People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University Centre of Maghnia
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

الجمـــهورية الجزائرية الديموقراطيـــة الشعبـــية
وزارة التـــعليم العالي و البحـث العلمـــي
المركز الجامعي مغنية
كليـة الآداب واللغـــــات
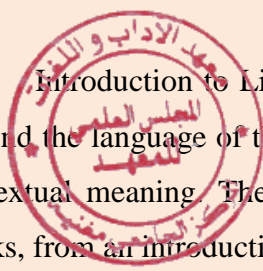قسم اللغة الانجليزية

University Centre of Maghnia

The Booklet is designed for L1

**Introduction to Literature and Literary Analysis
A Guidance for the Understanding of Basic Literature for L1
Students**

Prepared by
Dr Fazilet ALACHAHER

Academic Year: 2021/2022

PREFACE

Introduction to Literature booklet aims to invite you to think more about what is beyond the language of the text. It is not only to understand the textual meaning but also contextual meaning. The booklet provides also a complete guide to analyzing literary works, from an introduction of basic principles to the finer details.

This course also is to invite you to write from your deepest concept, which has never been explored before. You are allowed to be an author, critic, or commentator. You are not allowed to be a save students (to be quite until the end of the semester).

You are expected to be a student who dares to write, criticize, and give comments of everything presented by lecturer or your friends. It is the Literary Studies class, a chance for you to be creative, to pass the structural limitations of literature itself. You can deconstruct any kinds of written text as long as in scientific ways.

As Shakespeare said TO BE OR NOT TO BE. So, take the risk!!....

Dr Fazilet ALACHAHER

TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTORY INFORMTAION

<u>Final Objective</u>: By the end of all courses our students should be able to:

- Identify literature and its main history, discriminate the different literary genres and figures of speech.
- Produce a paper on literary analysis on a selected prose or verse excerpt.
- Differentiate between the existing literary theories and identify the importance of the different schools in literary criticism (traditional & modern)

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION
FINAL OBJECTIVE OF ALL COURSES

The courses presented in a form of handouts will be around the understanding of the module of Literary Studies. Those will be explained along the two semesters in ten until twelve meetings (lectures & TDs) a year. Beside this module, students are expected to read some novels, short story, poems, and other literary works as a way to enrich the references concerning to Literature. By reading those, it is hoped for the students to be able to think wider than before. The critical thinking is more important here.

The understanding of English Literary Studies will be discussed in every meeting before middle test. The history of English Literature will be discussed after it. This class is not based on lecturer explanations only, but students are expected to deconstruct and finding something new to discuss related with Literature. Afterward, students are also challenged to write some simple literary works as a way to exercise the skill of writing.

Some video files will also be shown to you as a means to understand some texts required to be discussed. Comparing between video file and the text will be the best way to enlarge our understanding.

Requirements:

Other than learning Literature, this course also intends to forge students' reading, writing, and critical vision through some references provided in our shared Platform (merouane_fazbenz@gmail.com) Password: provided later on. References will also become our sources of discussion besides discussing main topics. Those also will guide you to be able to write paper on your own perspective. Student, who never visits our shared Platform, possibly will lose him/herself in every discussion.

Assignment will be divided into three terms: Intellectual diary is a kind of simple daily assignment where students must record (in the form of simple paper consists of not more than one page) the discussion done every meeting before middle test. Pre-final paper is required to train students to face final paper. Final paper is forbidden to be submitted together with final test. It must be submitted on final meeting of the semester.

UNIT I
THE UNDERSTANDING OF LITERATURE

In this unit, our students should be able to:

-        Develop a background on the definition of literature

-        Discriminate the main literary genres and sub-genres

CHAPTER I
THE UNDERSTANDING OF LITERATURE

What is Literature?

Fathoming the complexity of critical theory cannot be separated from the problematical definition of literature which it theorizes. Unfortunately, the definition of literature is not as simple as it initially seems. Terry Eagleton in *Literary Theory, an Introduction* and Jonathan Culler in *Literary Theory, a Very Short Introduction* elaborate the complexity and problems of defining literature. Eagleton, for instance, questions the once widely accepted definition of literature: literature is the kind of writing that uses language in a special way[1]. In technical terms, it is called estranging or defamiliarizing as opposed to day-to-day or ordinary use of language. Although this definition, which is derived from Viktor Shklovsky's survey on the possible scientific facets of literary analysis, matches the characteristics of poetry, Eagleton objects to this definition for two reasons. First of all, not all literary works, a novel or a drama for example, use language with this estranging effect. Yet, they are still characterized as literature. Secondly, Eagleton adds, given a certain context all language is estranging. As an example, Eagleton quotes a sign post in an England subway which reads "Dogs must be carried on the escalator" (6). Unambiguous it may seem at first, this seemingly plain announcement might be estranging: does this mean that people are not allowed to use the escalator unless they carry a dog?

Other definitions of literature, namely literature as fictional writing and literature as *belles lettres* are easier to refute. The inadequacy of the first definition is that not all fictional writings, such as *Gundala Putra Petir* or even *Wiro Sableng* for that matter is considered as literature. The later definition is usually taught to Indonesian high school

---

[1] Literary Theory: *An Introduction*, 2nd edition. (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publisher, 1996)

students: etymologically, *susastra* (literature) is derived from Sanskrit i.e. *su* meaning good and *sastra* meaning writing so that *susastra* means good writing which is synonymous with *belles lettres*. For Eagleton, this definition leads to the impossibility of defining literature objectively because the next question would be who has the right to set the standard. A work considered literary by certain community might be ordinary for another. Since the definition of literature then depends on the "who" rather than the "what," both Eagleton and Culler agree that literature and weeds are similar in the sense that ontological definition of them is beyond objective formulation. The closest definition we might come to is that literature is some kind of writing which for certain reasons people value highly. Functionality and language estrangement function as non-defining features of literature rather than as the defining characteristics of literature.

Loose Definition and Its Implication

As a definition, Eagleton's does not fulfill the criteria of not too narrow as to exclude a whole lot of things and not too broad as to include anything possible, however this seems the closest possible Eagleton can get to the definition. To include what is and what is not literature then depends on an agreement between members of a certain community, be it an academic community or a community of another sort. At most, as Culler has suggested, they come up with some features of literature that are non-defining in nature. It means that a work of literature may or may not embody one or several of those features. Being a loose entity, literature has naturally invited theory as diverse as it can be. Many believe that formulating a compact literary theory as well as a definition of literature is a chimera. Literary theory, according to Eagleton, is

really no more than a branch of social ideologies, utterly without any unity or identity which would adequately distinguish it from philosophy, linguistics, psychology, cultural and sociolinguistical thought" (1998: 178)[2].

This is what he means when Eagleton says that literary theory is an illusion. The problem with literary theory is that it comprises of a lot of theories that often mention literature, as if, by accident or that initially do not relate to literature but whose relationship is established later after witnessing a similarity of process such as in the Freudian and Lacanian theory of the unconscious and the use of symbol in literary writing.

The efforts to make literary study more academic goes back as early as the 1880s when literary study was still a branch of Linguistics in Oxford University. However, it did not get serious attention until literary theory was presented more academically for the first time by the New Critics in the US at the beginning of the 20th century. Since then, literary study has been showered with tons of theories that do not always speak the same language such as, Structuralism, Post-structuralism, Deconstruction, Postmodernism, Lesbian/gay criticism, Cultural Materialism, New historicism, Postcolonial criticism, Narratology, Ecocriticism and many others[3].

Literary Genre

A literary genre is a category of literary composition. Genres may be determined by literary technique, tone, content, or even (as in the case of fiction) length. Genre should not be confused with age category, by which literature may be classified as either adult, young-adult, or children's. They also must not be confused with format, such as

---

[2] Terry Engleton, Literary Theory: *An Introduction*, 2nd edition. (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publisher, 1996)

[3] Paulus Sarwoto, Critical Theory for Undergraduates: *How Much is enough?* Vol 10 No. 1 June 2006

graphic novel or picture book. The distinctions between genres and categories are flexible and loosely defined, often with subgroups.

The most general genres in literature are (in loose chronological order) epic, tragedy[4], comedy, novel, short story, and creative nonfiction. They can all be in the genres prose or poetry, which shows best how loosely genres are defined. Additionally, a genre such as satire, allegory or pastoral might appear in any of the above, not only as a sub-genre (see below), but as a mixture of genres. Finally, they are defined by the general cultural movement of the historical period in which they were composed. The concept of "genre" has been criticized by Jacques Derrida[56].

Sub-genres

Genres are often divided into sub-genres. Literature, for instance, is divided into three basic kinds of literature, the classic genres of Ancient Greece, poetry, drama, and prose. Poetry may then be subdivided into epic, lyric, and dramatic. Subdivisions of drama include foremost comedy and tragedy, while eg. Comedy itself has sub-genres, including farce, comedy of manners, burlesque, satire, and so on. However, any of these terms would be called "genre", and its possible more general terms implied.

Dramatic poetry, for instance, might include comedy, tragedy, melodrama, and mixtures like tragicomedy. This parsing into sub-genres can continue: "comedy" has its own genres, including, for example, comedy of manners, sentimental comedy, burlesque comedy, and satirical comedy.

---

[4] Bakhtin M. M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin and London: University of Texas Press. 1981, p.3

[5] Derrida, Jacques *The Law of Genre [Critical Inquiry]* Vol. 7, No. 1, On Narrative. (Autumn, 1980), pp. 55–81. essay contained in *On Narrative* W.J.T. Mitchell, ed. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. 1981

[6] Michael Herzfeld, review of *On Narrative*, American Anthropologist 1983, p.195

Creative non fiction can cross many genres but is typically expressed in essays, memoir, and other forms that may or may not be narrative but share the characteristics of being fact-based, artistically-rendered prose.

Often, the criteria used to divide up works into genres are not consistent, and may change constantly, and be subject of argument, change and challenge by both authors and critics. However, even a very loose term like fiction ("literature created from the imagination, not presented as fact, though it may be based on a true story or situation") is not universally applied to all fictitious literature, but instead is typically restricted to the use for novel, short story, and novella, but not fables, and is also usually a prose text.

Semi-fiction spans stories that include a substantial amount of non-fiction. It may be the retelling of a true story with only the names changed. The other way around, semi-fiction may also involve fictional events with a semi-fictional character, such as Jerry Seinfeld.

Genres may easily be confused with literary techniques, but, though only loosely defined, they are not the same; examples are parody, Frame story, constrained writing, stream of consciousness.

List of Literary Genres

This list is incomplete; you can help by expanding it. Some important part of the following genres will be discussed through the following chapter.

- Fable, Fairy tale, Folklore
- Fiction
    - o Adventure novel
    - o Comic novel
    - o Crime fiction
        - ▪ Detective fiction
    - o Fantasy
        - ▪ Bangsian fantasy
        - ▪ Comic fantasy

- - - Contemporary fantasy
    - - Urban fantasy
  - - Fairytale fantasy
  - - Heroic fantasy
  - - High fantasy
  - - Historical fantasy
    - - Celtic fantasy
    - - Steampunk
    - - Wuxia
    - - Medieval fantasy
    - - Prehistoric fantasy
  - - Juvenile fantasy
  - - Low fantasy
  - - Fantasy of manners
    - - Mythic fiction
  - - Romantic fantasy
  - - Science fantasy
    - - Planetary romance
    - - Sword and Planet
  - - Superhero fantasy
  - - Sword and sorcery
- *Gawęda*
- Gothic fiction
  - - Southern Gothic
- Historical fiction
- Holocaust
- Horror
  - - Splatterpunk
- Medical novel
- Microfiction
  - - 55 Fiction
  - - Drabble
  - - Nanofiction
- Metafiction
- Musical fiction
- Mystery fiction
- Philosophical novel
- Political fiction
- Quest
- Religious fiction
  - - Christian novel
- Romance novel
  - - Historical romance
- Saga, Family Saga
- Satire
- Short story
- Slave narrative
- Speculative fiction

- - - - Alternative history
    - Science fiction (for more details see Science fiction genre)
      - Cyberpunk
        - Nanopunk
      - Soft science fiction
      - Hard science fiction
    - Weird fiction
  - Surrealist novel
  - Thriller
    - Conspiracy fiction
    - Legal thriller
    - Psychological thriller
    - Spy fiction/Political thriller
    - Medical thriller
  - Tragedy
  - Urban fiction
  - Westerns
- Nonfiction
  - Biography
    - Autobiography, Memoir
      - Spiritual autobiography
  - Diaries and Journals
  - Erotic literature
  - Essay, Treatise
  - History
  - Religious texts
    - Apologetics
    - Proverbs
    - Scripture
    - Christian literature

Unit II
FICTION

In this unit, our students should be able to:

- Write short paragraphs defining fiction and its history

- Recognize the main elements of fiction

CHAPTER II
FICTION

Fiction (Latin: *fictum*, "created") is a branch of literature which deals, in part or in whole, with temporally contrafactual events (events that are not true at the time of writing). In contrast to this is non-fiction, which deals exclusively in factual events (e.g.: biographies, histories).

History of fiction

The history of fiction coincides with much of the history of literature, with each genre of fiction having its own origins and development.

- **By form**: legends, comics, fables, fairy tales, film, folklore, novels, plays, poetry, serials, short stories, situation comedies, and video games.

- **By length**: flash fiction, short stories, novelettes, novellas, novels, and epic poetry.

- **By content**: pseudohistory, genre fiction, detective fiction, fantasy fiction, mystery fiction, and science fiction.

Elements of fiction

A. Character (arts)

A character is the representation of a person in a narrative or dramatic work of art (such as a novel, play, or film)[7]. Derived from the ancient Greek word *kharaktêr* (χαρακτήρ) through its Latin transcription *character*, the earliest use in English, in this sense, dates from the Restoration, although it became widely used after its appearance in

---

[7] Baldick (2001, 37) and Childs and Fowler (2006, 23). See also "character, 10b" in Trumble and Stevenson (2003, 381): "A person portrayed in a novel, a drama, etc; a part played by an actor".

Tom Jones in 1749[8]. Character, particularly when enacted by an actor in the theatre or cinema, involves "the illusion of being a human person[9]. Since the end of the 18th century, the phrase "in character" has been used to describe an effective impersonation by an actor[10]. Since the 19th century, the art of creating characters, as practised by actors or writers, has been called characterization[11].

A character, which stands as a representative of a particular class or group of people is known as a type[12]. Types include both stock characters and those that are more fully individualized[13]. The characters in Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (1891) and August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (1888), for example, are representative of specific positions in the social relations of class and gender, such that the conflicts between the characters reveal ideological conflicts[14].

B. Plot

In fiction, the **plot** is a sequence of interrelated events arranged to form a logical pattern and achieve an intended effect[15]. Along with character, setting, theme, and style, plot is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction[16]. Aristotle wrote in *Poetics* that mythos is the most important element of storytelling.

---

[8] Aston and Savona (1991, 34) and Harrison (1998, 51); see also: *OED* "character" sense 17.a citing, *inter alia*, Dryden's 1679 preface to *Troilus and Cressida*: "The chief character or Hero in a Tragedy ... ought in prudence to be such a man, who has so much more in him of Virtue than of Vice... If Creon had been the chief character in *Œdipus*..."

[9] Pavis, Patrice (1998.47) *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis.* Trans. Christine Shantz. Toronto and Buffalo: U of Toronto P. ISBN 0802081630.

[10] Harrison (1998, 51).

[11] Harrison (1998, 51-52).

[12] Baldick (2001, 265).

[13] Ibid

[14] Aston, Elaine; George Savona (1991). *Theatre as Sign-System: A Semiotics of Text and Performance*. London and New York: Routledge. ISBN 0415049326.

[15] Polking, K (1990. p.328-9). *Writing A to Z.* Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books. ISBN 0898794358.

[16] Obstfeld, Raymond (2002. p.1,65,115,171.). *Fiction First Aid: Instant Remedies for Novels, Stories and Scripts*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books. ISBN 158297117x.

1. Plot Structure

Plot is often designed with a **narrative structure**, **storyline** or story arc, which includes exposition, conflict, rising action and climax, followed by a falling action and a dénouement. The term *storyline* also refers to the plot or subplot of a story.

a. **Exposition** is the beginning of the plot usually concerned with introducing characters and setting.

b. **Conflict** is actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests. A conflict may be internal (within oneself) or external (between two or more individuals). It may also be both internal and external.

c. The **rising action** in a work of fiction builds suspense and leads to the climax.

d. The high point, a moment most intense, a turning point, a major culmination of events. The **climax** isn't always the first important scene in a story. In many stories, it is the last sentence.

e. The **falling action** is the part of a story following the climax and shows the effects of the climax. It leads up to the dénouement (or catastrophe)[17]

f. **Dénouement (Resolution),** Etymologically, the French word *dénouement* is derived from the Old French word *denoer*, "to untie", and from *nodus*, Latin for "knot". In fiction, a **dénouement** consists of a series of events that follow the climax, and thus serves as the conclusion of the story. Conflicts are resolved, creating normality for the characters and a sense of catharsis, or release of tension and anxiety, for the reader. Simply put, dénouement is the

---

[17] Greenville College (2006). Plot A: The Pattern of the Action

unraveling or untying of the complexities of a plot. Be aware that not all stories have a resolution.
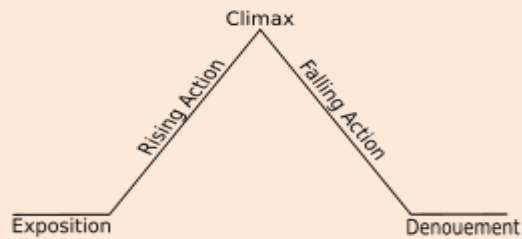
C. Setting

In fiction, **setting** includes the time, location, circumstances, and characters, everything in which a story takes place, and provides the main backdrop and mood for a story. Setting has been referred to as story world[18] or **milieu** to include a context (especially society) beyond the immediate surroundings of the story. Elements of setting may include culture, historical period, geography, and hour. Along with plot, character, theme, and style, setting is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction[19].

1. Role of setting

Setting may take a key role in plot, as in man vs. nature or man vs. society stories. In some stories the setting becomes a character itself[20]. In such roles setting may be considered a plot device or literary device.

2. Types of setting

Settings may take various forms:

- Alternate history
- Campaign setting
- Constructed world
- Dystopia
- Fantasy world
- Fictional country
- Fictional location

---

[18] Truby, John (2007, p. 145). *Anatomy of a Story: 22 Steps to Becoming a Master Storyteller*. New York, NY: Faber and Faber, Inc. ISBN 9780865479517.

[19] Obstfeld, Raymond (2002, p. 1, 65, 115, 171.)………………

[20] Rozelle, Ron (2005, p. 2.). *Write Great Fiction: Description & Setting*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books. ISBN 158297327x

- Fictional universe
- Future history
- Imaginary world
- Mythical place
- Parallel universe
- Planets in science fiction
- Simulated reality
- Virtual reality
- Utopia

D. Theme

A broad idea, message, or lesson that is conveyed by a work. The message may be about life, society, or human nature. Themes often explore timeless and universal ideas and may be implied rather than stated explicitly. Along with plot, character, setting, and style, theme is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction[21].

1. Techniques

Leitwort stil is the purposeful repetition of words in a literary piece that usually expresses a motif or theme important to the story. This device dates back to the *One Thousand and One Nights*, also known as the *Arabian Nights*, which connects several tales together in a story cycle. The storytellers of the tales relied on this technique "to shape the constituent members of their story cycles into a coherent whole."[22]

Thematic patterning is "the distribution of recurrent thematic concepts and moralistic motifs among the various incidents and frames of a story. Thematic patterning may be arranged so as to emphasize the unifying argument or salient

---

[21] Obstfeld, 2002, p. 1, 65, 115, 171.
[22] Heath, Peter (May 1994), "Reviewed work(s) *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* by David Pinault", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Cambridge University Press)

idea which disparate events and disparate frames have in common". This technique also dates back to the *One Thousand and One Nights[23]*.

E. Style

In fiction, style is the manner in which the author tells the story. Along with plot, character, theme, and setting, style is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction[24]. Some components of style in fiction includes the use of various literary techniques. They are:

1. Fiction-writing modes

Fiction is a form of narrative, one of the four rhetorical modes of discourse. Fiction-writing also has distinct forms of expression, or modes, each with its own purposes and conventions. Agent and author Evan Marshall identifies five fiction-writing modes: action, summary, dialogue, feelings/thoughts, and background[25]. Author and writing-instructor Jessica Page Morrell lists six delivery modes for fiction-writing: action, exposition, description, dialogue, summary, and transition[26]. Author Peter Selgin refers to *methods*, including action, dialogue, thoughts, summary, scene, and description[27]. Currently, there is no consensus within the writing community regarding the number and composition of fiction-writing modes and their uses.

2. Narrator

The **narrator** is the teller of the story, the orator, doing the mouthwork, or its in-print equivalent. A writer is faced with many choices regarding the narrator of a story:

---

[23] Heath, Peter (May 1994), "Reviewed work(s): *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* by David Pinault", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Cambridge University Press)

[24] Obstfeld, 2002, p. 1, 65, 115, 171.

[25] Marshall, Evan (1998, pp. 143-165). *The Marshall Plan for Novel Writing*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books.

[26] Morrell, Jessica Page (2006, p. 127). *Between the Lines: Master the Subtle Elements of Fiction Writing*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books

[27] Selgin, Peter (2007, p. 38). *By Cunning & Craft: Sound Advice and Practical Wisdom for fiction writers*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books.

first-person narrative, third-person narrative, unreliable narrator, stream-of-consciousness writing. A narrator may be either obtrusive or unobtrusive, depending on the author's intended relationship between himself, the narrator, the point-of-view character, and the reader[28].

3. Point of View

Point of view is from whose consciousness the reader hears, sees, and feels the story.

4. Allegory

Allegory is a work of fiction in which the symbols, characters, and events come to represent, in somewhat point-by-point fashion, a different metaphysical, political, or social situation.

5. Symbolism

Symbolism refers to any object or person which represents something else. Allegory is the representation of ideas or principles by characters, figures, or events in a story.

6. Tone

Tone refers to the attitude that a story creates toward its subject matter. Tone may be formal, informal, intimate, solemn, somber, playful, serious, ironic, condescending, or many other possible attitudes. Tone is sometimes referred to as the **mood** that the author establishes within the story.

7. Imagery

Imagery is used in fiction to refer to descriptive language that evokes sensory experience. Imagery may be in many forms, such as metaphors and similes.

---

[28] *Todd, Loreto (2000). The Cassell Guide to Punctuation. Cassell,*

8. Punctuation

Punctuation is everything in written language other than the actual letters or numbers, including **punctuation marks**, inter-word spaces, and indentation[29].

9. Word choice

Diction, in its original, primary meaning, refers to the writer's or the speaker's distinctive vocabulary choices and style of expression. Literary diction analysis reveals how a passage establishes tone and characterization; for example, a preponderance of verbs relating physical movement suggests an active character, while a preponderance of verbs relating states of mind portrays an introspective character.

10. Grammar

In linguistics, grammar refers to the logical and structural rules that govern the composition of sentences, phrases, and words in any given natural language. Grammar also refers to the study of such rules. This field includes morphology and syntax, often complemented by phonetics, phonology, semantics, and pragmatics.

11. Imagination

Imagination, also called the faculty of **imagining**, is the ability to form mental images, sensations and concepts, in a moment when they are not perceived through sight, hearing or other senses.

12. Cohesion

Cohesion is the grammatical and lexical relationship within a text or sentence. Cohesion can be defined as the links that hold a text together and give it meaning.

13. Suspension of Disbelief

Suspension of disbelief is the reader's temporary acceptance of story elements as believable, regardless of how implausible they may seem in real life.

---

[29] Ibid

14. Voice

In grammar, the voice (also called **diathesis**) of a verb describes the relationship between the action (or state) that the verb expresses and the participants identified by its arguments (subject, object, etc.). When the subject is the agent or actor of the verb, the verb is in the **active voice**. When the subject is the patient, target or undergoer of the action, it is said to be in the **passive voice**.

15. Show, Don't Tell

Show; don't tell is an admonition to fiction writers to write in a manner that allows the reader to experience the story through a character's action, words, thoughts, senses, and feelings rather than through the narrator's exposition, summarization, and description.

Unit III
DRAMA

In this unit, our students should be able to:

- Write short paragraphs defining Drama and its history

- Recognize the main elements of Drama

- Identify the basic Characteristics of the cause to effect arrangement in playwrights

CHAPTER III
DRAMA

Drama is the specific mode of fiction represented in performance[30]. The term comes from a Greek word meaning "action" (Classical Greek: δράμα, *dráma*), which is derived from "to do" (Classical Greek: δράω, *dráō*). The enactment of drama in theatre, performed by actors on a stage before an audience, presupposes collaborative modes of production and a collective form of reception. The structure of dramatic texts, unlike other forms of literature, is directly influenced by this collaborative production and collective reception[31]. The early modern tragedy *Hamlet* (1601) by Shakespeare and the classical Athenian tragedy *Oedipus the King* (c. 429 BCE) by Sophocles are among the supreme masterpieces of the art of drama[32].

The two masks associated with drama represent the traditional generic division between comedy and tragedy. They are symbols of the ancient Greek Muses, Thalia and Melpomene. Thalia was the Muse of comedy (the laughing face), while Melpomene was the Muse of tragedy (the weeping face). Considered as a genre of poetry in general, the dramatic mode has been contrasted with the epic and the lyrical modes ever since Aristotle's *Poetics* (c. 335 BCE)—the earliest work of dramatic theory[33].

The use of "drama" in the narrow sense to designate a specific *type* of play dates from the 19th century. Drama in this sense refers to a play that is *neither* a comedy nor a

---

[30] Elam, Keir. (1980, 98). *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. New Accents Ser. London and New York: Methuen.

[31] Pfister, Manfred. (1977, 11). *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*. Trans. John Halliday. European Studies in English Literature Ser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

[32] Fergusson Francis (1949, 2-3). *The Idea of a Theater: A Study of Ten Plays, The Art of Drama in a Changing Perspective*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1968.

[33] Ibid, writes that "a drama, as distinguished from a lyric, is not primarily a composition in the verbal medium; the words result, as one might put it, from the underlying structure of incident and character. As Aristotle remarks, 'the poet, or "maker" should be the maker of plots rather than of verses; since he is a poet because he imiates, and what he imitates are actions'" (1949, 8).

tragedy--for example, Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* (1873) or Chekhov's *Ivanov* (1887). It is this narrow sense that the film and television industry and film studies adopted to describe "drama" as a genre within their respective media. "Radio drama" has been used in both senses--originally transmitted in a live performance, it has also been used to describe the more high-brow and serious end of the dramatic output of radio[34].

Drama is often combined with music and dance: the drama in opera is sung throughout; musicals include spoken dialogue and songs; and some forms of drama have regular musical accompaniment (melodrama and Japanese Nō, for example)[35]. In certain periods of history (the ancient Roman and modern Romantic) dramas have been written to be read rather than performed[36]. In improvisation, the drama does not pre-exist the moment of performance; performers devise a dramatic script spontaneously before an audience[37].

The Elements of Drama

Most successful playwrights follow the theories of playwriting and drama that were established over two thousand years ago by a man named Aristotle. In his works *the Poetics* Aristotle outlined the six elements of drama in his critical analysis of the classical Greek tragedy *Oedipus Rex* written by the Greek playwright, Sophocles, in the fifth

---

[34] Banham, Martin, ed. (1998, 894-900). *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[35] See the entries for "opera", "musical theatre, American", "melodrama" and "Nō" in Banham (1998).

[36] While there is some dispute among theatre historians, it is probable that the plays by the Roman Seneca were not intended to be performed. *Manfred* by Byron is a good example of a "dramatic poem." See the entries on "Seneca" and "Byron (George George)" in Banham (1998).

[37] Some forms of improvisation, notably the Commedia dell'arte, improvise on the basis of 'lazzi' or rough outlines of scenic action (see Gordon (1983) and Duchartre (1929)). All forms of improvisation take their cue from their immediate response to one another, their characters' situations (which are sometimes established in advance), and, often, their interaction with the audience. The classic formulations of improvisation in the theatre originated with Joan Littlewood and Keith Johnstone in the UK and Viola Spolin in the USA. See Johnstone (1981) and Spolin (1963).

century B.C. The six elements as they are outlined involve: Thought, Theme, Ideas; Action or Plot; Characters; Language; Music; and Spectacle.

A. Thought/Theme/Ideas

What the play means as opposed to what happens (the plot). Sometimes the theme is clearly stated in the title. It may be stated through dialogue by a character acting as the playwright's voice. Or it may be the theme is less obvious and emerges only after some study or thought. The abstract issues and feelings that grow out of the dramatic action.

B. Action/Plot

The events of a play; the story as opposed to the theme; what happens rather than what it means. The plot must have some sort of unity and clarity by setting up a pattern by which each action initiating the next rather than standing alone without connection to what came before it or what follows. In the plot of a play, characters are involved in conflict that has a pattern of movement. The action and movement in the play begins from the initial entanglement, through rising action, climax, and falling action to resolution.

C. Characters

These are the people presented in the play that are involved in the perusing plot. Each character should have their own distinct personality, age, appearance, beliefs, socio economic background, and language.

D. Language

The word choices made by the playwright and the enunciation of the actors of the language. Language and dialog delivered by the characters moves the plot and action along, provides exposition, defines the distinct characters. Each playwright can create

their own specific style in relationship to language choices they use in establishing character and dialogue.

E. Music

Music can encompass the rhythm of dialogue and speeches in a play or can also mean the aspects of the melody and music compositions as with musical theatre. Each theatrical presentation delivers music, rhythm and melody in its own distinctive manner. Music is not a part of every play. But, music can be included to mean all sounds in a production. Music can expand to all sound effects, the actor's voices, songs, and instrumental music played as underscore in a play. Music creates patterns and establishes tempo in theatre. In the aspects of the musical the songs are used to push the plot forward and move the story to a higher level of intensity. Composers and lyricist work together with playwrights to strengthen the themes and ideas of the play. Character's wants and desires can be strengthened for the audience through lyrics and music.

F. Spectacle

The spectacle in the theatre can involve all of the aspects of scenery, costumes, and special effects in a production. The visual elements of the play created for theatrical event. The qualities determined by the playwright that create the world and atmosphere of the play for the audience's eye.

Further Considerations of the Playwright: *Genre/Form*

Above and beyond the elements outlined above the playwright has other major considerations to take into account when writing. The Genre and Form of the play is an important aspect. Some playwrights are pure in the choice of genre for a play. They write strictly tragedy or comedy. Other playwrights tend to mix genre, combining both

comedy and tragedy in one piece of dramatic work. Based on the Genre/Form, drama is divided into the categories of tragedy, comedy, melodrama, and tragicomedy. Each of these genre/forms can be further subdivide by style and content.

A. Tragedy

Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude. The tragedy is presented in the form of action, not narrative. It will arouse pity and fear in the audience as it witnesses the action. It allows for an arousal of this pity and fear and creates an affect of purgation or catharsis of these strong emotions by the audience. Tragedy is serious by nature in its theme and deals with profound problems. These profound problems are universal when applied to the human experience. In classical tragedy we find a protagonist at the center of the drama that is a great person, usually of upper class birth. He is a good man that can be admired, but he has a tragic flaw, a hamartia, that will be the ultimate cause of his down fall. This tragic flaw can take on many characteristics but it is most often too much pride or hubris. The protagonist always learns, usually too late, the nature of his flaw and his mistakes that have caused his downfall. He becomes self-aware and accepts the inevitability of his fate and takes full responsibility for his actions. We must have this element of inevitability in tragedy. There must be a cause and effect relationship from the beginning through the middle to the end or final catastrophe. It must be logical in the conclusion of the necessary outcome. Tragedy will involve the audience in the action and create tension and expectation. With the climax and final end the audience will have learned a lesson and will leave the theatre not depressed or sullen, but uplifted and enlightened.

B. Comedy

Comedy should have the view of a "comic spirit" and is physical and energetic. It is tied up in rebirth and renewal, this is the reason most comedy end in weddings, which suggest a union of a couple and the expected birth of children. In comedy there is absence of pain and emotional reactions, as with tragedy, and a replaced use of mans intellect. The behavior of the characters presented in comedy is ludicrous and sometimes absurd and the result in the audience is one of correction of behaviors. This correction of behaviors is the didactic element of comedy that acts as a mirror for society , by which the audience learns "don't behave in ludicrous and absurd ways." The types of comedies can vary greatly; there are situation comedies, romantic comedies, sentimental comedies, dark comedies, comedy of manners, and pure farce. The comic devices used by playwrights of comedy are: exaggeration, incongruity, surprise, repetition, wisecracks, and sarcasm.

C. Melodrama

Melodrama is drama of disaster and differs from tragedy significantly, in that; forces outside of the protagonist cause all of the significant events of the plot. All of the aspects of related guilt or responsibility of the protagonist are removed. The protagonist is usually a victim of circumstance. He is acted upon by the antagonist or anti-hero and suffers without having to accept responsibility and inevitability of fate. In melodrama we have clearly defined character types with good guys and bad guys identified. Melodrama has a sense of strict moral judgment. All issues presented in the plays are resolved in a well-defined way. The good characters are rewarded and the bad characters are punished in a means that fits the crime.

D. Tragicomedy

Tragicomedy is the most life like of all of the genres. It is non-judgmental and ends with no absolutes. It focuses on character relationships and shows society in a state of continuous flux. There is a mix of comedy and tragedy side by side in these types of plays.

Style/Mode/ "ism'

The shaping of dramatic material, setting, or costumes in a specific manner. Each play will have its own unique and distinctive behaviors, dress, and language of the characters. The style of a playwright is shown in the choices made in the world of the play: the kinds of characters, time periods, settings, language, methods of characterization, use of symbols, and themes.

Dramatic Structure

Dramatic structure involves the overall framework or method by which the playwright uses to organize the dramatic material and or action. It is important for playwrights to establish themes but the challenge comes in applying structure to the ideas and inspirations. Understanding basic principals of dramatic structure can be invaluable to the playwright. Most modern plays are structured into acts that can be further divided into scenes. The pattern most often used is a method by where the playwright sets up early on in the beginning scenes all of the necessary conditions and situations out of which the later conditions will develop. Generally the wants and desires of one character will conflict with another character. With this method the playwright establishes a pattern of complication, rising action, climax, and resolution. This is commonly known as cause to effect arrangement of incidents.

A. The basic Characteristics of the cause to effect arrangement are:

- Clear exposition of situation
- Careful preparation for future events
- Unexpected but logical reversals
- Continuous mounting suspense
- An obligatory scene
- Logical resolution

1. **Point of Attack**

The moment of the play at which the main action of the plot begins. This may occur in the first scene, or it may occur after several scenes of exposition. The point of attack is the main action by which all others will arise. It is the point at which the main complication is introduced. Point of attack can sometimes work hand in hand with a play's inciting incident, which is the first incident leading to the rising action of the play. Sometimes the inciting incident is an event that occurred somewhere in the character's past and is revealed to the audience through exposition.

2. **Exposition**

Exposition is important information that the audience needs to know in order to follow the main story line of the play. It is the aspects of the story that the audience may hear about but that they will not witness in actual scenes. It encompasses the past actions of the characters before the play's opening scenes progress.

3. **Rising Action**

Rising action is the section of the plot beginning with the point of attack and/or inciting incident and proceeding forward to the crisis onto the climax. The action of the play will rise as it set up a situation of increasing intensity and anticipation. These scenes make up the body of the play and usually create a sense of continuous mounting suspense in the audience.

4. The Climax/Crisis

All of the earlier scenes and actions in a play will build technically to the highest level of dramatic intensity. This section of the play is generally referred to as the moment of the plays climax. This is the moment where the major dramatic questions rise to the highest level, the mystery hits the unraveling point, and the culprits are revealed. This should be the point of the highest stage of dramatic intensity in the action of the play. The whole combined actions of the play generally lead up to this moment.

5. Resolution/Obligatory Scene

The resolution is the moment of the play in which the conflicts are resolved. It is the solution to the conflict in the play, the answer to the mystery, and the clearing up of the final details. This is the scene that answers the questions raised earlier in the play. In this scene the methods and motives are revealed to the audience.

Unit IV
POETRY

In this unit, our students should be able to:

- Define Poetry, its history and the main poets

- Recognize the main elements of poetry

- Practise poetry forms and poetry genres

UNIT IV
POETRY

Poetry (from the Greek "ποίησις", *poiesis*, a "making") is a form of literary art in which language is used for its aesthetic and evocative qualities in addition to, or in lieu of, its apparent meaning. Poetry may be written independently, as discrete poems, or may occur in conjunction with other arts, as in poetic drama, hymns or lyrics. Aristotle divided poetry into three genres which have each spawned other genres:

1. Epic, which included narratives of heroic action and events of more than personal significance

2. Lyric, which was originally meant to be sung

3. Satire, which was the moral censure of evil, pretension, or anti-social behavior

Poetry, and discussions of it, has a long history. Early attempts to define poetry, such as Aristotle's *Poetics*, focused on the uses of speech in rhetoric, drama, song and comedy[38]. Later attempts concentrated on features such as repetition, verse form and rhyme, and emphasized the aesthetics which distinguish poetry from prose[39]. From the mid-20th century, poetry has sometimes been more loosely defined as a fundamental creative act using language[40].

Poetry often uses particular forms and conventions to suggest alternative meanings in the words, or to evoke emotional or sensual responses. Devices such as assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia and rhythm are sometimes used to achieve musical

---

[38] Heath, Malcolm (ed). Aristotle's *Poetics*. London, England: Penguin Books, (1997), ISBN 0140446362.

[39] *See, for example,* Immanuel Kant (J.H. Bernhard, Trans). *Critique of Judgment*. Dover (2005).

[40] Dylan Thomas. *Quite Early One Morning*. New York, New York: New Direction Books, reset edition (1968).

or incantatory effects. The use of ambiguity, symbolism, irony and other stylistic elements of poetic diction often leaves a poem open to multiple interpretations. Similarly, metaphor, simile and metonymy create a resonance between otherwise disparate images—a layering of meanings, forming connections previously not perceived. Kindred forms of resonance may exist, between individual verses, in their patterns of rhyme or rhythm.

Some forms of poetry are specific to particular cultures and genres, responding to the characteristics of the language in which the poet writes. While readers accustomed to identifying poetry with Dante, Goethe, Mickiewicz and Rumi may think of it as being written in rhyming lines and regular meter, there are traditions, such as those of Du Fu and *Beowulf*, that use other approaches to achieve rhythm and euphony. Much of modern British and American poetry is to some extent a critique of poetic tradition[41], playing with and testing (among other things) the principle of euphony itself, to the extent that sometimes it deliberately does not rhyme or keep to set rhythms at all.

In today's globalized world, poets often borrow styles, techniques and forms from diverse cultures and languages.

Elements of Poetry

Prosody is the study of the meter, rhythm, and intonation of a poem. Rhythm and meter, although closely related, should be distinguished[42]. Meter is the definitive pattern established for a verse (such as iambic pentameter), while rhythm is the actual sound that results from a line of poetry. Thus, the meter of a line may be described as being "iambic", but a full description of the rhythm would require noting where the language

---

[41] As a contemporary example of that ethos, see T.S. Eliot, "The Function of Criticism" in *Selected Essays*. Paperback Edition (Faber & Faber, 1999). pp13-34.
[42] Robert Pinsky, *The Sounds of Poetry* at 52

causes one to pause or accelerate and how the meter interacts with other elements of the language. Prosody also may be used more specifically to refer to the scanning of poetic lines to show meter.

Rhythm, the methods for creating poetic rhythm vary across languages and between poetic traditions. Languages are often described as having timing set primarily by accents, syllables, or morals, depending on how rhythm is established, though a language can be influenced by multiple approaches. Metrical rhythm generally involves precise arrangements of stresses or syllables into repeated patterns called feet within a line.

In Modern English verse the pattern of stresses primarily differentiate feet, so rhythm based on meter in Modern English is most often founded on the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables (alone or elided). In the classical languages, on the other hand, while the metrical units are similar, vowel length rather than stresses define the meter. Old English poetry used a metrical pattern involving varied numbers of syllables but a fixed number of strong stresses in each line[43].

Meter, In the Western poetic tradition, meters are customarily grouped according to a characteristic metrical foot and the number of feet per line. Thus, "iambic pentameter" is a meter comprising five feet per line, in which the predominant kind of foot is the "iamb." This metric system originated in ancient Greek poetry, and was used by poets such as Pindar and Sappho, and by the great tragedians of Athens. Similarly, "dactylic hexameter," comprises six feet per line, of which the dominant kind of foot is the "dactyl." Dactylic hexameter was the traditional meter of Greek epic poetry, the earliest extant examples of which are the works of Homer and Hesiod. More recently,

---

[43] Howell D. Chickering. *Beowulf: a Dual-language Edition*. Garden City, New York: Anchor (1977),

iambic pentameter and dactylic hexameter have been used by William Shakespeare and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, respectively.

Meter is often scanned based on the arrangement of "poetic feet" into lines[44]. In English, each foot usually includes one syllable with a stress and one or two without a stress. In other languages, it may be a combination of the number of syllables and the length of the vowel that determines how the foot is parsed, where one syllable with a long vowel may be treated as the equivalent of two syllables with short vowels. For example, in ancient Greek poetry, meter is based solely on syllable duration rather than stress. In some languages, such as English, stressed syllables are typically pronounced with greater volume, greater length, and higher pitch, and are the basis for poetic meter. In ancient Greek, these attributes were independent of each other; long vowels and syllables including a vowel plus more than one consonant actually had longer duration, approximately double that of a short vowel, while pitch and stress (dictated by the accent) were not associated with duration and played no role in the meter. Thus, a dactylic hexameter line could be envisioned as a musical phrase with six measures, each of which contained either a half note followed by two quarter notes (i.e. a long syllable followed by two short syllables), or two half notes (i.e. two long syllables); thus, the substitution of two short syllables for one long syllable resulted in a measure of the same length. Such substitution in a stress language, such as English, would not result in the same rhythmic regularity. In Anglo-Saxon meter, the unit on which lines are built is a half-line containing two stresses rather than a foot[45]. Scanning meter can often show the basic or

---

[44] Howell D. Chickering. *Beowulf: a Dual-language Edition*. Garden City, New York: Anchor (1977),
[45] Christine Brooke-Rose. *A ZBC of Ezra Pound*. Faber and Faber, (1971)

fundamental pattern underlying a verse, but does not show the varying degrees of stress, as well as the differing pitches and lengths of syllables[46].

As an example of how a line of meter is defined, in English-language iambic pentameter, each line has five metrical feet, and each foot is an iamb, or an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. When a particular line is scanned, there may be variations upon the basic pattern of the meter; for example, the first foot of English iambic pentameters is quite often inverted, meaning that the stress falls on the first syllable[47]. The generally accepted names for some of the most commonly used kinds of feet include:

- iamb – one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable
- trochee – one stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable
- dactyl – one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables
- anapest – two unstressed syllables followed by one stressed syllable
- spondee – two stressed syllables together
- pyrrhic – two unstressed syllables together (rare, usually used to end dactylic hexameter)

The number of metrical feet in a line are described in Greek terminology as follows:

- dimeter – two feet
- trimeter – three feet
- tetrameter – four feet
- pentameter – five feet
- hexameter – six feet
- heptameter – seven feet
- octameter – eight feet

Metrical patterns

Different traditions and genres of poetry tend to use different meters, ranging from the Shakespearian iambic pentameter and the Homeric dactylic hexameter to the Anapestic tetrameter used in many nursery rhymes. However, a number of variations to the established meter are common, both to provide emphasis or attention to a given foot

---

[46] Robert Pinsky. *The Sounds of Poetry*. New York, New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, (1998)
[47] Robert Pinsky, *The Sounds of Poetry*.

or line and to avoid boring repetition. For example, the stress in a foot may be inverted, a caesura (or pause) may be added (sometimes in place of a foot or stress), or the final foot in a line may be given a feminine ending to soften it or be replaced by a spondee to emphasize it and create a hard stop. Some patterns (such as iambic pentameter) tend to be fairly regular, while other patterns, such as dactylic hexameter, tend to be highly irregular. Regularity can vary between language. In addition, different patterns often develop distinctively in different languages, so that, for example, iambic tetrameter in Russian will generally reflect a regularity in the use of accents to reinforce the meter, which does not occur or occurs to a much lesser extent in English.

Some common metrical patterns, with notable examples of poets and poems who use them, include:

- Iambic pentameter (John Milton, *Paradise Lost*)

- Dactylic hexameter (Homer, *Iliad;*, Virgil, Aeneid; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*)

- Iambic tetrameter (Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"; Aleksandr Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin*)

- Trochaic octameter (Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven")

- Anapestic tetrameter (Lewis Carroll, "The Hunting of the Snark";[48] Lord Byron, *Don Juan*)

- Alexandrine (Jean Racine, *Phèdre*)

Rhyme, alliteration, assonance

Rhyme, alliteration, assonance and consonance are ways of creating repetitive patterns of sound. They may be used as an independent structural element in a poem, to reinforce rhythmic patterns, or as an ornamental element[48].

---

[48] Rhyme, alliteration, assonance or consonance can also carry a meaning separate from the repetitive sound patterns created. For example, Chaucer used heavy alliteration to mock Old English verse

Rhyme consists of identical ("hard-rhyme") or similar ("soft-rhyme") sounds placed at the ends of lines or at predictable locations within lines ("internal rhyme")[49]. Languages vary in the richness of their rhyming structures; Italian, for example, has a rich rhyming structure permitting maintenance of a limited set of rhymes throughout a lengthy poem. The richness results from word endings that follow regular forms. English, with its irregular word endings adopted from other languages, is less rich in rhyme. The degree of richness of a language's rhyming structures plays a substantial role in determining what poetic forms are commonly used in that language.

Alliteration and assonance played a key role in structuring early Germanic, Norse and Old English forms of poetry. The alliterative patterns of early Germanic poetry interweave meter and alliteration as a key part of their structure, so that the metrical pattern determines when the listener expects instances of alliteration to occur. This can be compared to an ornamental use of alliteration in most Modern European poetry, where alliterative patterns are not formal or carried through full stanzas[50]. Alliteration is particularly useful in languages with less rich rhyming structures. Assonance, where the use of similar vowel sounds within a word rather than similar sounds at the beginning or end of a word, was widely used in skaldic poetry, but goes back to the Homeric epic. Because verbs carry much of the pitch in the English language, assonance can loosely evoke the tonal elements of Chinese poetry and so is useful in translating Chinese poetry. Consonance occurs where a consonant sound is repeated throughout a sentence without

---

and to paint a character as archaic, and Christopher Marlowe used interlocking alliteration and consonance of "th", "f" and "s" sounds to force a lisp on a character he wanted to paint as effeminate. See, for example, the opening speech in *Tamburlaine the Great available online at Project Gutenberg*

[49] For a good discussion of hard and soft rhyme see Robert Pinsky's introduction to Dante Alighieri, Robert Pinsky (Trans.). *The Inferno of Dante: A New Verse Translation*. New York, New York: Farar Straus & Giroux, (1994), ISBN 0374176744; the Pinsky translation includes many demonstrations of the use of soft rhyme.

[50] *See* the introduction to Burton Raffel. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. New York, New York: Signet Books, (1984), ISBN 0451628233.

putting the sound only at the front of a word. Consonance provokes a more subtle effect than alliteration and so is less useful as a structural element.

In 'A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry' (Longmans, 1969) Geoffrey Leech identified six different types of sound patterns or rhyme forms. These are defined as six possible ways in which either one or two of the structural parts of the related words can vary. The unvarying parts are in upper case/bold. C symbolises a consonant cluster, not a single consonant, V a vowel:

1) Alliteration: **C** v c **gr**eat/**gr**ow send/sit

2) Assonance: c **V** c gr**ea**t/f**ai**l send/bell

3) Consonance: c v **C** grea**t**/mea**t** send/hand

4) Reverse Rhyme: **C V** c **gr**e**a**t/**gra**zed send/sell

5) Pararhyme: **C** v **C** **gr**ea**t**/**gr**oa**t** send/sound

6) Rhyme: c **V C** gr**eat**/b**ait** send/end

Form

Poetic form is more flexible in modernist and post-modernist poetry, and continues to be less structured than in previous literary eras. Many modern poets eschew recognisable structures or forms, and write in free verse. But poetry remains distinguished from prose by its form; some regard for basic formal structures of poetry will be found in even the best free verse, however much it may appear to have been ignored. Similarly, in the best poetry written in the classical style there will be departures from strict form for emphasis or effect. Among the major structural elements often used in poetry are the line, the stanza or verse paragraph, and larger combinations of stanzas or lines such as cantos. The broader visual presentation of words and calligraphy can also be utilized. These basic

units of poetic form are often combined into larger structures, called *poetic forms* or poetic modes (see following section), such as in the sonnet or haiku.

Lines and stanzas

Poetry is often separated into lines on a page. These lines may be based on the number of metrical feet, or may emphasize a rhyming pattern at the ends of lines. Lines may serve other functions, particularly where the poem is not written in a formal metrical pattern. Lines can separate, compare or contrast thoughts expressed in different units, or can highlight a change in tone. See the article on line breaks for information about the division between lines.

Lines of poems are often organized into stanzas, which are denominated by the number of lines included. Thus a collection of two lines is a couplet (or distich), three lines a triplet (or tercet), four lines a quatrain, five lines a quintain (or cinquain), six lines a sestet, and eight lines an octet. These lines may or may not relate to each other by rhyme or rhythm. For example, a couplet may be two lines with identical meters which rhyme or two lines held together by a common meter alone. Stanzas often have related couplets or triplets within them.

Other poems may be organized into verse paragraphs, in which regular rhymes with established rhythms are not used, but the poetic tone is instead established by a collection of rhythms, alliterations, and rhymes established in paragraph form. Many medieval poems were written in verse paragraphs, even where regular rhymes and rhythms were used.

In many forms of poetry, stanzas are interlocking, so that the rhyming scheme or other structural elements of one stanza determine those of succeeding stanzas. Examples of such interlocking stanzas include, for example, the ghazal and the villanelle, where a

refrain (or, in the case of the villanelle, refrains) is established in the first stanza which then repeats in subsequent stanzas. Related to the use of interlocking stanzas is their use to separate thematic parts of a poem. For example, the strophe, antistrophe and epode of the ode form are often separated into one or more stanzas. In such cases, or where structures are meant to be highly formal, a stanza will usually form a complete thought, consisting of full sentences and cohesive thoughts.

In some cases, particularly lengthier formal poetry such as some forms of epic poetry, stanzas themselves are constructed according to strict rules and then combined. In skaldic poetry, the dróttkvætt stanza had eight lines, each having three "lifts" produced with alliteration or assonance. In addition to two or three alliterations, the odd numbered lines had partial rhyme of consonants with dissimilar vowels, not necessarily at the beginning of the word; the even lines contained internal rhyme in set syllables (not necessarily at the end of the word). Each half-line had exactly six syllables, and each line ended in a trochee. The arrangement of dróttkvætts followed far less rigid rules than the construction of the individual dróttkvætts.

Visual presentation

Even before the advent of printing, the visual appearance of poetry often added meaning or depth. Acrostic poems conveyed meanings in the initial letters of lines or in letters at other specific places in a poem. In Arabic, Hebrew and Chinese poetry, the visual presentation of finely calligraphed poems has played an important part in the overall effect of many poems.

With the advent of printing, poets gained greater control over the mass-produced visual presentations of their work. Visual elements have become an important part of the poet's toolbox, and many poets have sought to use visual presentation for a wide range of

purposes. Some Modernist poetry takes this to an extreme, with the placement of individual lines or groups of lines on the page forming an integral part of the poem's composition, whether to complement the poem's rhythm through visual caesuras of various lengths, or to create juxtapositions so as to accentuate meaning, ambiguity or irony, or simply to create an aesthetically pleasing form.[60] In its most extreme form, this can lead to concrete poetry or asemic writing[51].

Diction

Illustration for the cover of Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (1862), by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. *Goblin Market* used complex poetic diction in nursery rhyme form: "We must not look at goblin men, / We must not buy their fruits: / Who knows upon what soil they fed / Their hungry thirsty roots?"

Poetic diction treats of the manner in which language is used, and refers not only to the sound but also to the underlying meaning and its interaction with sound and form. Many languages and poetic forms have very specific poetic dictions, to the point where distinct grammars and dialects are used specifically for poetry. Registers in poetry can range from strict employment of ordinary speech patterns, as favoured in much late 20th century prosody, through to highly ornate and aureate uses of language by such as the medieval and renaissance makars.

Poetic diction can include rhetorical devices such as simile and metaphor, as well as tones of voice, such as irony[52]. Aristotle wrote in the *Poetics* that "the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor." Since the rise of Modernism, some poets have opted for a poetic diction that deemphasizes rhetorical devices, attempting instead the direct presentation of things and experiences and the exploration of tone. On the other hand,

---

[51] A good pre-modernist example of concrete poetry is the poem about the mouse's tale in the shape of a long tail in Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, available in Wikisource.

[52] See *The Poetics of Aristotle* at Project Gutenberg at 22.

Surrealists have pushed rhetorical devices to their limits, making frequent use of catachresis.

Allegorical stories are central to the poetic diction of many cultures, and were prominent in the west during classical times, the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance.[64] Rather than being fully allegorical, however, a poem may contain symbols or allusions that deepen the meaning or effect of its words without constructing a full allegory.

Another strong element of poetic diction can be the use of vivid imagery for effect. The juxtaposition of unexpected or impossible images is, for example, a particularly strong element in surrealist poetry and haiku. Vivid images are often, as well, endowed with symbolism.

Many poetic dictions use repetitive phrases for effect, either a short phrase (such as Homer's "rosy-fingered dawn" or "the wine-dark sea") or a longer refrain. Such repetition can add a somber tone to a poem, as in many odes, or can be laced with irony as the context of the words changes. For example, in Antony's famous eulogy of Caesar in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Antony's repetition of the words, "For Brutus is an honorable man," moves from a sincere tone to one that exudes irony.

Genre of Poetry

In addition to specific forms of poems, poetry is often thought of in terms of different genres and subgenres. A poetic genre is generally a tradition or classification of poetry based on the subject matter, style, or other broader literary characteristics[53]. Some

---

[53] For a general discussion of genre theory on the internet, see Daniel Chandler's *Introduction to Genre Theory*

commentators view genres as natural forms of literature[54]. Others view the study of genres as the study of how different works relate and refer to other works[55].

Epic poetry is one commonly identified genre, often defined as lengthy poems concerning events of a heroic or important nature to the culture of the time[56]. Lyric poetry, which tends to be shorter, melodic, and contemplative, is another commonly identified genre. Some commentators may organize bodies of poetry into further subgenres, and individual poems may be seen as a part of many different genres[57]. In many cases, poetic genres show common features as a result of a common tradition, even across cultures.

Described below are some common genres, but the classification of genres, the description of their characteristics, and even the reasons for undertaking a classification into genres can take many forms.

Narrative poetry

Narrative poetry is a genre of poetry that tells a story. Broadly it subsumes epic poetry, but the term "narrative poetry" is often reserved for smaller works, generally with more appeal to human interest.

Narrative poetry may be the oldest type of poetry. Many scholars of Homer have concluded that his *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were composed from compilations of shorter narrative poems that related individual episodes and were more suitable for an evening's entertainment. Much narrative poetry—such as Scots and English ballads, and Baltic and Slavic heroic poems—is performance poetry with roots in a preliterate oral tradition. It

---

[54] *See, for example,* Northrup Frye. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, (1957).

[55] Jacques Derrida, Beverly Bie Brahic (Trans.). *Geneses, Genealogies, Genres, And Genius: The Secrets of the Archive*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press(2006), ISBN 0231139780.

[56] Hatto, A. T.. *Traditions of Heroic and Epic Poetry* (Vol. I: The Traditions ed.). Maney Publishing.

[57] Shakespeare parodied such analysis in *Hamlet*, describing the genres as consisting of "tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral..."

has been speculated that some features that distinguish poetry from prose, such as meter, alliteration and kennings, once served as memory aids for bards who recited traditional tales.

Notable narrative poets have included Ovid, Dante, Juan Ruiz, Chaucer, William Langland, Luís de Camões, Shakespeare, Alexander Pope, Robert Burns, Fernando de Rojas, Adam Mickiewicz, Alexander Pushkin, Edgar Allan Poe and Alfred Tennyson.

Epic poetry

Epic poetry is a genre of poetry, and a major form of narrative literature. It recounts, in a continuous narrative, the life and works of a heroic or mythological person or group of persons. Examples of epic poems are Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's Aeneid, the *Nibelungenlied*, Luís de Camões' *Os Lusíadas*, the *Cantar de Mio Cid*, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the *Mahabharata*, Valmiki's *Ramayana*, Ferdowsi's *Shahnama*, Nizami (or Nezami)'s Khamse (Five Books), and the *Epic of King Gesar*.

While the composition of epic poetry, and of long poems generally, became less common in the west after the early 20th century, some notable epics have continued to be written. Derek Walcott won a Nobel prize to a great extent on the basis of his epic, *Omeros*[58].

Dramatic poetry

Dramatic poetry is drama written in verse to be spoken or sung, and appears in varying, sometimes related forms in many cultures. Verse drama may have developed out of earlier oral epics, such as the Sanskrit and Greek epics[59].

Greek tragedy in verse dates to the sixth century B.C., and may have been an influence on the development of Sanskrit drama[60], just as Indian drama in turn appears to

---

[58] See Press Release from the Nobel Committee, [10], accessed January 20, 2008.
[59] A. Berriedale Keith, *Sanskrit Drama, Motilal Banarsidass Publ (1998).*

have influenced the development of the *bainwen* verse dramas in China, forerunners of Chinese Opera[61]. East Asian verse dramas also include Japanese Noh.

Examples of dramatic poetry in Persian literature include Nezami's two famous dramatic works, *Layla and Majnun* and *Khosrow and Shirin*[62], Ferdowsi's tragedies such as *Rostam and Sohrab*, Rumi's *Masnavi*, Gorgani's tragedy of *Vis and Ramin*[63], and Vahshi's tragedy of *Farhad*.

Satirical poetry

Poetry can be a powerful vehicle for satire. The punch of an insult delivered in verse can be many times more powerful and memorable than that of the same insult, spoken or written in prose. The Romans had a strong tradition of satirical poetry, often written for political purposes. A notable example is the Roman poet Juvenal's satires, whose insults stung the entire spectrum of society.

The same is true of the English satirical tradition. Embroiled in the feverish politics of the time and stung by an attack on him by his former friend, Thomas Shadwell (a Whig), John Dryden (a Tory), the first Poet Laureate, produced in 1682 *Mac Flecknoe*, one of the greatest pieces of sustained invective in the English language, subtitled "A Satire on the True Blue Protestant Poet, T.S." In this, the late, notably mediocre poet, Richard Flecknoe, was imagined to be contemplating who should succeed him as ruler "of all the realms of Nonsense absolute" to "reign and wage immortal war on wit."

---

[60] Ibid, 57-58

[61] William Dolby, "Early Chinese Plays and Theatre," in Colin Mackerras, *Chinese Theatre*, University of Hawaii Press, 1983, p. 17.

[62] *The Story of Layla and Majnun, by Nizami*, translated Dr. Rudolf Gelpke in collaboration with E. Mattin and G. Hill, Omega Publications, 1966, ISBN 0-930872-52-5.

[63] Dick Davis (January 6, 2005), "Vis o Rāmin," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Online Edition. Accessed on April 25, 2008.

Another master of 17th-century English satirical poetry was John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester. He was known for ruthless satires such as "A Satyr Against Mankind" (1675) and a "A Satyr on Charles II."

Another exemplar of English satirical poetry was Alexander Pope, who famously chided critics in his *Essay on Criticism* (1709). Dryden and Pope were writers of epic poetry, and their satirical style was accordingly epic; but there is no prescribed form for satirical poetry. The greatest satirical poets outside England include Poland's Ignacy Krasicki, Azerbaijan's Sabir and Portugal's Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage, commonly known as Bocage.

Lyric poetry

Lyric poetry is a genre that, unlike epic poetry and dramatic poetry, does not attempt to tell a story but instead is of a more personal nature. Rather than depicting characters and actions, it portrays the poet's own feelings, states of mind, and perceptions. While the genre's name, derived from "lyre," implies that it is intended to be sung, much lyric poetry is meant purely for reading.

Though lyric poetry has long celebrated love, many courtly-love poets also wrote lyric poems about war and peace, nature and nostalgia, grief and loss. Notable among these are the 15th century French lyric poets, Christine de Pizan and Charles, Duke of Orléans. Spiritual and religious themes were addressed by such mystic lyric poets as St. John of the Cross and Teresa of Ávila. The tradition of lyric poetry based on spiritual experience was continued by later poets such as John Donne, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Antonio Machado and T. S. Eliot.

Though the most popular form for western lyric poetry to take may be the 14-line sonnet, as practiced by Petrarch and Shakespeare, lyric poetry shows a bewildering

variety of forms, including increasingly, in the 20th century, unrhymed ones. Lyric poetry is the most common type of poetry, as it deals intricately with an author's own emotions and views.

Elegy

An elegy is a mournful, melancholy or plaintive poem, especially a lament for the dead or a funeral song. The term "elegy," which originally denoted a type of poetic meter (elegiac meter), commonly describes a poem of mourning. An elegy may also reflect something that seems to the author to be strange or mysterious. The elegy, as a reflection on a death, on a sorrow more generally, or on something mysterious, may be classified as a form of lyric poetry. In a related sense that harks back to ancient poetic traditions of sung poetry, the word "elegy" may also denote a type of musical work, usually of a sad or somber nature.

Elegiac poetry has been written since antiquity. Notable practitioners have included Propertius (lived ca. 50 BCE – ca. 15 BCE), Jorge Manrique (1476), Jan Kochanowski (1580), Chidiock Tichborne (1586), Edmund Spenser (1595), Ben Jonson (1616), John Milton (1637), Thomas Gray (1750), Charlotte Turner Smith (1784), William Cullen Bryant (1817), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1821), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1823), Evgeny Baratynsky (1837), Alfred Tennyson (1849), Walt Whitman (1865), Louis Gallet (lived 1835–98), Antonio Machado (1903), Juan Ramón Jiménez (1914), William Butler Yeats (1916), Rainer Maria Rilke (1922), Virginia Woolf (1927), Federico García Lorca (1935), Kamau Brathwaite (born 1930).

Verse fable

The fable is an ancient, near-ubiquitous literary genre, often (though not invariably) set in verse. It is a succinct story that features anthropomorphized animals,

plants, inanimate objects, or forces of nature that illustrate a moral lesson (a "moral").

Verse fables have used a variety of meter and rhyme patterns; Ignacy Krasicki, for example, in his *Fables and Parables*, used 13-syllable lines in rhyming couplets.

Notable verse fabulists have included Aesop (mid-6th century BCE), Vishnu Sarma (ca. 200 BCE), Phaedrus (15 BCE–50 CE), Marie de France (12th century), Robert Henryson (fl.1470-1500), Biernat of Lublin (1465?–after 1529), Jean de La Fontaine (1621–95), Ignacy Krasicki (1735–1801), Félix María de Samaniego (1745 – 1801), Tomás de Iriarte (1750 – 1791), Ivan Krylov (1769–1844) and Ambrose Bierce (1842–1914). All of Aesop's translators and successors owe a debt to that semi-legendary fabulist.

An example of a verse fable is Krasicki's "The Lamb and the Wolves":

> Aggression ever finds cause if sufficiently pressed.
>
> Two wolves on the prowl had trapped a lamb in the forest
>
> And were about to pounce. Quoth the lamb: "What right have you?"
>
> "You're toothsome, weak, in the wood." — The wolves dined sans ado.

Prose poetry

Prose poetry is a hybrid genre that shows attributes of both prose and poetry. It may be indistinguishable from the micro-story (aka the "short short story," "flash fiction"). It qualifies as poetry because of its conciseness, use of metaphor, and special attention to language.

While some examples of earlier prose strike modern readers as poetic, prose poetry is commonly regarded as having originated in 19th-century France, where its practitioners included Aloysius Bertrand, Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud and Stéphane Mallarmé.

The genre has subsequently found notable exemplars in different languages:

- *English*: Oscar Wilde, T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, Allen Ginsberg, Giannina Braschi, Seamus Heaney, Russell Edson, Robert Bly, Charles Simic, Joseph Conrad

- *French*: Francis Ponge

- *Greek*: Andreas Embirikos, Nikos Engonopoulos

- *Italian*: Eugenio Montale, Salvatore Quasimodo, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Umberto Saba

- *Polish*: Bolesław Prus, Zbigniew Herbert

- *Portuguese*: Fernando Pessoa, Mário Cesariny, Mário de Sá-Carneiro, Walter Solon, Eugénio de Andrade, Al Berto, Alexandre O'Neill, José Saramago, António Lobo Antunes

- *Russian*: Ivan Turgenev, Regina Derieva, Anatoly Kudryavitsky

- *Spanish*: Octavio Paz, Giannina Braschi, Ángel Crespo, Julio Cortázar, Ruben Dario, Oliverio Girondo

- *Swedish*: Tomas Tranströmer

- *Sindhi language*: Narin Shiam*: Hari Dilgeer Tanyir Abasi*: Saikh AyazMukhtiar Malik*: Taj Joyo*

Unit V
WRITING a LITERARY ANALYSIS PAPER

In this unit, our students should be able to:

- Practice the use of all studied literary genres in literary analysis

- Recognize the main steps on how to produce a literary analysis paper

WRITING a LITERARY ANALYSIS PAPER

The Purpose of a Literary Analysis

Literary analysis is not merely a summary of a literary work. Instead, it is an argument about the work that expresses a writer's personal perspective, interpretation, judgment, or critical evaluation of the work. This is accomplished by examining the literary devices, word choices, or writing structures the author uses within the work. The purpose of a literary analysis is to demonstrate why the author used specific ideas, word choices, or writing structures to convey his or her message.

How to Create a Literary Analysis

1. **Read the text closely several times.** Focus on the ideas that are being presented. Think about the characters' development and the author's writing technique. What might be considered interesting, unusual, or important?

2. **Brainstorm a list of potential topics.** Highlight important passages in the text and take notes on these passages. Later, when writing the paper, these notes should help a writer to remember which aspects of the story caught his/her attention. The topic chosen should always be based on a writer's interpretation of the author's message. Here are some things a writer may want to consider when brainstorming for a literary analysis.

   ❖ **Character:** What observations might a writer make about the characters? Are there discrepancies in what they think, say, or do? Are the observations a writer makes different from what other characters say? How does the author describe the characters? Are the characters "dynamic" (a dynamic character is a character that undergoes important changes throughout the work)? Are the characters "static" characters (a static character is a character that stays the same throughout the work)? Are the characters "flat" characters (a flat character is a character that does not have vivid character traits) or "round" characters (a round character is a character that has vivid character traits)? Are the characters symbolic or representative of some universal quality? Is it possible that two characters in the text might

be compared or contrasted?

- ❖ **Setting:** Is there a relationship between the work's setting and its mood? Does the setting reflect the work's theme? How does the setting impact the characters? Does a change in the setting affect the mood, characters, or conflict?
- ❖ **Plot:** How might the beginning of the work be interpreted? How does the plot build suspense? Does the author use techniques such as foreshadowing or flashback? Are there patterns of cause-effect relationships? Do events occur in a logical order? Examine the events that lead to the climax and determine how the work ends?

Theme: What is the major idea or theme of the work? How does the author relay this theme? Is there a greater meaning to the details given? How do the characters' moods affect the theme? What allusions are made throughout the work? Are there repeating patterns or symbols? What does the title say about the theme?

- ❖ **Dialogue:** What is the purpose of the dialogue? Is the dialogue appropriate in terms of word choice or sentence length? How does the dialogue impact the characterization? How does the author use the dialogue to show the mood of the characters? How does this aid the author's message? How does the dialogue impact the plot?
- ❖ **Imagery:** In what way might a specific image or series of images be analyzed? How might the development of images throughout the work be explained? Are the images important to the meaning of the work? How are images interrelated with other literary elements?
- ❖ **Figures of speech:** How are figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, and hyperboles used throughout the text? How are these figures of speech important in relation to the meaning of the text? Are figures of speech interrelated between other literary elements?
- ❖ **Tone:** How might the attitude of the author or the tone of the work be described? Is the tone serious, playful, casual, formal, or somber? How does the author achieve this tone? How does the tone impact the author's message? Does the author say one thing but mean another? Does the author take the subject seriously or treat it lightly?
- ❖ **Rhyme/Rhythm:** Do the author's words, sentences, or paragraphs seem to share a similar rhyme pattern? What type of rhythm does the author seem to be creating? How is this rhyme/rhythm impacting the author's message? Does

the author use the different rhymes/rhythms as a sound device for the literary work? How does the author do this?

- ❖ **Point of View:** What point of view do the characters display? First, second, or third? How does this point of view affect the theme, plot, or conflict of the work? How might the author's point of view impact a writer's analysis? Might the character's first person point of view draw a writer to feel as though he/she is hearing a personal account and cause him/her to feel an intimate connection with the character? Might the author's third person account cause a writer to feel as if the author is acting as the narrator of the story? Or might it cause a writer to believe that the narrator is an omniscient being who is distant but knows the character's thoughts and feelings?

3. **Think about what the author is trying to say.** Why is this important? When viewing this work as a piece of art, what might a writer's response be? What might a writer's reactions be to the ideas presented in the work? Are these ideas truthful or relevant to today and how? If a writer were asked what they thought of this work how might they respond? What points might a writer make?"

4. **Select a topic that has sufficient supporting evidence.** A writer should make sure to include specific details to support the topic. Use highlighted sections of the book as evidence to support the topic that has been chosen

5. **Write a working thesis.** The analysis will need a strong thesis that states a writer's perspective but also allows it to be debated. The thesis should state a writer's opinion, but it should also allow readers to arrive at their own conclusions.

   ❖ Example of a **debatable thesis**:

   Pride and Prejudice is about Elizabeth Bennet's effort to overcome her own proud behavior and discrimination towards Mr. Darcy, as well as how her family is affected by the haughtiness and preconceptions of the society around them.

(*This is a debatable thesis because it asks the reader, "Does Elizabeth actually exhibit haughtiness and preconceptions? Is this why she doesn't get along with Mr. Darcy? How is Elizabeth's family affected by the haughtiness and preconceptions of the society around them?"*)

❖ Avoid a **non-debatable thesis**:

Example: *Pride and Prejudice* is about five sisters and their journey to find love.

(*This thesis is non-debatable because it is undisputable. The paper is framed as a summary rather than as a literary analysis.*)

6. **Make an extended list of evidence:** Find more evidence from the text to support the working thesis. Then select the evidence that will be used in the paper.

7. **Refine the thesis:** Make sure the thesis fits with the evidence that has been presented.

8. **Organize the evidence:** Match the evidence to the order of the thesis. Delete any of the original textual supports that may no longer follow the thesis, and gather new evidence if needed.

9. **Interpret the evidence.** When writing a literary analysis, it is very important for writers to make sure they express their own personal interpretation of the work. Be careful that the literary analysis is not a summary.

10. **Create a rough draft.** When writing a rough draft, there are several methods that may aid a writer in creating a strong final draft. Here are a few methods:

    ❖ **Outline:** An outline will help a writer to organize his/her thoughts and ideas. It will remind a writer of the order of the thesis, as well as the supporting points he/she would like each topic sentence to have.
    ❖ **Free-write:** A short, ten minute free-write will help to get all of a writer's thoughts on paper. It will allow a writer to focus on the content, rather than the punctuation and spelling. Once the free-write is complete, a writer can read

through it and circle the points that are strong, as well as omit the ones that are not.

- ❖ **Bubble Map:** A bubble map will allow a writer to draw connections from one idea to the next. It will give a writer a visual idea of the direction of the literary analysis, as well as help a writer to see the connections between the topics. This can help a writer transition from one topic to another more fluidly.

11. **Revise the Analysis**. After completing the first draft, revise the analysis by considering the following questions:

- ❖ Is the thesis clearly stated in the first paragraph?
- ❖ Is the sentence structure varied?
- ❖ Does the structure of the analysis emphasize the main ideas?
- ❖ Is the third-person point of view used throughout the entire essay?
- ❖ Has the present tense been used to discuss the work and past tense to describe the author's background?
- ❖ Have quotation marks been used around direct quotations?
- ❖ Have the sources been cited correctly according to MLA style?
- ❖ Has extraneous information that does not support the thesis been eliminated?
- ❖ Have clear transitions been used between sentences and paragraphs?

12. **Proofread.** Once the content of the essay is well-developed, it should be proofread for grammar, punctuation, and spelling. It is often helpful to read the paper slowly and clearly out loud. If possible, another person should listen and read along as the paper is being read. The paper should be printed and proofread several times until an accurate final copy is created. Be alert to common grammatical errors such as sentence fragments, comma splices, or run-on sentences. Remember to consult a style manual for grammatical or citation questions, and if further assistance is desired, group workshops and individual appointments are available free of charge through the Academic Center for Excellence.

Unit VI
An INTRODUCTION to LITERARY CRITICISM

In this unit, our students should be able to:

- Discriminate the different literary theories

- Recognize the main schools of literary criticism (traditional and modern ones)

- Identify how modern criticism extended to sub-branches:

  Tthe study of ethic studies, postcolonial criticism, and gender studies

Unit VI
AN INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY CRITICISM

Literary Theory

"Literary theory" is the body of ideas and methods we use in the practical reading of literature. By literary theory we refer not to the meaning of a work of literature but to the theories that reveal what literature can mean. Literary theory is a description of the underlying principles, one might say the tools, by which we attempt to understand literature. All literary interpretation draws on a basis in theory but can serve as a justification for very different kinds of critical activity. It is literary theory that formulates the relationship between author and work; literary theory develops the significance of race, class, and gender for literary study, both from the standpoint of the biography of the author and an analysis of their thematic presence within texts. Literary theory offers varying approaches for understanding the role of historical context in interpretation as well as the relevance of linguistic and unconscious elements of the text. Literary theorists trace the history and evolution of the different genres—narrative, dramatic, lyric—in addition to the more recent emergence of the novel and the short story, while also investigating the importance of formal elements of literary structure. Lastly, literary theory in recent years has sought to explain the degree to which the text is more the product of a culture than an individual author and in turn how those texts help to create the culture. **Main steps to follow:**

1. What Is Literary Theory?
2. Traditional Literary Criticism
3. Formalism and New Criticism
4. Marxism and Critical Theory
5. Structuralism and Poststructuralism
6. New Historicism and Cultural Materialism
7. Ethnic Studies and Postcolonial Criticism
8. Gender Studies and Queer Theory
9. Cultural Studies

1. What Is Literary Theory?

"Literary theory," sometimes designated "critical theory," or "theory," and now undergoing a transformation into "cultural theory" within the discipline of literary studies, can be understood as the set of concepts and intellectual assumptions on which rests the work of explaining or interpreting literary texts. Literary theory refers to any principles derived from internal analysis of literary texts or from knowledge external to the text that can be applied in multiple interpretive situations. All critical practice regarding literature depends on an underlying structure of ideas in at least two ways: theory provides a rationale for what constitutes the subject matter of criticism—"the literary"—and the specific aims of critical practice—the act of interpretation itself. For example, to speak of the "unity" of *Oedipus the King* explicitly invokes Aristotle's theoretical statements on poetics. To argue, as does Chinua Achebe, that Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* fails to grant full humanity to the Africans it depicts is a perspective informed by a postcolonial literary theory that presupposes a history of exploitation and racism. Critics that explain the climactic drowning of Edna Pontellier in *The Awakening* as a suicide generally call upon a supporting architecture of feminist and gender theory. The structure of ideas that enables criticism of a literary work may or may not be acknowledged by the critic, and the status of literary theory within the academic discipline of literary studies continues to evolve.

Literary theory and the formal practice of literary interpretation runs a parallel but less well known course with the history of philosophy and is evident in the historical record at least as far back as Plato. *The Cratylus* contains a Plato's meditation on the relationship of words and the things to which they refer. Plato's skepticism about signification, i.e., that words bear no etymological relationship to their meanings but are arbitrarily "imposed," becomes a central concern in the twentieth century to both "Structuralism" and "Poststructuralism." However, a persistent belief in "reference," the notion that words and images refer to an objective reality, has provided epistemological (that is, having to do with theories of knowledge) support for theories of literary representation throughout most of Western history. Until the nineteenth century, Art, in Shakespeare's phrase, held "a mirror up to nature" and faithfully recorded an objectively real world independent of the observer.

Modern literary theory gradually emerges in Europe during the nineteenth century. In one of the earliest developments of literary theory, German "higher criticism" subjected biblical texts to a radical historicizing that broke with traditional scriptural interpretation. "Higher," or "source criticism," analyzed biblical tales in light of comparable narratives from other cultures, an approach that anticipated some of the method and spirit of twentieth century theory, particularly "Structuralism" and "New Historicism." In France, the eminent literary critic Charles Augustin Saint Beuve maintained that a work of literature could be explained entirely in terms of biography, while novelist Marcel Proust devoted his life to refuting Saint Beuve in a massive narrative in which he contended that the details of the life of the artist are utterly transformed in the work of art. (This dispute was taken up anew by the French theorist Roland Barthes in his famous declaration of the "Death of the Author." See "Structuralism" and "Poststructuralism.") Perhaps the greatest nineteenth century influence on literary theory came from the deep epistemological suspicion of Friedrich Nietzsche: that facts are not facts until they have been interpreted. Nietzsche's critique of knowledge has had a profound impact on literary studies and helped usher in an era of intense literary theorizing that has yet to pass.

Attention to the etymology of the term "theory," from the Greek "theoria," alerts us to the partial nature of theoretical approaches to literature. "Theoria" indicates a view or perspective of the Greek stage. This is precisely what literary theory offers, though specific theories often claim to present a complete system for understanding literature. The current state of theory is such that there are many overlapping areas of influence, and older schools of theory, though no longer enjoying their previous eminence, continue to exert an influence on the whole. The once widely-held conviction (an implicit theory) that literature is a repository of all that is meaningful and ennobling in the human experience, a view championed by the Leavis School in Britain, may no longer be acknowledged by name but remains an essential justification for the current structure of American universities and liberal arts curricula. The moment of "Deconstruction" may have passed, but its emphasis on the indeterminacy of signs (that we are unable to establish exclusively what a word means when used in a given situation) and thus of texts, remains significant. Many critics may not embrace the label "feminist," but the premise that gender is a social construct, one of theoretical feminisms distinguishing insights, is now axiomatic in a number of theoretical perspectives.

While literary theory has always implied or directly expressed a conception of the world outside the text, in the twentieth century three movements—"Marxist theory" of the Frankfurt School, "Feminism," and "Postmodernism"—have opened the field of literary studies into a broader area of inquiry. Marxist approaches to literature require an understanding of the primary economic and social bases of culture since Marxist aesthetic theory sees the work of art as a product, directly or indirectly, of the base structure of society. Feminist thought and practice analyzes the production of literature and literary representation within the framework that includes all social and cultural formations as they pertain to the role of women in history. Postmodern thought consists of both aesthetic and epistemological strands. Postmodernism in art has included a move toward non-referential, non-linear, abstract forms; a heightened degree of self-referentiality; and the collapse of categories and conventions that had traditionally governed art. Postmodern thought has led to the serious questioning of the so-called metanarratives of history, science, philosophy, and economic and sexual reproduction. Under postmodernity, all knowledge comes to be seen as "constructed" within historical self-contained systems of understanding. Marxist, feminist, and postmodern thought have brought about the incorporation of all human discourses (that is, interlocking fields of language and knowledge) as a subject matter for analysis by the literary theorist. Using the various poststructuralist and postmodern theories that often draw on disciplines other than the literary—linguistic, anthropological, psychoanalytic, and philosophical—for their primary insights, literary theory has become an interdisciplinary body of cultural theory. Taking as its premise that human societies and knowledge consist of texts in one form or another, cultural theory (for better or worse) is now applied to the varieties of texts, ambitiously undertaking to become the preeminent model of inquiry into the human condition.

Literary theory is a site of theories: some theories, like "Queer Theory," are "in;" other literary theories, like "Deconstruction," are "out" but continue to exert an influence on the field. "Traditional literary criticism," "New Criticism," and "Structuralism" are alike in that they held to the view that the study of literature has an objective body of knowledge under its scrutiny. The other schools of literary theory, to varying degrees, embrace a postmodern view of language and reality that calls into serious question the objective referent of literary studies. The following categories are certainly not exhaustive, nor are

they mutually exclusive, but they represent the major trends in literary theory of this century.

2. Traditional Literary Criticism

Academic literary criticism prior to the rise of "New Criticism" in the United States tended to practice traditional literary history: tracking influence, establishing the canon of major writers in the literary periods, and clarifying historical context and allusions within the text. Literary biography was and still is an important interpretive method in and out of the academy; versions of moral criticism, not unlike the Leavis School in Britain, and aesthetic (e.g. genre studies) criticism were also generally influential literary practices. Perhaps the key unifying feature of traditional literary criticism was the consensus within the academy as to the both the literary canon (that is, the books all educated persons should read) and the aims and purposes of literature. What literature was, and why we read literature, and what we read, were questions that subsequent movements in literary theory were to raise.

3. Formalism and New Criticism

"Formalism" is, as the name implies, an interpretive approach that emphasizes literary form and the study of literary devices within the text. The work of the Formalists had a general impact on later developments in "Structuralism" and other theories of narrative. "Formalism," like "Structuralism," sought to place the study of literature on a scientific basis through objective analysis of the motifs, devices, techniques, and other "functions" that comprise the literary work. The Formalists placed great importance on the literariness of texts, those qualities that distinguished the literary from other kinds of writing. Neither author nor context was essential for the Formalists; it was the narrative that spoke, the "hero-function," for example, that had meaning. Form was the content. A plot device or narrative strategy was examined for how it functioned and compared to how it had functioned in other literary works. Of the Russian Formalist critics, Roman Jakobson and Viktor Shklovsky are probably the most well known.

The Formalist adage that the purpose of literature was "to make the stones stonier" nicely expresses their notion of literariness. "Formalism" is perhaps best known is

65

Shklovsky's concept of "defamiliarization." The routine of ordinary experience, Shklovsky contended, rendered invisible the uniqueness and particularity of the objects of existence. Literary language, partly by calling attention to itself as language, estranged the reader from the familiar and made fresh the experience of daily life.

The "New Criticism," so designated as to indicate a break with traditional methods, was a product of the American university in the 1930s and 40s. "New Criticism" stressed close reading of the text itself, much like the French pedagogical precept "explication du texte." As a strategy of reading, "New Criticism" viewed the work of literature as an aesthetic object independent of historical context and as a unified whole that reflected the unified sensibility of the artist. T.S. Eliot, though not explicitly associated with the movement, expressed a similar critical-aesthetic philosophy in his essays on John Donne and the metaphysical poets, writers who Eliot believed experienced a complete integration of thought and feeling. New Critics like Cleanth Brooks, John Crowe Ransom, Robert Penn Warren and W.K. Wimsatt placed a similar focus on the metaphysical poets and poetry in general, a genre well suited to New Critical practice. "New Criticism" aimed at bringing a greater intellectual rigor to literary studies, confining itself to careful scrutiny of the text alone and the formal structures of paradox, ambiguity, irony, and metaphor, among others. "New Criticism" was fired by the conviction that their readings of poetry would yield a humanizing influence on readers and thus counter the alienating tendencies of modern, industrial life. "New Criticism" in this regard bears an affinity to the Southern Agrarian movement whose manifesto, *I'll Take My Stand*, contained essays by two New Critics, Ransom and Warren. Perhaps the enduring legacy of "New Criticism" can be found in the college classroom, in which the verbal texture of the poem on the page remains a primary object of literary study.

4. Marxism and Critical Theory

Marxist literary theories tend to focus on the representation of class conflict as well as the reinforcement of class distinctions through the medium of literature. Marxist theorists use traditional techniques of literary analysis but subordinate aesthetic concerns to the final social and political meanings of literature. Marxist theorist often champion authors sympathetic to the working classes and authors whose work challenges economic

equalities found in capitalist societies. In keeping with the totalizing spirit of Marxism, literary theories arising from the Marxist paradigm have not only sought new ways of understanding the relationship between economic production and literature, but all cultural production as well. Marxist analyses of society and history have had a profound effect on literary theory and practical criticism, most notably in the development of "New Historicism" and "Cultural Materialism."

The Hungarian theorist Georg Lukacs contributed to an understanding of the relationship between historical materialism and literary form, in particular with realism and the historical novel. Walter Benjamin broke new ground in his work in his study of aesthetics and the reproduction of the work of art. The Frankfurt School of philosophers, including most notably Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse—after their emigration to the United States—played a key role in introducing Marxist assessments of culture into the mainstream of American academic life. These thinkers became associated with what is known as "Critical theory," one of the constituent components of which was a critique of the instrumental use of reason in advanced capitalist culture. "Critical theory" held to a distinction between the high cultural heritage of Europe and the mass culture produced by capitalist societies as an instrument of domination. "Critical theory" sees in the structure of mass cultural forms—jazz, Hollywood film, advertising—a replication of the structure of the factory and the workplace. Creativity and cultural production in advanced capitalist societies were always already co-opted by the entertainment needs of an economic system that requires sensory stimulation and recognizable cliché and suppressed the tendency for sustained deliberation.

The major Marxist influences on literary theory since the Frankfurt School have been Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton in Great Britain and Frank Lentricchia and Fredric Jameson in the United States. Williams is associated with the New Left political movement in Great Britain and the development of "Cultural Materialism" and the Cultural Studies Movement, originating in the 1960s at Birmingham University's Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Eagleton is known both as a Marxist theorist and as a popularizer of theory by means of his widely read overview, *Literary Theory*. Lentricchia likewise became influential through his account of trends in theory, *After the New*

Criticism. Jameson is a more diverse theorist, known both for his impact on Marxist theories of culture and for his position as one of the leading figures in theoretical postmodernism. Jameson's work on consumer culture, architecture, film, literature and other areas, typifies the collapse of disciplinary boundaries taking place in the realm of Marxist and postmodern cultural theory. Jameson's work investigates the way the structural features of late capitalism—particularly the transformation of all culture into commodity form—are now deeply embedded in all of our ways of communicating.

5. Structuralism and Poststructuralism

Like the "New Criticism," "**Structuralism**" sought to bring to literary studies a set of objective criteria for analysis and a new intellectual rigor. "Structuralism" can be viewed as an extension of "Formalism" in that that both "Structuralism" and "Formalism" devoted their attention to matters of literary form (i.e. structure) rather than social or historical content; and that both bodies of thought were intended to put the study of literature on a scientific, objective basis. "Structuralism" relied initially on the ideas of the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. Like Plato, Saussure regarded the signifier (words, marks, symbols) as arbitrary and unrelated to the concept, the signified, to which it referred. Within the way a particular society uses language and signs, meaning was constituted by a system of "differences" between units of the language. Particular meanings were of less interest than the underlying structures of signification that made meaning itself possible, often expressed as an emphasis on "langue" rather than "parole." "Structuralism" was to be a metalanguage, a language about languages, used to decode actual languages, or systems of signification. The work of the "Formalist" Roman Jakobson contributed to "Structuralist" thought, and the more prominent Structuralists included Claude Levi-Strauss in anthropology, Tzvetan Todorov, A.J. Greimas, Gerard Genette, and Barthes.

The philosopher Roland Barthes proved to be a key figure on the divide between "Structuralism" and "Poststructuralism." "**Poststructuralism**" is less unified as a theoretical movement than its precursor; indeed, the work of its advocates known by the term "Deconstruction" calls into question the possibility of the coherence of discourse, or the capacity for language to communicate. "Deconstruction," Semiotic theory (a study of

signs with close connections to "Structuralism," "Reader response theory" in America ("Reception theory" in Europe), and "Gender theory" informed by the psychoanalysts Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva are areas of inquiry that can be located under the banner of "Poststructuralism." If signifier and signified are both cultural concepts, as they are in "Poststructuralism," reference to an empirically certifiable reality is no longer guaranteed by language. "Deconstruction" argues that this loss of reference causes an endless deferral of meaning, a system of differences between units of language that has no resting place or final signifier that would enable the other signifiers to hold their meaning. The most important theorist of "Deconstruction," Jacques Derrida, has asserted, "There is no getting outside text," indicating a kind of free play of signification in which no fixed, stable meaning is possible. "Poststructuralism" in America was originally identified with a group of Yale academics, the Yale School of "Deconstruction:" J. Hillis Miller, Geoffrey Hartmann, and Paul de Man. Other tendencies in the moment after "Deconstruction" that share some of the intellectual tendencies of "Poststructuralism" would included the "Reader response" theories of Stanley Fish, Jane Tompkins, and Wolfgang Iser.

Lacanian psychoanalysis, an updating of the work of Sigmund Freud, extends "Postructuralism" to the human subject with further consequences for literary theory. According to Lacan, the fixed, stable self is a Romantic fiction; like the text in "Deconstruction," the self is a decentered mass of traces left by our encounter with signs, visual symbols, language, etc. For Lacan, the self is constituted by language, a language that is never one's own, always another's, always already in use. Barthes applies these currents of thought in his famous declaration of the "death" of the Author: "writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin" while also applying a similar "Poststructuralist" view to the Reader: "the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that *someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted."

Michel Foucault is another philosopher, like Barthes, whose ideas inform much of poststructuralist literary theory. Foucault played a critical role in the development of the postmodern perspective that knowledge is constructed in concrete historical situations in the form of discourse; knowledge is not communicated by discourse but is discourse

itself, can only be encountered textually. Following Nietzsche, Foucault performs what he calls "genealogies," attempts at deconstructing the unacknowledged operation of power and knowledge to reveal the ideologies that make domination of one group by another seem "natural." Foucaldian investigations of discourse and power were to provide much of the intellectual impetus for a new way of looking at history and doing textual studies that came to be known as the "New Historicism."

6. New Historicism and Cultural Materialism

"New Historicism," a term coined by Stephen Greenblatt, designates a body of theoretical and interpretive practices that began largely with the study of early modern literature in the United States. "New Historicism" in America had been somewhat anticipated by the theorists of "Cultural Materialism" in Britain, which, in the words of their leading advocate, Raymond Williams describes "the analysis of all forms of signification, including quite centrally writing, within the actual means and conditions of their production." Both "New Historicism" and "Cultural Materialism" seek to understand literary texts historically and reject the formalizing influence of previous literary studies, including "New Criticism," "Structuralism" and "Deconstruction," all of which in varying ways privilege the literary text and place only secondary emphasis on historical and social context. According to "New Historicism," the circulation of literary and non-literary texts produces relations of social power within a culture. New Historicist thought differs from traditional historicism in literary studies in several crucial ways. Rejecting traditional historicism's premise of neutral inquiry, "New Historicism" accepts the necessity of making historical value judgments. According to "New Historicism," we can only know the textual history of the past because it is "embedded," a key term, in the textuality of the present and its concerns. Text and context are less clearly distinct in New Historicist practice. Traditional separations of literary and non-literary texts, "great" literature and popular literature, are also fundamentally challenged. For the "New Historicist," all acts of expression are embedded in the material conditions of a culture. Texts are examined with an eye for how they reveal the economic and social realities, especially as they produce ideology and represent power or subversion. Like much of the emergent European social history of the 1980s, "New Historicism" takes particular interest in representations of marginal/marginalized groups and non-normative

behaviors—witchcraft, cross-dressing, peasant revolts, and exorcisms—as exemplary of the need for power to represent subversive alternatives, the Other, to legitimize itself.

Louis Montrose, another major innovator and exponent of "New Historicism," describes a fundamental axiom of the movement as an intellectual belief in "the textuality of history and the historicity of texts." "New Historicism" draws on the work of Levi-Strauss, in particular his notion of culture as a "self-regulating system." The Foucaldian premise that power is ubiquitous and cannot be equated with state or economic power and Gramsci's conception of "hegemony," i.e., that domination is often achieved through culturally-orchestrated consent rather than force, are critical underpinnings to the "New Historicist" perspective. The translation of the work of Mikhail Bakhtin on carnival coincided with the rise of the "New Historicism" and "Cultural Materialism" and left a legacy in work of other theorists of influence like Peter Stallybrass and Jonathan Dollimore. In its period of ascendancy during the 1980s, "New Historicism" drew criticism from the political left for its depiction of counter-cultural expression as always co-opted by the dominant discourses. Equally, "New Historicism's" lack of emphasis on "literariness" and formal literary concerns brought disdain from traditional literary scholars. However, "New Historicism" continues to exercise a major influence in the humanities and in the extended conception of literary studies.

7. Ethnic Studies and Postcolonial Criticism

"**Ethnic Studies**," sometimes referred to as "Minority Studies," has an obvious historical relationship with "Postcolonial Criticism" in that Euro-American imperialism and colonization in the last four centuries, whether external (empire) or internal (slavery) has been directed at recognizable ethnic groups: African and African-American, Chinese, the subaltern peoples of India, Irish, Latino, Native American, and Philipino, among others. "Ethnic Studies" concerns itself generally with art and literature produced by identifiable ethnic groups either marginalized or in a subordinate position to a dominant culture. "Postcolonial Criticism" investigates the relationships between colonizers and colonized in the period post-colonization. Though the two fields are increasingly finding points of intersection—the work of bell hooks, for example—and are both activist

intellectual enterprises, "Ethnic Studies and "Postcolonial Criticism" have significant differences in their history and ideas.

"**Ethnic Studies**" has had a considerable impact on literary studies in the United States and Britain. In W.E.B. Dubois, we find an early attempt to theorize the position of African-Americans within dominant white culture through his concept of "double consciousness," a dual identity including both "American" and "Negro." Dubois and theorists after him seek an understanding of how that double experience both creates identity and reveals itself in culture. Afro-Caribbean and African writers—Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Chinua Achebe—have made significant early contributions to the theory and practice of ethnic criticism that explores the traditions, sometimes suppressed or underground, of ethnic literary activity while providing a critique of representations of ethnic identity as found within the majority culture. Ethnic and minority literary theory emphasizes the relationship of cultural identity to individual identity in historical circumstances of overt racial oppression. More recently, scholars and writers such as Henry Louis Gates, Toni Morrison, and Kwame Anthony Appiah have brought attention to the problems inherent in applying theoretical models derived from Euro-centric paradigms (that is, structures of thought) to minority works of literature while at the same time exploring new interpretive strategies for understanding the vernacular (common speech) traditions of racial groups that have been historically marginalized by dominant cultures.

Though not the first writer to explore the historical condition of postcolonialism, the Palestinian literary theorist Edward Said's book *Orientalism* is generally regarded as having inaugurated the field of explicitly "Postcolonial Criticism" in the West. Said argues that the concept of "the Orient" was produced by the "imaginative geography" of Western scholarship and has been instrumental in the colonization and domination of non-Western societies. "Postcolonial" theory reverses the historical center/margin direction of cultural inquiry: critiques of the metropolis and capital now emanate from the former colonies. Moreover, theorists like Homi K. Bhabha have questioned the binary thought that produces the dichotomies—center/margin, white/black, and colonizer/colonized—by which colonial practices are justified. The work of Gayatri C. Spivak has focused attention on the question of who speaks for the colonial "Other" and

the relation of the ownership of discourse and representation to the development of the postcolonial subjectivity. Like feminist and ethnic theory, "Postcolonial Criticism" pursues not merely the inclusion of the marginalized literature of colonial peoples into the dominant canon and discourse. "Postcolonial Criticism" offers a fundamental critique of the ideology of colonial domination and at the same time seeks to undo the "imaginative geography" of Orientalist thought that produced conceptual as well as economic divides between West and East, civilized and uncivilized, First and Third Worlds. In this respect, "Postcolonial Criticism" is activist and adversarial in its basic aims. Postcolonial theory has brought fresh perspectives to the role of colonial peoples—their wealth, labor, and culture—in the development of modern European nation states. While "Postcolonial Criticism" emerged in the historical moment following the collapse of the modern colonial empires, the increasing globalization of culture, including the neo-colonialism of multinational capitalism, suggests a continued relevance for this field of inquiry.

8. Gender Studies and Queer Theory

Gender theory came to the forefront of the theoretical scene first as feminist theory but has subsequently come to include the investigation of all gender and sexual categories and identities. Feminist gender theory followed slightly behind the reemergence of political feminism in the United States and Western Europe during the 1960s. Political feminism of the so-called "second wave" had as its emphasis practical concerns with the rights of women in contemporary societies, women's identity, and the representation of women in media and culture. These causes converged with early literary feminist practice, characterized by Elaine Showalter as "gynocriticism," which emphasized the study and canonical inclusion of works by female authors as well as the depiction of women in male-authored canonical texts.

Feminist gender theory is postmodern in that it challenges the paradigms and intellectual premises of western thought, but also takes an activist stance by proposing frequent interventions and alternative epistemological positions meant to change the social order. In the context of postmodernism, gender theorists, led by the work of Judith Butler, initially viewed the category of "gender" as a human construct enacted by a vast repetition of social performance. The biological distinction between man and woman

eventually came under the same scrutiny by theorists who reached a similar conclusion: the sexual categories are products of culture and as such help create social reality rather than simply reflect it. Gender theory achieved a wide readership and acquired much its initial theoretical rigor through the work of a group of French feminist theorists that included Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous, and Julia Kristeva, who while Bulgarian rather than French, made her mark writing in French. French feminist thought is based on the assumption that the Western philosophical tradition represses the experience of women in the structure of its ideas. As an important consequence of this systematic intellectual repression and exclusion, women's lives and bodies in historical societies are subject to repression as well. In the creative/critical work of Cixous, we find the history of Western thought depicted as binary oppositions: "speech/writing; Nature/Art, Nature/History, Nature/Mind, Passion/Action." For Cixous, and for Irigaray as well, these binaries are less a function of any objective reality they describe than the male-dominated discourse of the Western tradition that produced them. Their work beyond the descriptive stage becomes an intervention in the history of theoretical discourse, an attempt to alter the existing categories and systems of thought that found Western rationality. French feminism, and perhaps all feminism after Beauvoir, has been in conversation with the psychoanalytic revision of Freud in the work of Jacques Lacan. Kristeva's work draws heavily on Lacan. Two concepts from Kristeva—the "semiotic" and "abjection"—have had a significant influence on literary theory. Kristeva's "semiotic" refers to the gaps, silences, spaces, and bodily presence within the language/symbol system of a culture in which there might be a space for a women's language, different in kind as it would be from male-dominated discourse.

Masculine gender theory as a separate enterprise has focused largely on social, literary, and historical accounts of the construction of male gender identities. Such work generally lacks feminisms' activist stance and tends to serve primarily as an indictment rather than a validation of male gender practices and masculinity. The so-called "Men's Movement," inspired by the work of Robert Bly among others, was more practical than theoretical and has had only limited impact on gender discourse. The impetus for the "Men's Movement" came largely as a response to the critique of masculinity and male domination that runs throughout feminism and the upheaval of the 1960s, a period of crisis in American social ideology that has required a reconsideration of gender roles.

Having long served as the de facto "subject" of Western thought, male identity and masculine gender theory awaits serious investigation as a particular, and no longer universally representative, field of inquiry.

Much of what theoretical energy of masculine gender theory currently possesses comes from its ambiguous relationship with the field of "Queer theory." "Queer theory" is not synonymous with gender theory, nor even with the overlapping fields of gay and lesbian studies, but does share many of their concerns with normative definitions of man, woman, and sexuality. "Queer theory" questions the fixed categories of sexual identity and the cognitive paradigms generated by normative (that is, what is considered "normal") sexual ideology. To "queer" becomes an act by which stable boundaries of sexual identity are transgressed, reversed, mimicked, or otherwise critiqued. "Queering" can be enacted on behalf of all non-normative sexualities and identities as well, all that is considered by the dominant paradigms of culture to be alien, strange, unfamiliar, transgressive, odd—in short, queer. Michel Foucault's work on sexuality anticipates and informs the Queer theoretical movement in a role similar to the way his writing on power and discourse prepared the ground for "New Historicism." Judith Butler contends that heterosexual identity long held to be a normative ground of sexuality is actually produced by the suppression of homoerotic possibility. Eve Sedgwick is another pioneering theorist of "Queer theory," and like Butler, Sedgwick maintains that the dominance of heterosexual culture conceals the extensive presence of homosocial relations. For Sedgwick, the standard histories of western societies are presented in exclusively in terms of heterosexual identity: "Inheritance, Marriage, Dynasty, Family, Domesticity, Population," and thus conceiving of homosexual identity within this framework is already problematic.

9. Cultural Studies

Much of the intellectual legacy of "New Historicism" and "Cultural Materialism" can now be felt in the "Cultural Studies" movement in departments of literature, a movement not identifiable in terms of a single theoretical school, but one that embraces a wide array of perspectives—media studies, social criticism, anthropology, and literary theory—as they apply to the general study of culture. "Cultural Studies" arose quite self-consciously in the 80s to provide a means of analysis of the rapidly expanding global culture industry

that includes entertainment, advertising, publishing, television, film, computers and the Internet. "Cultural Studies" brings scrutiny not only to these varied categories of culture, and not only to the decreasing margins of difference between these realms of expression, but just as importantly to the politics and ideology that make contemporary culture possible. "Cultural Studies" became notorious in the 90s for its emphasis on pop music icons and music video in place of canonical literature, and extends the ideas of the Frankfurt School on the transition from a truly popular culture to mass culture in late capitalist societies, emphasizing the significance of the patterns of consumption of cultural artifacts. "Cultural Studies" has been interdisciplinary, even antidisciplinary, from its inception; indeed, "Cultural Studies" can be understood as a set of sometimes conflicting methods and approaches applied to a questioning of current cultural categories. Stuart Hall, Meaghan Morris, Tony Bennett and Simon During are some of the important advocates of a "Cultural Studies" that seeks to displace the traditional model of literary studies according to Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature.*

References

Berriedale Keith, *Sanskrit Drama, Motilal Banarsidass Publ (1998).*

Aston, Elaine; George Savona (1991). *Theatre as Sign-System: A Semiotics of Text and Performance.* London and New York: Routledge. ISBN 0415049326.

Bakhtin M. M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin and London: University of Texas Press. 1981.

Baldick, *Childs and Fowler* (2006)

Banham, Martin, ed. (1998, 894-900). *The Cambridge Guide to Theatre.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Christine Brooke-Rose. *A ZBC of Ezra Pound*. Faber and Faber, (1971)

Derrida, Jacques *The Law of Genre [Critical Inquiry]* Vol. 7, No. 1, On Narrative. (Autumn, 1980), pp. 55–81. essay contained in *On Narrative* W.J.T. Mitchell, ed. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. 1981

Dick Davis (January 6, 2005), "Vis o Rāmin," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Online Edition. Accessed on April 25, 2008

Dylan Thomas. *Quite Early One Morning*. New York, New York: New Direction Books, reset edition (1968).

Elam, Keir. (1980, 98). *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. New Accents Ser. London and New York: Methuen.

Fergusson Francis (1949, 2-3). *The Idea of a Theater: A Study of Ten Plays, The Art of Drama in a Changing Perspective.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1968. Greenville College (2006). Plot A: The Pattern of the Action

Hatto, A. T.. *Traditions of Heroic and Epic Poetry* (Vol. I: The Traditions ed.). Maney Publishing.

Heath, Malcolm (ed). Aristotle's *Poetics*. London, England: Penguin Books, (1997)

Heath, Peter (May 1994), "Reviewed work(s) *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* by David Pinault", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Cambridge University Press)

Howell D. Chickering. *Beowulf: a Dual-language Edition*. Garden City, New York: Anchor (1977).

Jacques Derrida, Beverly Bie Brahic (Trans.). *Geneses, Genealogies, Genres, And Genius: The Secrets of the Archive*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press(2006).

Michael Herzfeld, review of *On Narrative*, American Anthropologist 1983, p.195

Morrell, Jessica Page (2006, p. 127). *Between the Lines: Master the Subtle Elements of Fiction Writing*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books

Obstfeld, Raymond (2002. p.1,65,115,171.). *Fiction First Aid: Instant Remedies for Novels, Stories and Scripts*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books. ISBN 158297117x.

Paulus Sarwoto, Critical Theory for Undergraduates: *How Much is enough?* Vol 10 No. 1 June 2006

Pavis, Patrice (1998.47) *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis.* Trans. Christine Shantz. Toronto and Buffalo: U of Toronto P. ISBN 0802081630.

Pfister, Manfred. (1977, 11). *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*. Trans. John Halliday. European Studies in English Literature Ser. Cambridige: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Polking, K (1990. p.328-9). *Writing A to Z.* Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books. ISBN 0898794358

Robert Pinsky. *The Sounds of Poetry*. New York, New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, (1998)

Rozelle, Ron (2005, p. 2.). *Write Great Fiction: Description & Setting*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books. ISBN 158297327x

Selgin, Peter (2007, p. 38). *By Cunning & Craft: Sound Advice and Practical Wisdom for fiction writers*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books.

Terry Engleton, Literary Theory: *An Introduction*, 2nd edition. (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publisher, 1996)

Truby, John (2007, p. 145). *Anatomy of a Story: 22 Steps to Becoming a Master Storyteller*. New York, NY: Faber and Faber, Inc. ISBN 9780865479517.

William Dolby, "Early Chinese Plays and Theatre," in Colin Mackerras, *Chinese Theatre*, University of Hawaii Press, 1983.