Contemporary drama sometimes dismisses with the plot.

## IMMERSION EFFECT, THE 4 WALLS

Breaking the fourth wall is a term used in theatre and film to describe a situation in which the characters directly address the audience or acknowledge the fact that they are in a performance. This can be achieved through dialogue, gestures, or other means, and it is often used as a storytelling device to create a sense of intimacy or to involve the audience in the action of the play. Breaking the fourth wall can also be used to challenge the audience's expectations or to draw attention to the artificiality of the performance. This technique is often associated with Brechtian theatre and other forms of experimental or avant-garde performance.

## BRECHTIAN/EPIC THEATRE

Brechtian theatre, also known as Epic theatre, is a form of theatre developed by the German playwright Bertolt Brecht. It is characterized by its use of "alienation effects," which are intended to distance the audience from the characters and story, and to encourage them to think critically and reflect on the issues being presented. This is often achieved through the use of techniques such as breaking the fourth wall, using songs and music, and having actors directly address the audience. The goal of Brechtian theatre is to promote social and political change by encouraging audience members to engage with the ideas being presented, rather than simply being entertained.

## THE THEATRE OF CRUELTY

The Theatre of Cruelty is a term coined by the French playwright and director Antonin Artaud to describe a form of theatre that seeks to confront and challenge its audience through the use of intense sensory stimuli, such as loud noises, bright lights, and violent imagery. The goal of the Theatre of Cruelty is to break down the barriers between the audience and the performance, and to create a sense of immediacy and immersion. Artaud believed that this approach to theatre could have a profound impact on the audience, and that it could be used to explore deeper psychological and philosophical themes. The Theatre of Cruelty has been influential in the development of many experimental and avant-garde theatre practices.

## THE THEATRE OF ABSURD

The Theatre of the Absurd is a term used to describe a style of theatre that emerged in the 1950s and was characterized by its use of absurd or illogical elements in order to challenge the audience's expectations and to question the nature of reality. This type of theatre often includes elements of satire, parody, and the grotesque, and it often portrays characters who are struggling to make sense of a meaningless and

chaotic world. The Theatre of the Absurd is associated with playwrights such as Samuel Beckett, Eugène Ionesco, and Harold Pinter, and it has been a major influence on many subsequent theatre movements.

## TYPES OF STAGE

There are several different types of stages that are commonly used in theatre and performance. The most common type is the proscenium stage, which has a fixed, rectangular frame around the front of the stage. This type of stage is typically used in traditional theatre spaces, and it allows the audience to focus on the action in the centre of the stage. Another common type of stage is the thrust stage, which extends out into the audience on three sides. This allows for more intimate and immersive performances, and it allows the audience to feel like they are a part of the action. Other types of stages include the in-the-round stage, which has the audience seated on all sides, and the traverse stage, which has the audience seated on one side and the action taking place along the length of the stage.

### ACTIVITY

Review the video introducing the [Royal National Theatre](#) in London. Consider how the types of stage affect performance.

## LIST OF RESOURCES/ FURTHER READINGS

Baumbach Sibylle and Ansgar Nünning. 2009. *An Introduction to the Study of Plays and Drama*. Stuttgart. Klett.

Brockett, Oscar and Hildy Francklin. 2014. *History of the Theatre*. Harlow, UK: Pearson

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Ringo, Heather and Athena Kashyap. 2021. [Writing and Critical Thinking Through Literature](#). City College of San Francisco via ASCCC Open Educational Resources Initiative

## UNIT 4

# INTRODUCING FICTION, UNDERSTANDING NARRATOLOGY

### AIMS

- to identify main features of narrative fiction
- to describe the difference in the structuring of fictional universes of different works belonging to Classical Realism, Modernism and Post-Modernism
- to describe elements of “story” (events and existents) level in a narrative
- to explain the structure of “discourse” level and the principles of representation in a narrative (narrator, time, consciousness)

# TOPICS

## MIMESIS VS. DIEGESIS (SHOW VS. TELL)

In literature, mimesis and diegesis are two related but distinct concepts that refer to the representation of reality in a story.

Mimesis, also known as imitation or representation, refers to the way in which the world of fiction is “acted out” for the reader as (seemingly) unmediated emulation of a proposed reality. It refers to the portrayal of characters, events, and settings in a way that allows the reader to be positioned as an observer able to negotiate the meaning based on the actions presented within the proposed fictional universe. Mimesis is dominant in drama, but as a convention it is often associated with naturalism and realism in literature (not only as a historical period but as the approach to text), where the fictional universe is a structure generated as a combination of narrator’s discourse and characters’ dialogue.

Diegesis (story-telling) refers to the fictional world created by the author relying on the structure of the narrator as a type of consciousness overtly filtering the information about the characters, events, and settings that make up the story. Diegesis is concerned with the story itself and its internal logic, rather than its relationship to reality.

Both mimesis and diegesis are important elements of fiction, and authors use them in various ways to create meaning and to control the readers’ perception of the story. The balance and interaction between mimesis and diegesis can greatly affect the way the story is perceived by the reader.

## THE CONCEPT OF READERLY AND WRITERLY TEXT

Readerly and writerly texts are terms coined by the French literary critic Roland Barthes to describe two different approaches to reading and writing. A readerly text is one that is intended to be consumed passively by the reader, who is expected to accept the story and the characters as they are presented. In contrast, a writerly text is one that encourages the reader to be active and creative, to question the assumptions and conventions of the text, and to interpret it in their own way. Barthes believed that the distinction between these two types of texts was important because it reflected a broader shift in society towards a more individual and critical approach to understanding the world.

## CONVENTIONS OF STRUCTURING OF THE FICTIONAL UNIVERSE

The conventions of a fictional universe are the rules, norms, and assumptions that are established by the creator of the universe and that are used to give the universe a sense of internal consistency and coherence. These conventions may include things like the physical laws that govern the universe, the social and cultural norms of the characters, and the backstory and history of the universe. They are an important part of what makes a fictional universe believable and engaging for the audience, and they provide a framework for the story and the characters to exist within. The conventions of a fictional universe can be explicit or implicit, and they can be used to create a wide range of different worlds and stories.

### CLASSICAL REALISM

Classical realism in literature is a style of writing that was developed in the 19th century and is characterized by several conventions which constitute principles of emulation of “objective reality”. However, it should be noted that the 18<sup>th</sup> century brought about the turn towards “new kind of fiction” which would “exhibit life in its true state diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world, and influenced by passions and qualities which are really to be found in conversing with mankind.” (Dr Johnson). The fictional universe depends on the structure consisting of narrator’s discourse and characters’ dialogue, the narrator is often omniscient, and the detailed descriptions create the effect of offering the reader a position of the observer. Classical realist writers are often described as if “seeking to depict the world as it truly is, with a focus on objective reality, social and historical context, and the daily lives of ordinary people”. However, it is important to note that the reality depicted most commonly corresponded to the “slice of life” (that is, the material circumstances as well as the moral and cultural norm) occupied by the authors and the majority of readers describing the experience from (most commonly) male, white, middle class and Christian perspective, which questions the idea of objectivity. In British literature the works of Charles Dickens and George Eliot belong to the core of classical realism, while the seminal works of Defoe, Fielding and Richardson are thought to be the nuclei that announced how the novel would develop. Some of the most renowned classical realist writers include Gustave Flaubert, Honore de Balzac, and Leo Tolstoy.

### MODERNISM

Modernism is a common denominator for a number of different movements and approaches to art that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a response

to the rapidly changing social, political, and technological landscape of the time (advances in science: Einstein's Theories of relativity, models of the atom, Freud and psychoanalysis; film and radio as new media etc.). It is not homogenous, but rather encompasses many approaches often contradicting one another, that marked a break from traditional forms and conventions, and sought to capture the complex experience of modern life through new techniques and perspectives.

The characteristics of Modernist literature include:

- Experimentation with form and structure: Modernist literature often breaks away from traditional narrative structures and employs techniques such as stream-of-consciousness, fragmentation, and non-linear storytelling.
- Focus on the inner experience of the individual: Modernist literature often explores the inner thoughts and feelings of the characters, rather than their external actions.
- Exploration of the subjective and the personal: Modernist literature often insists on the individual's subjective experience of the world, rather than on emulating what is imagined as "objective reality".
- Use of symbolism and metaphor: Modernist literature often uses imagery and symbols to convey deeper meanings and insights. However, the approach to figurative language is diverse and often conflicting.
- Concern with the alienation and fragmentation of the modern world: Modernist literature often reflects the sense of alienation and fragmentation felt by individuals in the rapidly changing world of the early 20th century.

Some of the most famous and influential modernist authors include James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and T.S. Eliot. Modernism had a significant impact on literature, the way of writing and reading, it also influenced other forms of art and culture. It continues to be studied and debated by literary critics and scholars today.

## MONTAGE

Montage in literature refers to the use of a collage of images, scenes, or fragments to convey a particular idea or theme. It is a technique that combines different elements and creates a new meaning by juxtaposing them. The term "montage" is borrowed from film, where it is used to describe a technique of editing where a series of short

shots are put together to create a new meaning, often to convey a progression of time, or to create a sense of depth and complexity.

In literature, montage can be used in different ways, such as:

- **Jump-cuts:** Jumping from one scene to another without any transition, a technique to create a sense of disorientation and to challenge the linearity of the narrative.
- **Collage:** Combining different elements such as images, texts, documents, etc. to create a new meaning, often used to convey a theme or a message.
- **Stream of consciousness:** Combining different thoughts, memories, and perceptions to create a sense of the character's inner world, often used to convey the subjective experience of a character.
- **Flashbacks and flash-forwards:** The use of time-shifting to jump back and forth in time, similar to the way film uses flashbacks and flash-forwards to reveal information about a character or plot.

Montage can be used to create a sense of fragmentation and dissonance, and to challenge the traditional narrative structure. It can also be used to create a sense of depth and complexity, by showing the connections and disconnections between different elements.

## COLLAGE

Collage in literature refers to the technique of assembling a text from a variety of different sources, in a similar way to how a collage is created in visual arts by combining pieces of paper, photographs, or other materials. Collage literature often incorporates elements such as found text, newspaper clippings, photographs, and other ephemera into the work. The technique is often used to create a sense of fragmentation and to comment on the nature of reality and representation. This technique can also be used to play with the readers' expectation and to challenge their understanding of the narrative. The most common forms of collage literature include poetry, experimental fiction, and some forms of drama. Examples of collage literature include "The Waste Land" by T.S. Eliot, "The Third Policeman" by Flann O'Brien, and *The Cut-ups* by William S. Burroughs.

## STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Stream of consciousness is a literary technique that aims to capture the flow of a character's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions in a way that mimics the way that the

mind actually works. It is often used to create a sense of immediacy and to give the reader a deeper understanding of a character's inner thoughts and emotions. The technique can be used to portray the character's thoughts and feelings in a non-linear and non-logical way, without the use of punctuation and without concern for grammar and syntax. Stream of consciousness is often associated with modernist literature and is used in novels, short stories and plays. Some of the most famous examples of stream of consciousness literature include *Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, *Ulysses* by James Joyce, and *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner. Though popularised by the Modernists, it was first introduced by Lawrence Sterne in the novel *Tristram Shandy* in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

## MOSAIC NARRATIVE

The mosaic narrative is a literary technique that combines a variety of different perspectives and styles to create a complex and multifaceted story. It often uses multiple narrators, different time periods, and different points of view to create a rich and detailed picture of the story. The mosaic narrative is often used in novels, short stories, and plays, to create a narrative that is more realistic and captures the complexity of real life. The technique can also be used to create a sense of fragmentation and to comment on the nature of reality and representation. Some examples of literature that use the mosaic narrative technique include *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien, *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton, and *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell (extending the mosaic narrative after modernism).

## SPATIAL PLOT

In Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, the spatial plot refers to the way the story is organized in terms of the location of the events and the movement of the characters through different spaces. The novel is set in London and primarily takes place in the neighbourhoods of Westminster and Richmond. The main character, Clarissa Dalloway, moves through these neighbourhoods throughout the course of the day, visiting various locations such as her home, the florist, and Buckingham Palace. Additionally, the novel also explores the inner thoughts and memories of the characters, which are often depicted as different spaces within their own minds.

In James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*, the spatial plot is used to explore the city of Dublin, Ireland through the eyes of the characters as they move through the city. The novel is divided into 18 chapters, each with its own distinct setting and perspective. The main characters, Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, move through different neighbourhoods and locations in Dublin, such as Sandymount, the Martello Tower,

and the streets of Dublin city centre. Additionally, the novel also explores the inner thoughts and memories of the characters, which are often depicted as different spaces within their own minds. The novel also makes use of stream of consciousness narrative technique which further adds to the exploration of the characters inner thoughts and memories as spaces.

## CINEMATIC ELEMENTS IN FICTION

Cinematic elements in fiction refer to the use of techniques and conventions commonly found in filmmaking, such as visual imagery, camera angles, and editing, in written literature. These elements are used to create a sense of movement and visual spectacle in the text, and to enhance the reader's imagination by providing visual cues and references. Although coinciding with the film as art and the new medium, these techniques in literature extend beyond modernism.

Some examples of cinematic elements in fiction include:

- **Visual imagery:** Descriptions of a scene, characters, or setting that are detailed and evocative, using vivid and sensory language to create a mental image for the reader.
- **Camera angles:** The use of words to describe the point of view from which a scene is being observed, such as a close-up, a wide shot, or a bird's-eye view.
- **Editing:** The use of transition words and phrases to move between different scenes or perspectives, creating a sense of movement and change similar to the way film editing is used to link shots together.
- **Sound and Music:** Use of sounds and music to create atmosphere, mood and to underscore the meaning of the scene
- **Flashbacks and flash-forwards:** The use of time-shifting to jump back and forth in time, similar to the way film uses flashbacks and flash-forwards to reveal information about a character or plot.

These elements are also known as cinematic techniques, and when used effectively, they can help to create a more immersive reading experience and make the fiction more cinematic.

## POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism is a term used to describe a cultural and artistic movement that emerged in the mid-20th century as a reaction against the principles and conventions of modernism. Postmodernism is characterized by a rejection of absolute truths and universal values, and by a scepticism towards grand narratives and meta-narratives.

Postmodernist works often play with the conventions of genre, style, and form, and they are often self-referential, ironic, or ambiguous. Postmodernism is a highly diverse and heterogeneous movement, and it encompasses a wide range of artistic and cultural practices. It has had a significant impact on many different fields, including literature, art, architecture, and philosophy, and it continues to be an important influence on contemporary culture.

## HIGH CULTURE/POPULAR CULTURE – BLURRING OF THE BOUNDARIES

Blurring the boundary between high culture and popular culture refers to the mixing and blending of elements from different cultural spheres, such as fine art, literature, and classical music with elements from mass culture, such as popular music, film, and television. This blurring can happen in both directions, with elements from high culture being incorporated into popular culture, and elements from popular culture being elevated and incorporated into high culture.

The blurring of the boundary between high culture and popular culture can be seen in various ways such as:

- Pop art: An art movement that emerged in the 1950s and 60s, which incorporated elements from popular culture, such as advertising, comics, and consumer products, into fine art.
- Postmodern literature: A literary movement that emerged in the late 20th century, which incorporated elements from popular culture, such as science fiction, detective novels, and pulp fiction, into literature.
- Crossover: The phenomenon of artists or musicians who are successful in both high culture and popular culture spheres, such as opera singers who have successful pop music careers, or classical musicians who have successful careers in popular music.
- Hybrid genres: The emergence of new forms of art, literature, music and other forms that combine elements from different cultural spheres, such as Jazz, Hip-Hop, and other forms of Fusion Music.

This blurring of the boundary between high culture and popular culture can challenge traditional distinctions and hierarchies, and can open up new avenues for artistic expression and cultural engagement.

## METAFICTION

Metafiction is a type of literature that is self-referential and self-aware, often calling attention to its own status as a fictional work. It often includes elements such as

characters aware they are in a story, the narrator breaking the "fourth wall" and addressing the reader directly, and the use of literary devices to question the nature of fiction itself. Metafiction is often used to comment on the nature of storytelling and the relationship between the author, the characters, and the reader. Some famous examples of metafiction include *The French Lieutenant's Woman* by John Fowles, *The Locked Room* by Paul Auster, and *Lost in the Funhouse* by John Barth.

## PASTICHE

Pastiche in literature refers to a work that imitates the style or manner of another author, usually as a form of parody or homage. Pastiche can take many forms, from a direct imitation of another work to a more subtle incorporation of elements from other texts. The purpose of pastiche can vary, it may be used to pay tribute to an admired author or to mock their style. It can also be used to comment on the conventions of a particular genre or to explore the relationship between different works. Pastiche can be found in many forms of literature such as fiction, poetry, and drama. Examples of pastiche in literature include *Pale Fire* by Vladimir Nabokov, "The Counterfeiters" by André Gide, and "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen" by Alan Moore.

## IRONY

Irony is a literary device that is often used in postmodern literature to challenge traditional notions of meaning and truth. In postmodern literature, irony is often used to create a sense of distance or detachment from the story, characters, or themes, and to question the reliability of the narrator and the authority of the author.

There are several types of irony that are used in postmodern literature, such as:

- Verbal Irony: A type of irony that occurs when a character or narrator says one thing but means the opposite. This is often used to create a sense of sarcasm, or to call attention to the gap between what is said and what is meant.
- Situational Irony: A type of irony that occurs when the opposite of what is expected happens. This type of irony is used to create a sense of surprise, or to challenge the reader's assumptions about the story or characters.
- Dramatic Irony: A type of irony that occurs when the audience knows something that the characters do not. This type of irony is used to create a sense of suspense, or to call attention to the gap between the characters' understanding of the situation and the reader's understanding.

- **Cosmic Irony:** A type of irony that occurs when fate or the universe seems to be working against a character, often used to create a sense of absurdity or to question the meaning of the events in the story.

In postmodern literature, irony is often used to create a sense of ambiguity and to challenge the reader's understanding of the story, characters, and themes. It also calls into question the traditional notion of the author as an authority and the text as a stable and coherent representation of reality.

## UNDERSTANDING HISTORY

In postmodernist fiction, **history** is often depicted as a fluid, unstable, and subjective construct, rather than a fixed and objective truth. Postmodernist fiction often challenges traditional notions of history, by questioning the reliability of historical narratives, and by exploring the ways in which history is constructed and understood.

Some ways in which postmodernist fiction deals with history include:

- **Pastiche:** The use of multiple historical periods, styles, and genres in the same work, often used to create a sense of disorientation and to challenge the reader's understanding of historical context.
- **Intertextuality:** The use of references to other texts, both literary and historical, to create a sense of continuity and to question the boundaries of the text.
- **Metafiction:** The use of self-referentiality and self-consciousness to call attention to the fictional nature of the story and to question the relationship between fiction and reality.
- **Historiographic metafiction:** The use of historical fiction to explore the nature of historical representation and to question the reliability of historical narratives.
- **Deconstruction:** The use of linguistic and philosophical theories to question the stability of meaning, and to challenge the traditional notion of the author as an authority.

Postmodernist fiction often uses history as a way to question the traditional notions of history, and to explore the ways in which history is constructed and understood. It also often uses history to challenge traditional notions of genre, style, and literary form, and to question the authority of the author and the text.

## HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION

Historiographic metafiction is a literary genre that blends elements of historical fiction and metafiction, which is fiction that is self-consciously aware of its status as a work of fiction. In historiographic metafiction, the author uses the conventions of historical fiction to explore the nature of historical representation, often questioning the reliability of historical narratives and the ways in which history is constructed and understood.

Examples of historiographic metafiction include novels such as John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, which has a fictional narrator who comments on the process of writing the novel and the nature of historical representation, and A.S. Byatt's *Possession* which explores the relationship between the past and the present, the role of the historian and the imagination in constructing historical narratives. The genre is also known for its reflexive nature, which means that it often calls attention to its own fictional nature and uses various techniques such as breaking the fourth wall, self-referentiality, and self-consciousness to achieve this.

## UNRELIABLE NARRATOR

An unreliable narrator is a narrator in a story whose credibility has been seriously compromised. The unreliable narrator is a literary device used to create a sense of uncertainty about the events being described and to question the veracity of the narrator's perceptions and recollections. This narrator might be biased, mistaken, delusional, or simply untrustworthy. They might also be deliberately withholding information or lying to the reader.

There are different types of unreliable narrators, such as:

- First-person narrators: A narrator who tells the story from their own point of view but whose perception or recollections are questionable.
- Limited omniscient narrators: A narrator who only has access to the thoughts, feelings, or information of one character, and whose understanding of the events is limited by this character's perspective.
- Unreliable first-person narrators: A narrator who is also a character in the story, and whose actions and motivations are called into question.
- Unreliable omniscient narrators: A narrator who has access to the thoughts and actions of all the characters, but whose understanding or interpretation of events is questionable.

The use of an unreliable narrator can create a sense of ambiguity, tension, and uncertainty, and can also add a layer of complexity and depth to the story by forcing the reader to question their own perceptions and assumptions.

## WOMEN'S, POSTCOLONIAL, QUEER WRITING

As mainstream literature became more inclusive, we have in the past decades witnessed the proliferation of works depicting the experience of women's and other formerly marginalised writing (postcolonial, queer, etc.).

Although such writing has a long and rich history, it has often been marginalized or overlooked in the literary canon. Many writers have had to fight for recognition and validation of their work. However, in the last century, there has been a growing interest in and recognition women's and postcolonial writing, and the field has expanded to include diverse perspectives and voices. It has been instrumental in shaping literary history and continues to have a significant impact on contemporary literature. It has helped to challenge traditional notions of gender and identity and has opened up new perspectives and voices in literature.

## AFTER POSTMODERNISM

### Post-postmodernism

Post-postmodernism is a cultural and intellectual movement that emerged in the late 20th and early 21st century, as a response to the limitations and criticisms of postmodernism. It emphasizes the importance of ethics, morality, and spirituality, as well as the value of tradition and cultural heritage, which were often dismissed by postmodernism.

### Altermodernism

A cultural movement characterized by a global and interconnected perspective that embraces cultural hybridity, nomadism, and the constant redefinition of identities and traditions in a rapidly changing world. Introduced by Nicholas Bourriaud claiming that: "Artists are looking for a new modernity that would be based on translation: What matters today is to translate the cultural values of cultural groups and to connect them to the world network. This "reloading process" of modernism according to the twenty-first-century issues could be called altermodernism, a movement connected to the creolisation of cultures and the fight for autonomy, but also the possibility of producing singularities in a more and more standardized world" (Bourriaud 2005).

# INTRODUCTION TO NARRATOLOGY

Narratology is the study of narrative and storytelling, and it is concerned with the structure, elements, and functions of narrative. Narratologists use a variety of theoretical and analytical tools to examine the ways in which stories are constructed and conveyed, and to explore the ways in which narratives can shape our understanding of the world and ourselves. Narratology is an interdisciplinary field that draws on insights from linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines, and it has been applied to a wide range of cultural phenomena, including literature, film, television, and video games.

## THE SOURCE OF THE STORY: WHO SPEAKS? WHO SEES?

### STORY AND DISCOURSE

Story and discourse are two related but distinct concepts that are commonly used in the study of narrative. The story refers to the events, characters, and setting that make up the narrative, and it is the fundamental building block of any narrative work. The discourse, on the other hand, refers to the way in which the story is told, including the order in which events are presented, the point of view from which the story is narrated, and the use of stylistic devices such as dialogue and description. The relationship between story and discourse is complex and dynamic, and it is an important area of study in narratology.

### NARRATIVE VOICE – WHO SPEAKS?

Narrative voice refers to the way in which a story is told and the perspective from which it is presented. It encompasses elements such as the point of view, tone, and style in which the story is told.

There are several different types of narrative voice, including:

- First-person narrative: This point of view is when the story is told using "I" or "we" and the narrator is a character in the story.
- Second-person narrative: This point of view is when the story is told using "you" and the narrator addresses the reader directly.

- Third-person narrative: This point of view is when the story is told using "he," "she," or "they" and the narrator is not a character in the story.
- Omniscient narrative: This point of view is when the narrator knows everything about the story and its characters, including their thoughts and feelings.
- Limited narrative: This point of view is when the narrator is restricted to the thoughts, feelings, and perception of one character.

The choice of narrative voice can greatly affect the way the story is perceived by the reader, and can be used to create specific effects such as intimacy, objectivity, and emotional distance. It's also important to note that the narrative voice can change within a story, an author can use different types of narrative voices to achieve different effects.

## HETERODIEGETIC NARRATOR

A heterodiegetic narrator is a type of narrator in a story who is not a character in the story they are narrating. This means that the narrator is outside of the story, and not directly involved in the events they are describing. They can tell the story from an omniscient point of view (knowing everything about the characters and events) or from a limited point of view (providing access to the thoughts and feelings of only certain characters).

Heterodiegetic narrators can be further divided into two categories:

- An external heterodiegetic narrator is one who is completely outside of the story and does not have any personal connection to the events or characters.
- An internal heterodiegetic narrator is one who is not a character in the story but has some connection to the events or characters.

The use of a heterodiegetic narrator allows the author to present the story from an objective perspective, as the narrator is not directly involved in the events they are describing. This can create a sense of distance between the reader and the story and can be used to create a sense of objectivity or to comment on the events of the story. Examples of stories with heterodiegetic narrators include Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

## HOMODIEGETIC NARRATOR

It's important to note that the narrator and the author are not the same, the narrator is the voice that tells the story, the author is the person who wrote it. A homodiegetic narrator is a type of narrator in a story who is also a character within the story. This means that the narrator is directly involved in the events they are describing and is a participant in the story. They can tell the story from a first-person point of view, using "I" or "we" to refer to themselves, or from a third-person point of view, but still, they are a character in the story.

The use of a homodiegetic narrator allows the author to present the story from a subjective perspective, as the narrator is directly involved in the events they are describing. This can create a sense of closeness between the reader and the story and can be used to create a sense of intimacy or to provide a unique perspective on the events of the story.

Examples of stories with homodiegetic narrators include Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* and J.D Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*

## FOCALIZATION (ZERO, INTERNAL, EXTERNAL) - WHO SEES?

Focalization in fiction refers to the point of view from which a story is told. It is the perspective or lens through which the reader experiences the events of the story.

There are several different types of focalization, including:

- Omniscient focalization: This point of view is when the narrator knows everything about the story and its characters, including their thoughts and feelings.
- Limited focalization: This point of view is when the narrator is restricted to the thoughts, feelings, and perception of one character.
- Zero focalization: This point of view is when the narrator is not present in the story and the reader is left to infer what is happening based on the characters' actions and dialogue.
- Multiple focalization: This point of view is when the story is told from multiple characters' perspectives.

Focalization is an important element in fiction because it determines how the reader experiences the story and how they feel about the characters. It also can affect the way readers interpret the events of the story. For example, if the story is told from

the point of view of a single character, the reader's understanding of the events is limited to that character's perspective, while if the story is told from an omniscient point of view, the reader has access to the thoughts and feelings of all the characters.

Authors use different types of focalization to create specific effects and to control the readers' perception of the story, characters and events.

## CONSCIOUSNESS

Representing consciousness in fiction refers to the ways in which writers can convey the inner thoughts and experiences of their characters in a narrative. This can be done through techniques such as stream of consciousness, which involves using long, unbroken passages of interior monologue to capture the character's thoughts as they happen. Another approach is to use free indirect discourse, which allows the narrator to move seamlessly between the character's thoughts and the external events of the story. Representing consciousness in fiction can be challenging, as it requires the writer to find ways to make the character's inner experience accessible and meaningful to the reader or audience. However, when done well, it can add depth and complexity to the character and to the story as a whole.

## PLOT

Plot in fiction refers to the sequence of events that make up a story. It is the structure and organization of a narrative, and it includes the characters, setting, conflict, and resolution of the story.

Plot is one of the most important elements of fiction and is essential in creating a compelling and engaging story. A well-constructed plot will keep readers interested by introducing new developments and twists, and by building tension and suspense. It also helps to create meaning and symbolism in the work. A good plot will also use literary devices such as foreshadowing and symbolism to keep the readers engaged and guessing. However, not all stories follow a traditional plot structure, some of them may be more experimental and non-linear and the contemporary fiction has played with plot for decades.

It is important to note that a plot is not the same as a summary of the story, a plot is the structure and organization of the events that is established through the principle of cause and effect, not just a list of things that happen.

Yuri Lotman was a prominent Russian literary theorist and semiotician who developed the concept of syuzhet in literary analysis. Syuzhet refers to the plot of a literary work,

or the sequence of events that make up the story. Lotman believed that the syuzhet of a literary work is not just the sequence of events, but also the way that those events are structured and related to one another. He argued that the syuzhet is the key to understanding how a work creates meaning and how the reader interprets it.

In Lotman's theory, the syuzhet is seen as a reflection of the cultural and historical context in which a work is created. He believed that literary works are not just a reflection of reality, but also a product of the cultural codes and conventions of the society in which they were written. Lotman also argued that the syuzhet is not just a linear sequence of events, but also a system of relationships between characters, themes, and motifs. He believed that by understanding the syuzhet, one can gain a deeper understanding of the work as a whole and the cultural and historical context in which it was created. Syuzhet is an important concept in literary theory, and Lotman's work continues to be influential in the field of literary studies.

## TEMPORALITY (ORDER, FREQUENCY, DURATION)

Temporality in fiction refers to the way in which time is represented and experienced in a literary work. It encompasses the various ways in which time is depicted, including the ordering of events, the pace of the story, and the use of time-related literary devices such as flashbacks and foreshadowing.

In traditional linear narrative, the events of the story are presented in chronological order, following the cause and effect principle. However, there are many other ways in which time can be represented in fiction. For example, a non-linear narrative may present events out of order, such as through flashbacks or flash-forwards, or may use multiple perspectives to show different points in time.

Temporality can also affect the pace of the story. This can create a sense of urgency or tension in the story. Authors also use temporal devices to create a sense of nostalgia, to remind the readers of the past and the changes they have gone through, or to make the readers think about the concept of time itself. Temporality is an important element in fiction as it creates a sense of realism and adds depth to the story. On the other hand, it sometimes plays with readers' expectations and undermines realism (e.g. cyclical time in magic(al) realism, several temporal frameworks in the same narrative, mixing "real" time and virtual time, mimicking the technological manipulation of time).

## LIST OF RESOURCES/ FURTHER READINGS

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[Prezi summary](#) on narratology based on Cohan's *Telling Stories*

[How to Analyse a Film - English \(General Studies\) - NDLA](#)

# PROSE TUTORIAL

## DYSTOPIA

A dystopia is a type of speculative fiction that describes a society or community that is in some way undesirable or frightening. Dystopian literature often depicts a society that is controlled by a totalitarian government, or where individual freedom is severely restricted. These societies are often marked by poverty, oppression, war, and environmental disaster. They may also feature advanced technology, genetic engineering, or other scientific advancements that have been used to create a totalitarian state or to control the population.

In a dystopian society, the ruling class typically uses propaganda and surveillance to maintain control, and dissent is met with repression, punishment, or death. The stories usually take place in a future time, and the main characters are often part of the oppressed class who are struggling against the ruling power.

Some examples of dystopian literature include:

George Orwell's *1984* - set in a totalitarian society where the government has complete control over every aspect of citizens' lives.

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* - set in a future society where people are genetically engineered and conditioned to fit into predetermined social castes.

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* - set in a theocratic dictatorship where women have lost all rights and are used as reproductive vessels.

Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* - set in a post-apocalyptic society where children are forced to fight to the death in a televised event.

Dystopian literature is often used as a way to critique contemporary society and to explore the possible consequences of current political, social, and technological trends.

### Kazuo Ishiguro

*Never Let Me Go* is a novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, published in 2005. It is set in a dystopian version of England, where human clones are raised for the sole purpose of providing organ donations for the non-clone population. The story is told from the perspective of Kathy, a clone who has grown up in a special school for clones and is now working as a "carer" for other clones who are nearing the end of their lives. The novel explores

themes of identity, individuality, and the nature of human consciousness, as well as the ethical implications of human cloning.

Ishiguro uses a unique narrative style in the novel, alternating between the present and the past, to show the evolution of Kathy's understanding of her own identity and the world around her. The novel is also characterized by Ishiguro's sparse, understated style, which creates a sense of detachment and emotional distance, and highlights the dehumanizing aspects of the society in which the clones live.

The novel was highly acclaimed upon its release and won several awards including the Booker Prize. It was also made into a movie in 2010. Ishiguro's novel raises a lot of moral questions about the value of human life and what it means to be human. It also explores the human condition and the longing for love and connection in a world where human life is seen as disposable.

## CLASSICAL REALISM

### Jane Austen

*Pride and Prejudice* is a novel written by Jane Austen, first published in 1813. The novel is set in early 19th-century England and tells the story of the Bennett family, a group of five sisters who are in need of marriage to secure their financial future. The second eldest sister, Elizabeth, is the protagonist of the story, and the novel follows her interactions and relationships with the other characters, particularly Mr. Darcy, a wealthy and proud gentleman who initially looks down on the Bennett family.

The novel explores themes of love, marriage, and societal expectations, as well as the nature of pride and prejudice, and how these qualities can both hinder and aid in the quest for love and happiness. The novel is also known for its sharp wit and irony, and for the way in which it critiques the societal expectations of its time.

It is considered to be one of Austen's greatest works and is widely studied in literature classes. It is also considered as a classic of English literature and has become one of the most popular novels in the English language. It has been adapted into various forms of media such as movies, tv series, and stage productions. It is also considered a romance novel and is a representation of the society of the time.

## Emily Bronte

*Wuthering Heights* is a novel written by Emily Bronte, first published in 1847. The story is set in the moors of northern England and centres around the tumultuous relationship between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, from childhood to adulthood. The novel is considered a classic of English literature and is known for its complex and unconventional narrative structure, as well as its exploration of themes such as love, revenge, and social class.

*Wuthering Heights* has a complex narrative structure, which is one of the reasons it is considered a classic of English literature. The novel is divided into two parts and told from multiple perspectives. The first part is narrated by Mr. Lockwood, a tenant of Heathcliff, who is the main protagonist of the novel. He records his observations of the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, and the events that take place during his stay. The second part is told by Nelly Dean, the housekeeper of Wuthering Heights, who recounts the story of Heathcliff, Catherine, and the other characters from her own perspective.

The story is also interwoven with several subplots and flashbacks, which add depth and complexity to the narrative. The novel also makes use of a non-linear timeline, as events from the past are interspersed with events from the present, which creates a sense of confusion and uncertainty for the reader.

This narrative structure allows the readers to understand the different perspectives of the characters and also the significance of the past events in shaping their present lives. It also creates a sense of mystery and intrigue, as the reader must piece together the events of the story to fully understand the motivations and actions of the characters.

## Charles Dickens

*Great Expectations* is a novel written by Charles Dickens, first published in serial form in 1860-1861. The novel tells the story of an orphan, Pip, who is given the chance to rise above his humble beginnings and become a gentleman with the help of an anonymous benefactor. As Pip navigates his newfound wealth and social status, he must confront the harsh realities of class distinctions and the true nature of his relationships with those he thought were his friends.

The novel is set in early 19th-century England and is a critique of the rigid class system of the time. It explores themes of ambition, love, and redemption, as well as the nature of social mobility and the consequences of class distinctions. The novel is also famous for its memorable characters such as Miss Havisham, the jilted bride who raises Pip's love interest Estella, and Abel Magwitch, the criminal who turns out to be Pip's benefactor.

The novel is considered to be one of Dickens's greatest works and is widely studied in literature classes. It is also known for its vivid descriptions of the settings and characters, as well as its use of humour and satire to criticize the society of the time.

## MODERNISM

### Joseph Conrad

*Heart of Darkness* is a novella by Joseph Conrad, first published in 1899. It is set in the late 19th century and is a story of an ivory trader, Charles Marlow, who travels up the Congo River to the heart of Africa to meet Kurtz, a mysterious and powerful figure who has taken control of a remote trading post.

The story is a commentary on the exploitation and corruption of the European colonial system in Africa and the darkness that can be found in the human heart. It also explores themes of imperialism, madness, and the search for personal and cultural identity.

The narrative is also characterized by a frame story, where an anonymous narrator listens to Marlow's story on a ship anchored on the Thames river. The use of this narrative structure allows the author to create multiple layers of meaning and symbolism in the story.

*Heart of Darkness* is considered a classic of English literature and has had a significant impact on modern fiction, particularly in the genre of psychological and philosophical horror. The story has also been adapted into films, theatre productions, and video games.

## Virginia Woolf

*Mrs. Dalloway* is a novel by Virginia Woolf, first published in 1925. The story takes place on a single day in June 1923 and follows the lives of Clarissa Dalloway, a high-society hostess, and Septimus Warren Smith, a shell-shocked World War I veteran, as they move through London. The novel explores the inner thoughts and emotions of the characters, as well as the larger themes of time, memory, and the search for connection and meaning in life.

The narrative structure of the novel is experimental, using a stream-of-consciousness technique which allows the reader to enter the characters' thoughts and emotions. The story is also divided into two parts: the morning and the afternoon. The novel also uses a number of different perspectives, including those of Clarissa, Septimus, and a number of other characters.

The novel also explores the connection between past, present and future, where the characters' past experiences shape their present actions, and their present thoughts and feelings shape their future. This technique of interior monologue, multiple perspectives and the exploration of the passing of time, adds depth to the characters and their actions, and also makes the novel a significant work of modernist literature.

## James Joyce

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is a novel by James Joyce, first published in 1916. It is a semi-autobiographical bildungsroman that tells the story of Stephen Dedalus, a young Irishman who is struggling to find his identity and purpose as an artist in the face of the religious, political, and social pressures of his time. The novel traces Stephen's development from childhood to young adulthood, as he grapples with questions of faith, morality, and the nature of art and beauty.

The novel is divided into five chapters, each representing a different stage in Stephen's life and development. The narrative is written in a stream-of-consciousness style that gives the reader access to Stephen's inner thoughts and feelings, and it also uses a variety of different techniques to convey the subjective nature of experience. The story also makes use of a number of different perspectives, including those of Stephen and his family, friends and teachers.

The novel is considered a masterpiece of modernist literature for its innovative use of language, its exploration of the inner life of the artist, and its examination of the social

and political context of early 20th-century Ireland. It is also seen as a precursor to Joyce's later work, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.

## POSTMODERNISM

### John Barth

*Lost in the Funhouse* is a collection of short stories by John Barth, first published in 1968. The stories in the collection are postmodern, self-referential, and highly experimental in their narrative techniques. Many of the stories are metafictional, meaning they are stories about stories, and they often play with the conventions of narrative and the nature of fiction itself.

The title story, "Lost in the Funhouse," is a parody of the traditional coming-of-age story, in which the protagonist, Ambrose, gets lost in a funhouse and reflects on the nature of storytelling and the concept of the self. Other stories in the collection include "Night-Sea Journey," which is a retelling of the myth of the Minotaur, and "Menelaiad," which is a parody of Homer's "Odyssey," told from the point of view of Helen of Troy.

Barth's writing is known for its use of language games, intertextuality and self-referentiality. He uses a wide range of narrative techniques, such as parody, satire, and irony, to explore the nature of fiction and the relationship between the author, the text, and the reader.

The collection has been considered a classic of postmodern literature and is widely studied in academic circles. It is known for its playful and self-referential style, and its exploration of the nature of storytelling and the relationship between fiction and reality.

### Margaret Atwood

*The Handmaid's Tale* is a novel by Margaret Atwood, first published in 1985. The story is set in a dystopian future in which the United States has been overthrown by a theocratic, totalitarian regime known as the Republic of Gilead. The novel follows the story of Offred, a handmaid who is forced into sexual and reproductive servitude as part of the regime's efforts to increase the birthrate.

The novel is a commentary on the subjugation of women and the dangers of religious extremism and totalitarianism. It explores themes of oppression, resistance, and the power of language and memory in shaping our understanding of the world. The novel

is written in a first-person narrative, which allows readers to see the world through Offred's eyes, and also to experience her thoughts, emotions, and the gradual realization of her situation.

The novel has been widely acclaimed for its powerful and nuanced portrayal of the subjugation of women in a patriarchal society and its exploration of the complexities of power, resistance, and survival. It has been adapted into a television series, a film, and even an opera. The novel has also been considered as a classic of feminist literature for its representation of the struggle for women's rights and autonomy.

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# GLOSSARY

**Action:** a term used to describe the overall movement of events, especially in drama. In the analysis of drama, the action is subdivided into individual units, for example acts and scenes.

**Alliteration:** In a line of poetry, a series of sounds consonants make at the beginning of or in the middle of words.

**Allusion:** An indirect reference made to something else.

**Analepsis:** *flashback*

**Anapest:** Type of foot in poetry. Two light stresses followed by a heavy stress.

**Aside:** in drama, a type of speech (monologue) spoken for the audience but not for the characters on stage.

**Assonance:** sound effect in poetry, involves repetition of vowels

**Authorial narrative situation:** the external perspective is the most prominent aspect. The narrator who is not part of the narrated world tells the story positioning themselves as an individualized entity (consciousness).

**Autodiegetic narrator:** also *homodiegetic narrator*, who is also the main *character* and narrates his or her own life story.

**Blank verse:** poetry, drama. A form of verse, unrhymed iambic pentameters.

**Caesura:** in poetry, a pause, division which separates a line of verse

**Canon:** a group of (literary) texts to which a particular value is assigned (in terms of social norm, artistic excellence or experience shared).

**Catalectic:** An incomplete line of metrical poetry in which the last syllable or foot is dropped.

**Characterization:** a general term describing the techniques in literary texts to define characters as agents and their characteristics.

**Characters:** the fictive agents of the *action* in narrative or dramatic texts, who appear and take part in events inside the story.

**Consonance:** in poetry, repetition of consonant sounds in neighbouring words with different vowel sounds.

**Couplet:** A stanza comprised of two lines.

**Dactyl:** in poetry, a type of foot. A heavy stress followed by two light stresses.

**Diegetic level:** level of story within dramatic and narrative texts, usually marked by communication between the characters.

**Discourse:** in narrative, the manner in which information is delivered to the reader; the 'how' of a text. Answers the question "Who speaks?"

**Enjambed lines:** The running over of a sentence across multiple lines of poetry.

**Event:** smallest unit of the action.

**Exquisite corpse:** invented by the Surrealists, a group game using verbal or visual elements to create a text. Each person writes two lines, then folds the paper so the next person writing can see only the second line; the next person writes two more lines and folds the paper so that only the second line is visible; and so on.

**Figurative language:** the use of language where the meaning is negotiated between the concepts depending on context and connotations, not literal

**Flashback/analepsis:** in narrative, relating to the order of events; telling about an event that has happened earlier, interrupting the chronology of the story.

**Flashforward/prolepsis/foreshadowing:** telling about an event that would happen later in the chronology of the story.

**Foot:** In metrical verse, lines can be divided into length and rhythm which we refer to as feet. Each foot is comprised of stressed and unstressed syllables.

**Genre:** Categories used to describe types of writing such as fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama.

**Haiku:** This well-known Japanese form is three lines long and comprised of unrhymed, unmetred lines with a 5 7 5 syllable count. Traditionally, the haiku's subject matter relates to nature or seasons.

**Heterodiegetic narrator:** a narrator who is defined as individualized consciousness located outside the world of the story, usually assumed to be omniscient;

**Homodiegetic narrator:** a narrator who takes active role in the fictional action of the story world; not 'omniscient'.

**Iamb:** in poetry, a type of foot. A light stress followed by a heavy stress.

**Internal rhyme:** Lines of poetry in which words in the middle of a line rhyme with words at the end of the line.

**Intermediality:** general term describing the interconnectedness of the texts produced as literature and other media such as music, painting, photography, film and television.

**Intertextuality:** a term marking links in the networks of references between texts in terms of form and content.

**Metaphor:** A direct comparison between two things, X=Y, love is war.

**Metonymy:** When one thing is represented by another thing associated with it, as in 'The pen is mightier than the sword'.

**Mimesis:** an aesthetic concept which explains a literary texts as a model which imitates extra-literary reality.

**Narrator:** fictive textual speaker, a narrating subject outside the story; creates the narrated world but also filters information available to the reader.

**Plot:** interprets the structure of the action as the causal and logical sequence, or chain of the events.

**Prose poem:** The prose poem, which can be any length, isn't broken into verse, but contains many of the elements of poetry: figures of speech, musical language, internal rhyme, repetition, condensed syntax, and imagery.

**Prosody:** The musical patterns of language.

**Scansion:** The process of scanning lines of poetry to mark stressed and unstressed beats and determine the poem's pattern of meter and length.

**Simile:** A comparison that uses like or as

**Sonnet:** Although there are several versions of the sonnet, each has fourteen lines and contains a volta, or a turn in thought.

**Spondee:** in poetry, type of foot. Two equal stresses.

**Stanza:** A unit of poetry consisting of lines and bordered by blank space; similar to a paragraph in prose.

**Story:** a sequence of events in chronological order, a sum of elements of the diegetic level (events+existents), the 'what' of a text.

**Stream of consciousness:** a description of random sequencing of thoughts of a character emulating mental processes marked by association of ideas rather than by structural reasoning-

**Stress:** The syllables in a line of poetry that are emphasized.

**Structure:** a summary of all the elements of a whole and determining of their relationships.

**Synecdoche:** When a part of something symbolizes the whole, or the whole of something symbolizes the part, as in All hands on deck (where hands stands in for men), or The whole world loves you (where whole world represents only a small number of its human population).

**Trochee:** in poetry, a type of foot. A heavy stress followed by a light stress.

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