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Освещены основные вопросы теории литературы, приведены теоретический материал и практические задания. Цель пособия – помочь обучающимся в освоении терминов и понятий литературоведения и приобретении навыков их практического использования при анализе литературных произведений.

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I. WHAT IS LITERARY STUDIES?

As a field of study Literary Studies deals with:

– Development of theories, methods, models of textual analysis. Analysis and interpretation of literary texts (Literary theory);

– Literary Periods and movements (History of literature);

– Literature as a symbolic and social system (Literary criticism).

1. Literary theory

Literary theory is the systematic study of the nature of literature and of the methods for literary analysis.

Literary theory 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.

The practice of literary theory became a profession in the 20th century, but it has historical roots that run as far back as ancient Greece (Aristotle's (384–322 BC) *Poetics* is an often cited early example), The aesthetic theories of philosophers from the ancient times through the 18th and 19th centuries are important influences on current literary study.

Literary theory intermingles ideas from philosophy, linguistics, history, political theory, and psychoanalysis.

2. History of literature

The theory and criticism of literature are tied to the history of literature. The history of literature is the historical development of writings in prose or poetry that attempt to provide entertainment, enlightenment, or instruction to the reader or listener, as well as the development of the literary techniques used in the communication of these pieces.

3. Literary criticism

The point of criticism is to argue your point of view on a work of literature. You have to analyse a text and support your assertions with specific evidence from the text. It's crucial to go beyond plot development and into more abstract, higher-level thinking like theme, tone, purpose, etc.

One of the fundamental questions of literary theory is "*what is literature*?"

The Latin word 'litteratura' is derived from 'littera' (letter), which is the smallest element of alphabetical writing.

Literature broadly is all the written manifestations of a culture, but it is also used more narrowly for any imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution.

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines it as ‘written artistic works, especially those with a high and lasting artistic value’.

Adjectives ‘aesthetic’ or ‘artistic’ distinguish literary works from texts of everyday use such as telephone books, newspapers, legal documents and scholarly writings. Creative writing or imaginative literature (belles lettres) belongs to the creative arts reflecting reality in an artistic way through the medium of language.

Criteria to demarcate ‘literary texts’ from ‘non-literary texts’.

1. Fictionality. Even if literary texts attempt to represent reality, they are ultimately products of a writer’s imagination and that at least the characters and their conversations are fictitious. But the boundaries between ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ are often blurred and by no means always identifiable.

Ex. *Sesca Rompas climbed on to a plastic stool and peered through a dirty window at her brother, Aldo Kansil, lying motionless in a bed below. He was a pitiful sight: two drips attached, arms swathed in bandages, his face an angry mosaic of burns.*

Taken out of its context, it is difficult to decide what type of text this is. And yet, these are the opening lines of a newspaper article (*The Independent*, 16 October 2002) which deals with the victims of a Balinese bomb attack.

2. Specialised language. Literary language is ‘special’ and it differs from normal everyday language. The following example illustrates it.

Foot passengers, jostling one another’s umbrellas, in a general infection of ill-temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest. (Charles Dickens (1812–1870) *Bleak House*, ch. 1 (1852)

People wouldn’t normally talk about the weather in this way. Natural phenomenon is blended with the jargon words of the world of finance (‘deposits’, ‘accumulating’, ‘compound interests’). The reader is attracted by this ‘strange’ linguistic description and starts to wonder why such language is used here. One explanation might be that London as one of the

financial centres in the mid-nineteenth century has become so immersed in its business that even nature participates in it and is no longer ‘natural’.

Literature may be classified according to a variety of systems: language, national origin, historical period, genre, and subject matter.

Text is the natural domain of language and literature. Before writing developed as a system of signs, whether pictographs or alphabets, ‘texts’ were passed on orally. At the very beginning of human society the primitive groups of savages expressed their emotions together, communally, in rhythmical fashion. The Germanic tribes were fond of poems, which consisted largely of brief magical charms and of rough popular ballads (ballads of the people). The charms were an inevitable product of primitive superstition; the ballads sprang up and developed among all races. Out of the popular ballads regularly develops epic poetry. Early literature was sung, recited, or spoken, not written. Oral literature is fragile, and it presumes a different author-audience relationship. Typically, it is a communal, not a private, experience. The greatest work of the early period of English literature was the creation of minstrels, called by the Anglo-Saxons scops or gleemen.

While in the Middle Ages the visual component of writing was highly privileged in such forms as richly decorated handwritten manuscripts.

The arrival of the modern age – along with the invention of the printing press – made the visual element disappear or reduced it to a few illustrations in the text.

Text is a complex linguistic unit, and there is no agreement among linguists concerning the notion of this concept, and that causes a problem in case of any linguistic analysis whereas text is considered as an object.

It is only in drama that the union between the spoken word and visual expression survives in a traditional literary genre.

Even more obviously than in drama, the symbiosis of a word and an image culminates in a film. This medium is particularly interesting for textual studies, since words and pictures are recorded and, as in a book, can be looked up at any time. Methods of literary and textual criticism are, therefore, frequently applied to drama, cinema and acoustic media.

Computer hypertexts and networks such as the *Internet* are the latest hybrids of the textual and various media; here writing is linked to sounds, pictures or even video clips within an interdependent network.

Although the written medium is obviously the main concern in the study of literature or texts, this field of inquiry is also closely related to other media such as the stage, painting, film, music or even computer networks.

As a result of the penetration of unusual media through modern textual studies, there have been major controversies as to the definition of ‘text’. Many authors and critics have deliberately left the traditional paths of literature, abandoning old textual forms in order to find new ways of literary expression and analysis.

Visual and acoustic elements are being reintroduced into literature, and media, genres, text types and discourses are being mixed.

Task

1. What is Literature?
2. What is Literature Studies?

II. GENRE, TEXT TYPE AND DISCOURSE

Literary criticism encompasses the concept of evolution or development (**literary history**) and the criteria of classification to distinguish various genres (**poetics**). And every attempt to define text or literature touches not only upon differences between genres but also upon the historical dimensions of these literary forms of expression.

The term **genre** usually refers to one of the three classical literary forms of **epic, poetry** and **drama**.

This categorisation is slightly confusing as the epic occurs in verse, too, but is not classified as poetry. It is, in fact, a precursor of the modern novel (**prose fiction**) because of its structural features such as plot, character presentation and narrative perspective (**point of view**). Although this old classification is still in use, the tendency today is to abandon the term "epic" and introduce 'prose,' 'fiction' or 'prose fiction' for the relatively young literary forms of the novel and the short story.

Beside the genres which describe general areas of traditional literature, the term **text type** has been introduced, under the influence of linguistics. Texts which cannot be categorised under the canonical genres of fiction, drama and poetry are now often dealt with in modern linguistics. Scholars are looking at texts which were previously regarded as worthless or irrelevant for textual analysis. The term text type refers to highly conventional written documents such as instruction manuals, sermons, obituaries, advertising texts, catalogues, and scientific or scholarly writing. It can, of course, also include the three main literary genres and their subgenres.

A further key term in theoretical treatises on literary phenomena is **discourse**. Like text type, it is used as a term for any kind of classifiable linguistic expression. Whereas the term text type refers to written documents, discourse includes written and oral expression.

To sum up, **genre** is applied primarily to the three classical forms of the literary tradition; *text* is a broader term that is also applicable to "non-canonical" written texts, i.e., those which are traditionally not classified as literature. **Discourse** is the broadest term, referring to a variety of written and oral manifestations which share common thematic or structural features. The boundaries of these terms are not fixed and vary depending on the context in which they appear.

Task

Comment on 'genre', 'text type' and 'discourse'.

III. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

Traditional literary studies distinguish between the artistic object, or **primary source**, and its scholarly treatment in a critical text, or **secondary source**.

Primary sources denote the traditional objects of analysis in literary criticism, including texts from all literary genres, such as fiction, poetry or drama.

The term **secondary source** applies to texts such as articles (or essays), book reviews and notes (brief comments on a very specific topic), all of which are published primarily in scholarly journals.

Secondary sources

forms of secondary sources	publishing media	formal aspects of secondary literature
essay (article) note book review	journal anthology (collection)	footnotes bibliography index quotations

In the twentieth century, the traditional classification of primary and secondary sources is often deliberately neglected. A famous example from literature in English is T.S. Eliot's (1888–1965) modernist poem *The Waste Land* (1922), in which the American poet includes footnotes (a traditional element of secondary sources) in the primary text.

The Waste Land is a poem by T. S. Eliot, widely regarded as a central work of modernist poetry. The 434-line poem was published in book form in December 1922. Among its famous phrases are *"April is the cruellest month", "I will show you fear in a handful of dust"*, and the mantra in the Sanskrit language *"Shantih shantih shantih"*.

The poem shifts between voices of satire and prophecy featuring abrupt and unannounced changes of a speaker, location, and time and conjuring a vast and dissonant range of cultures and literatures. *The Waste Land* is not a single monologue. Instead, it is made up of a wide variety of voices (sometimes in monologue, dialogue, or with more than two characters speaking).

Eliot employs many literary and cultural allusions from the Western canon, Buddhism and the Hindu Upanishads.

The Waste Land is notable for its seemingly disjointed structure, indicative of the Modernist style of James Joyce's (1882–1941) *Ulysses*

(1922) (which Eliot cited as an influence and which he read the same year that he was writing *The Waste Land*). In the Modernist style, Eliot jumps from one voice or image to another without clearly delineating these shifts for the reader. He also includes phrases from multiple foreign languages (Latin, Greek, Italian, German, French and Sanskrit), indicative of Ezra Pound's influence.

Sources from which Eliot quotes, or to which he alludes, include the works of Homer, Sophocles, Petronius, Virgil, Ovid, Saint Augustine of Hippo, Dante Alighieri, William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Gérard de Nerval, Thomas Kyd, Geoffrey Chaucer, Thomas Middleton, John Webster, Joseph Conrad, John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Charles Baudelaire, Richard Wagner, Oliver Goldsmith, Hermann Hesse, Aldous Huxley, Paul Verlaine, Walt Whitman and Bram Stoker.

Eliot also makes extensive use of Scriptural writings including the *Bible*, the *Book of Common Prayer*, the Hindu *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, and the Buddha's *Fire Sermon*, and of cultural and anthropological studies such as Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* (particularly its study of the Wasteland motif in Celtic mythology).

The symbols Eliot employs, in addition to the Waste Land, include the Fisher King, the Tarot Deck, the Chapel Perilous, and the Grail Quest.

The Waste Land by T. S. Eliot
The Burial of the Dead

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.
And when we were children, staying at the arch-duke's,
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,

Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
In the mountains, there you feel free.
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

The title *The Burial of the Dead* refers firstly to fertility and secondly, the burial service of the Christian church. It is believed that both burials are followed by re-birth. However, the citizens of the Waste Land are spiritually dead. They do not like to be disturbed from their stupor or the furtile routine of the modern life. As such any idea of spiritual regeneration is uninviting and painful to them.

The poem opens with a declaration that *"April is the cruelest month"*. The poem recalls and overturns the opening line of Chaucer's *General prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales.* The opening lines of Chaucer *The Canterbury Tales* present the joyous abundance of fertility and new life at spring time.

When April with his showers sweet with fruit
The drought of March has pierced unto the root
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power
To generate therein and sire the flower;

Winter is mentioned as the season that kept the speaker warm. Then the author mentions Starnbergersee, Germany's second-largest body of fresh water the Hofgarten, the garden in the centre of Munich (German references). There is a countess Marie recalling how she used to stay at her cousin's and they went sledding. Then winter is mentioned once again because the Wasteland is both physically and spiritually dead.

In the second half of the twentieth century the fusion of primary and secondary sources has been employed in two ways: elements of secondary sources are added to literary texts, and elements of primary sources – e.g., the absence of a critical apparatus or an overtly literary style – are incorporated in secondary texts. The strict separation of the two text types is therefore not always possible.

Task

Read **The Waste Land** Part I. The Burial of the Dead by T. S. Eliot. Comment on allusions and symbols.

IV. MAJOR GENRES IN TEXTUAL STUDIES

There have been various attempts to classify literature into genres since Greco-Roman antiquity. The triad *epic, poetry,* and *drama* has proved to be the most common in modern literary criticism. Recent classifications prefer the terms *fiction, poetry,* and *drama + film,* a fourth textual manifestation in the widest sense of the term.

Fiction

The novel emerged in the 18th century but its precursors go back to Ancient Romans and Ancient Greeks.

Epics and **romance** are regarded as precursors of the modern novel.

Homer's (800 BC- 701 BC) **epics** the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (*c.* 7th century BC) and Virgil's (70–19 BC) *Aeneid* (*c.* 31–19 BC) influence the major medieval epics such as Dante Alighieri's (1265–1321) *Divina Commedia* (*Divine Comedy; c.* 1307–21) and the early modern English epics such as Edmund Spenser's (*c.* 1552–99) *Faerie Queene* (1590; 1596) and John Milton's (1608–74) *Paradise Lost* (1667).

Classical epics have roots in myth, history, and religion, reflect a self-contained worldview of their particular periods and nationalities. They centre around a hero who has to fulfill a number of tasks of national or cosmic significance in a multiplicity of episodes.

Written in verse, epics differ from other forms of poetry by length, narrative structure, depiction of characters, plot patterns

The romance established itself as an independent genre in the late Middle Ages.

Ancient romances such as Apuleius's *Golden Ass* (2nd century AD) were usually written in prose, while medieval works of this genre use verse forms, as in the anonymous Middle English Arthurian romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (14th century). The romance is considered a forerunner of the novel mainly because of its tendency toward a focused plot and unified point of view.

Features that distinguish epic poetry from romance

Epic	**The romance**
– The setting is large. It covers many nations, or the known world. – The hero is outstanding, and historically or legendarily significant. The hero's deeds are of	– The deliberately perspective point of view condenses the setting and the action and orients the plot toward a particular goal.

great valour or requiring superhuman courage. – There are supernatural forces: gods, angels, demons.	– The protagonist is depicted with more detail and greater care. Individual traits, such as insecurity, weakness, or other facets of character come to the foreground. – The linear plot structure is oriented toward a specific climax and no longer centres around national or cosmic problems

In early modern times, the position of the epic and romance weakened and they were replaced by the **novel**.

The novel emerged in Spain (Cervantes (1547–1616) *Don Quijote de la Mancha (1605–1615)*) during the 17th century and in England during the 18th century.

The early novels remain deeply rooted in the older genre of the epic.

Henry Fielding (1707–1754) characterises his novel *Joseph Andrews* (1742) as a 'comic romance' and 'comic epic poem in prose,' i.e., a parody and synthesis of existing genres.

Novels become one of the most productive genres of modern literature.

Daniel Defoe (1660–1731) *Robinson Crusoe* (1719);

Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) *Pamela* (1740–1741) and *Clarissa* (1748–1749);

Henry Fielding (1707–1754) *Tom Jones* (1749);

Laurence Sterne' (1713–1768) *Tristram Shandy* (1759–1767);

The newly established novel is often characterised by the terms 'realism' and 'individualism'.

The traditional epic exhibited a cosmic and allegorical dimension and symbolism. The modern novel distinguishes itself through grounding the plot in a distinct historical and geographical reality.

The reasons for the popularity of the novel in the 19th century.

The rise of an educated middle class.

The spread of the printing press.

The growth of book publishing industry.

Novels were published in parts in periodicals.

A modified economic basis which allowed authors to pursue writing as an independent profession.

Subgenres of the novel

P**icaresque novel** (from the Spanish ‘picaro-trickster’) relates the experiences of a vagrant rogue in his conflict with the social norms of society, tries to lay bare social injustice in a satirical way.

The main character is often of low character or social class. He or she gets by with wits and rarely deigns to hold a job. There is little or no plot, the story is told in a series of loosely connected adventures or episodes. There is little if any character development in the main character. Once a picaro, always a picaro. His or her circumstances may change but these rarely result in a change of a hero. The pícaro’s story is told with a plainness of language or realism.

Satire is sometimes a prominent element. The behaviour of a picaresque hero or heroine stops just short of criminality. Carefree or immoral rascality positions the picaresque hero as a sympathetic outsider, untouched by the false rules of society.

Daniel Defoe (1660–1731) *Moll Flanders* (1722)

Henry Fielding (1707–1754) *Tom Jones* (1749)

The Bildungsroman. The term comes from the German words *Bildung* ‘education’ and *Roman* ‘novel’, thus meaning ‘novel of education’. It describes the development of a protagonist from childhood to maturity (coming of age), in which character change is important.

Charlotte Bronte (1816–1855) *Jane Eyre* (1847);

Emily Bronte (1818–1848) *Wuthering Heights* (1847);

George Eliot (1819–1880) *The Mill on the Floss* (1860);

Doris Lessing (1919–2013) cycle *Children of Violence* (1952–1969).

The epistolary novel is a novel written as a series of documents. The usual form is letters, although diary entries, newspaper clippings and other documents are sometimes used. Recently, electronic ‘documents’ such as recordings and radio, blogs, and e-mails have also come into use. The word *epistolary* is derived from the Greek word *epistolē*, meaning ‘a letter’.

Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) *Pamela* (1740–1741) and *Clarissa* (1748–1749);

Fanny Burnes (1752–1840) *Evelina* (1788);

Jean Webster (1876–1916) *Daddy-Long-Legs* (1912);

Helen Fielding (1958–) *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (1996);

David Llewellyn (1978–) Eleven (2006).

The **historical novel is** a novel that has as its setting a period of history and that attempts to convey the spirit, manners, and social conditions of a past age with realistic detail and fidelity (which is in some cases only apparent fidelity) to historical fact.

Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) *Waverly* (1814), *Rob Roy* (1817), *Ivanhoe* (1820).

The **satirical novel** highlights weaknesses of society through the exaggeration of social conventions. By attacking what they see as human folly, satirists usually imply their own opinions on how the thing being attacked can be improved.

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) *Gulliver's Travels* (1726);

Mark Twain (1835–1910) *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884).

Science fiction (**Sci-Fi** or **SF**) is a genre of speculative fiction that typically deals with imaginative and futuristic concepts such as advanced science and technology, space exploration, time travel, parallel universes, and extraterrestrial life. It has been called the 'literature of ideas', and often explores the potential consequences of scientific, social, and technological innovations.

H.G. Wells (1866–1946) *The Time Machine* (1895), *The War of the Worlds* (1898);

Isaak Azimov (1920–1992) *I, Robot* (1950);

Ray Bradbury (1920–2012) *Fahrenheit 451* (1953).

Utopian novels create alternative worlds with which to criticise real sociopolitical conditions. Utopias are commonly found in science fiction novels and stories.

Thomas More *(1478–1535) Utopia (1516);*

George Orwell (1903–1950) *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949);

Margaret Atwood (1939–) *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985).

The **gothic novel** features include terror (psychological as well as physical), mystery, the supernatural, ghosts, haunted houses and Gothic architecture, castles, darkness, death, decay, 'doubles,' madness (especially mad women), secrets, hereditary curses, and persecuted maidens.

Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823) *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794);

Emily Brontë (1818–1848) *Wuthering Heights* (1847);

Bram Stoker (1847–1912) *Dracula* (1897).

D**etective fiction** is a subgenre of crime fiction and mystery fiction in which an investigator or a detective – either professional, amateur or retired – investigates a crime, often murder.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) *Auguste Dupin stories (1841–1844);*

Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930) *Sherlock Holmes* stories (1887–1927);

Agatha Christie (1890–1976) *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934).

The short story – a concise form of prose fiction

As with the novel, the roots of the short story lie in antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Story, myth, and fairy tale relate to the oldest types of textual manifestations, 'texts' which were primarily orally transmitted. The term 'tale' (from 'to tell'), like the German 'Sage' (from 'sagen' – 'to speak'), reflects this oral dimension inherent in short fiction. Even the Bible includes stories such as 'Job' or 'The Prodigal Son,' (*c.* 4th–5th century BC) whose structures and narrative patterns resemble modern short stories. Other forerunners of this subgenre of fiction are ancient satire and the romance.

Indirect precursors of the short story are medieval and early modern narrative cycles characterised by a frame-narrative, which unites a number of otherwise heterogeneous stories.

The Arabian *Thousand and One Nights (14th)*;

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) *Decamerone* (c. 1349–1351);

Geoffrey Chaucer (*c.* 1343–1400) *The Canterbury Tales* (*c.* 1387– 1400).

The short story emerged as a more or less independent text type at the end of the 18th century, parallel to the development of the novel, the newspaper, and magazines.

Regularly issued magazines of the 19th century provided an ideal medium for the publication of this prose genre.

Many of the early novels appeared as serial stories in these magazines before being published as independent books, for example, Charles Dickens' (1812–1870) *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–1837).

Task

What are major genres in textual studies?

V. MAJOR ELEMENTS OF FICTION

The terms *plot*, *character*, *narrative perspective*, *setting*, and style function as the most important elements in fiction, film and drama.

Plot (What happens?).

Characters (Who acts?).

Narrative Perspective (Who sees what?).

Setting (Where and when do the events take place?).

Plot

Plot (What happens?) is the logical interaction of the various thematic elements of a text which lead to a change of the original situation as presented at the outset of the narrative.

There are four sequential levels of the plot: **exposition, complication, climax or turning point, resolution.**

The **exposition** (presentation of the initial situation) is disturbed by a **complication** or conflict which produces suspense and eventually leads to a **climax**, crisis, or turning point. The climax is followed by a **resolution** of the complication (French **denouement**), with which the text usually ends. This plot structure is called **linear plot** since its different elements follow a chronological order.

In many cases – even in linear plots – **flashback** and **foreshadowing** introduce information concerning the past or future into the narrative.

The **drama of the absurd** and the **experimental novel** deliberately break with linear narrative structures.

'**The theatre of the absurd**' was a derived expression from Albert Camus' philosophy of the absurd and popularised by Martin Esslin's book *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1961). Esslin applied the term to the work of mainly four French playwrights which appeared on the stage in Paris in the early 1950s: Eugene Lonesco, Samuel Beckett, Arthur Adamov, and Jean Genet. The theatre of the absurd came to England with the staging in London of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in 1955, the French version of which had already been staged in Paris a couple of years earlier.

The chaos of existence as conceptualised by Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre – is the basis of absurd drama. According to these philosophers the universe and man's experience in it are meaningless. All attempts by the human mind to understand the world are futile. All philosophical systems and religions which claim that they can enable man to make sense of the world are delusive and useless. The absurd is defined by Camus as the 'tension' which arises from man's determination to discover order and purpose in a world which firmly refuses to show either.

Characters in this drama do nothing meaningful or well-motivated. Like life, an absurd play is meaningless.

In **experimental novels** linear narrative structures are altered by introducing elements of plot in an unorthodox sequence.

Kurt Vonnegut's (1922) postmodern novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) presents various levels of action and time in a non-chronological way (the main character occasionally travels through time):

– level 1 – the experiences of a young soldier Billy Pilgrim in World War II;

– level 2 – his life in America after the war;

– level 3 – a science-fiction-like dream-world in which the protagonist is kidnapped by an extra-terrestrial force.

Task

1. Give examples of the flashbacks and foreshadowing effect in novels and films.

2. Name the writers who break linear plot structure. Give examples, commenting on one of their works.

Characters

Characters in a text can be rendered either as **types** or as **individuals**.

A typified character in literature is dominated by one specific trait and is referred to as a **flat character**.

Typified characters often represent the general traits of a group of persons or abstract ideas.

Characteristics of a typified (flat) character

The role of flat characters is to support the main character.

They do not go through a substantial growth or transformation in the course of the narrative.

They have recognizable characteristics that make them appear stereotypical.

They are often referred to as one- or two-dimensional characters, usually having one perspective or point of view about life, things, or events.

Examples of flat characters in Literature

Benvolio from *Romeo and Juliet* (1595) by William Shakespeare (1564–1616). Benvolio is a flat character, who remains unchanged throughout the play. He is temperate, solid, and loyal and always tries to

maintain peace and harmony between the two families. Benvolio's purpose is to support Romeo to get married to Juliet.

Miss Maudie from *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) by Harper Lee (1926–2016). Miss Maudie is a flat character because she maintains the same characteristics and outlook throughout the narrative. She begins and ends the novel by acting as a voice of reason for kids, and supporting and explaining Atticus' motivations and actions. She is the one who does not openly give a warning to Atticus for taking the case of Tom Robinson. Her positive and optimistic attitude remains steady, even after losing her house to a fire. Also, she represents an open-minded woman in the novel, as she sees error in social structure of Maycomb.

Medieval allegorical depictions of characters used **typification** to personify vices, virtues, or philosophical and religious positions.

The **Everyman** figure, a symbol of the sinful Christian, is a major example of this general pattern in the representation of man in medieval literature.

Characteristics of a round character

The **individualisation** of a character, however, has evolved into a main feature of the genre of the novel. The term **round character** usually denotes a persona with complex and differentiated features.

Round characters are major characters in a story, who encounter contradictory situations, and undergo transformation during this phase. Therefore, these characters do not remain the same throughout the narrative, making their traits difficult to identify from the beginning until the end.

These characters are more realistic, their personalities are somewhat inconsistent.

They are fully developed and show complex traits, like real people.

Round characters are also known as 'main characters,' or 'major characters,' because they are suitable to surprise the readers in a very convincing manner.

Major characters must be round characters to be believable.

Examples of round characters in literature

Elizabeth Bennet from *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by Jane Austen (1775–1817) is a good example of a round character. She is the main character of Jane Austen's (1775–1813) *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), who does not remain the same innocent girl whom readers meet in the first part of the story. Elizabeth develops into a new woman, with different choices and behaviours that have an impact on the people around her. In the

beginning, Elizabeth is prejudiced, which is her major flaw, though later she transforms and changes her opinions. In fact, slowly and gradually Elizabeth evolves to understand her true feelings – showing a great example of a round character.

Winston Smith from *1984* by George Orwell (1903-1950). George Orwell named his novel's hero Winston Smith, after a great English leader, Winston Churchill. Smith is thirty-nine years old, he serves his whole life for the Ministry of Truth and rewrites history. Then he goes against the rules of the Party and falls in love with Julia, which is a rebellious act written in his diary. There is no past and no future for Smith. He is a round character whose mind is inconstant, while he undergoes his character development during the course of the story.

The methods of characterisation

Characterisation is the act of creating and describing characters in literature. Characterisation includes both descriptions of a character's physical attributes as well as the character's personality. The way that characters act, think, and speak also adds to their characterisation. There are two ways of characterisation: *direct* and *indirect characterisation*.

Direct characterisation, also known as explicit or explanatory characterisation, consists of the author telling the audience what a character is like. A narrator, another character or protagonists themselves may give this information.

Indirect characterisation, also known as **implicit** or d**ramatic characterisation,** is a more subtle way of introducing the character to the audience. The audience has to deduce for themselves the characteristics of the character by observing his / her thought process, behaviour, speech, way of talking, appearance, and manner of communication with other characters, as well as by discerning the response of other characters. While it takes more time to develop a character through indirect characterisation, it often leaves a deeper impression on the reader than direct statements about what a character is like. Ernest Hemingway's (1899–1961) texts are among the most famous for this technique, which aims at an 'objective' effect by means of a drama-like presentation.

Typification and individualisation, explanatory and dramatic methods hardly ever appear in their pure forms, but rather as hybrids of various degrees, since the narrator often also acts as a character in the text.

Task

Give examples (from British and American literature) of dramatic and explanatory characterisation.

VI. NARRATIVE

A narrative is an account of connected events. Two writers describing the same set of events might craft very different narratives, depending on how they use different narrative elements, such as tone or point of view. For example, an account of the American Civil War written from the perspective of a white slave owner would make for a very different narrative than if it were written from the perspective of a historian, or a former slave.

When we use the word 'narrative,' we are pointing out that who tells a story and how that person tells the story influence how the reader understands the story's meaning. The question of what purpose narratives serve in literature is inseparable from the question of why people tell stories in general, and why writers use different narrative elements to shape their stories into compelling narratives. Narratives make it possible for writers to capture some of the nuances and complexities of human experience in the retelling of a sequence of events.

Poetry written in the style of a narrative is known as **narrative verse**. *Faerie Queen* (1590) by Edmund Spenser (1553–1599), is an example of such poetry. It narrates the adventure of the Redcross Knight, who represents the virtue of holiness. He encounters the deceptive Duessa, Archimago, and the House of Pride. The virginal Una, who represents Truth, initially aids the Redcross Knight in his journey; however, after his encounter with the monstrous Errour the Redcross Knight wanders away from his guiding light and proceeds into an illicit relationship with the deceptive Duessa, whose very name means 'duplicity'. The Redcross Knight only learns the virtue of holiness after his fall from grace. On a symbolic level it describes the mission of the Holiness as helping the Truth fight Evil, and thus regaining its rightful place in human hearts.

Charlotte Macleod's (1922–2005) *The Withdrawing Room* (1890) is an example of a **thriller or suspense narrative**. Augustus Quiffen, a lodger at Sarah's Brownstone home, is killed by falling under the train. It seems to be an accident until Mary Smith tells Sarah that it is a murder, but she is not sure of the identity of the murderer. Sarah and Max Bittersohn investigate the matter, and find that the killer has planned the death beforehand.

Don Quixote (1605) by Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616) is a parody of **romance narratives**, which dealt with the adventures of a valiant knight. Unlike serious romances, in *Don Quixote*, the narrative takes a comical turn. We laugh at how Quixote was bestowed a knighthood in his battle with the giants (windmills). We enjoy how the knight helps the Christian king

against the army of a Moorish monarch (herd of sheep). These and the rest of the incidents of the novel are written in the style of Spanish romances of the 16th century, in order to mock the idealism of knights in the contemporary romances.

Animal Farm (1945) by George Orwell (1903–1950) is a modern narrative example known as a '**political satire**,' which aims at expressing a writer's political views. It uses animals on a farm to describe the overthrow of the last Russian Tsar, Nicholas II, and the Communist Revolution of Russia before WWII. The actions of the animals on the farm are used to expose the greed and corruption of the Revolution. It also describes how powerful people can change the ideology of a society.

In the **figural narrative situation** the narrator moves into the background, suggesting that the plot is revealed solely through the actions of the characters in the text. This literary technique is a relatively recent phenomenon, one which has been developed with the rise of the modern novel, mostly in order to encourage the reader to judge the action without an intervening commentator. The following example from James Joyce's (1882–1941) *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) renders the action through the figural perspective of the protagonist.

The fellows had seen him running. They closed round him in a ring, pushing one against another to hear.

– Tell us! Tell us!

– What did he say?…

He told them what he had said and what the rector had said and, when he had told them, all the fellows flung their caps spinning up into the air and cried:

– Hurroo!…

The cheers died away in the soft gray air. He was alone. He was happy and free.

In the above passage, direct speech and mental reflections are employed to reveal the action through the perspective of the protagonist. In contrast to an omniscient point of view this form of third person narrative is bound to the perspective of a figure who is also part of the action.

Stream of consciousness is a style or technique of writing that tries to capture the natural flow of a characters extended thought process, often by incorporating sensory impressions, incomplete ideas, unusual syntax, and rough grammar. Stream of consciousness technique and related narratological phenomena (interior monologue and free indirect discourse) shift the emphasis from exterior aspects of the plot to the inner world of a character. This technique found its way into modernist prose fiction after

World War I. James Joyce is considered the inventor of this technique, best exemplified by his novel *Ulysses* (1922).

These experimental narrative techniques of character presentation are associated with the early 20th-century Modernist movement. The term 'stream of consciousness' originated in psychology before literary critics began using it to describe a narrative style that depicts how people think. The term is commonly credited to an American philosopher, historian, and psychologist William James who used it in 1890 in his *The Principles of Psychology*. He described it like this: *"consciousness, then, does not appear to itself as chopped up in bits… it is nothing joined; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let's call it the stream of thought, consciousness, or subjective life."*

Stream of consciousness is used primarily in fiction and poetry, but the term has also been used to describe plays and films that attempt to visually represent a character's thoughts.

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) is known for using stream of consciousness in her writing. The novel *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) follows the thoughts, experiences, and memories of several characters on a single day in London. In this passage, the title character, Clarissa Dalloway, watches cars driving by:

She had a perpetual sense, as she watched the taxi cabs, of being out, out, far out to sea and alone; she always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day. Not that she thought herself clever, or much out of the ordinary. How she had got through life on the few twigs of knowledge Fraulein Daniels gave them she could not think. She knew nothing; no language, no history; she scarcely read a book now, except memoirs in bed; and yet to her it was absolutely absorbing; all this; the cabs passing; and she would not say of Peter, she would not say of herself, I am this, I am that.

Woolf does more than simply say *"Mrs. Dalloway watched the taxis and thought about her life."* Rather, she lets the reader into the character's thoughts by using long sentences with semicolons to show the slow drift of ideas and the transitions between thoughts. Readers are able to watch as Mrs. Dalloway's mind moves from observations about things she is seeing to reflections on her general attitude towards life, and then moves on to memories from her childhood, then back to the taxi cabs in the street, and finally to Peter, a former romantic interest. This is an excellent example of using associative leaps and sensory impressions to create a stream of consciousness. Woolf manages to convey not only the content but the

structure and process of Mrs. Dalloway's thoughts, a fact which is all the more impressive because she does so while writing in the third person.

Modernist poet T. S. Eliot (1888–1965) uses stream of consciousness techniques in his famous poem, *"The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock"* (1915).

I grow old ... I grow old ...
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

The poem generally follows traditional grammar and syntax, but Eliot moves from idea to idea and sentence to sentence using associative thought. For example, when he thinks of walking on the beach, he is reminded of mermaids. And while it's not immediately clear what peaches and mermaids have to do with old age, the passage shows readers something about how the speaker's mind wanders.

Modernist and postmodernist novels introduce these techniques in very overt ways, often even changing narrative perspectives within one text in order to highlight decisive shifts in the course of action or narrative.

Task

Give examples of different types of narrative forms in British and American literature.

VII. NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The term *narrative perspective* or *point of view* (POV) characterises the way in which a text presents persons, events, and settings.

The three primary points of view are first person, in which the narrator tells a story from their own perspective ("I went to the store"); second person, in which the narrator tells a story about you, the reader or viewer ("You went to the store"); and third person, in which the narrator tells a story about other people ("He went to the store"). Each point of view creates a different experience for the reader, because, in each point of view, different types and amounts of information are available to the reader about the story's events and characters.

First person narration

First person narration renders the action as seen through a participating figure, who refers to her-or himself in the first person. First person narrations can adopt the point of view either of the protagonist or of a minor figure.

The majority of novels in first person narration use, of course, the protagonist (main character) as a narrator. These first person narrations by protagonists aim at a supposedly authentic representation of the subjective experiences and feelings of the narrator. In *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) by J. D. Sallinger (1919–2010), the first person narrator Holden Caulfield is the clear protagonist of the story. His voice dominates the story, and the story he tells is his own.

In Ralph Ellison's (1913–1994) novel *The Invisible Man* (1952), the protagonist tells his own story from a first person point of view. This passage reflects both the power of this narrative perspective and its limitations. By telling his own story, the protagonist is able to have a close connection with the reader and directly express his true thoughts, feelings, and ideas. However, due to this restricted form of narration, the reader must rely solely on the viewpoint of the protagonist. This puts a level of responsibility on the reader to determine whether the protagonist is reliable in his narration and to fill in any gaps in the story that are ambiguous or unaddressed in a full manner by the narrator.

I was never more hated when I tried to be honest. Or when, even as just now I've tried to articulate exactly what I felt to be the truth. No one was satisfied.

One of the most famous examples of first person point of view is the very first line of Herman Melville's (1819–1891) *Moby-Dick* (1851):

Call me Ishmael.

Melville uses first person here because he wants to establish a confessional tone for the protagonist. He wants the reader to feel like Ishmael has just sat down next to him on a bar stool, and is about to tell him his life's story. Only the first person can have this colloquial and intimate effect. Saying, *"His name was Ishmael,"* for instance, would insert more distance between the reader and the character Ishmael, because the third person narrator would sit *between* the reader and Ishmael. First person, in this way, can have the effect of connecting the reader directly with the story.

By depicting events as seen through the eyes of another person (a minor character), the character of the protagonist remains less transparent. A number of novels which centre around a main figure, mystify the protagonist by using this particular technique.

The novel *The Great Gatsby* is narrated by Nick Carraway, but the protagonist of the novel is Jay Gatsby. Nick Carraway tells the story, and the reader is limited to understanding the story through what Nick himself sees, knows, and thinks, but nevertheless the story that Nick tells is not his own but rather Gatsby's.

Second person narration

When writing from a second person POV, the writer has the narrator speaking to the reader. Second person point of view uses the pronoun 'you' to immerse the reader in the experience of *being* the protagonist. It's important to remember that second person point of view is different from simply addressing the reader. Rather, the second person point of view' places the reader 'on the playing field' by putting them in the position of the protagonist – the one to whom the action occurs. Few stories are appropriate for such a perspective, but occasionally it is quite successful, as in Jay McInerney's *Bright Lights, Big City*, a novel in which the reader is taken on a wild night through Manhattan.

Eventually you ascend the stairs to the street. You think of Plato's pilgrims climbing out of the cave, from the shadow world of appearances toward things as they really are, and you wonder if it is possible to change in this life. Being with a philosopher makes you think.

Of the three points of view, second person is the most rarely used, primarily because it doesn't allow the narrator as much freedom as first person and third person, so it's hard to sustain this style of narration for very long.

Some common uses for second-person POV are directions, business writing, technical writing, song lyrics, speeches, and advertising.

Ex.

In just a few simple steps you can make a big change in your life!

To make a great chili, you must season it early and often.

Management is very happy with the progress you are all making.

You gotta fight for your right to party! - Fight for Your Right, *Beastie Boys*

Third person narration

Third person narration presents the actions through an external narrator who refers to protagonist in the third person. In this type of narration, the narrator is usually a non-participating observer of the represented events. In other words, the narrator exists, observes and reports the main events of the story.

It is the most common point of view in writing, as it gives the writer a considerable amount of freedom to focus on different people, events, and places without being limited within the consciousness of a single character. Below is an example of dialogue written in third person by Joseph Heller (1923–1999) in his novel *Catch-22* (1961).

"What are you doing?" Yossarian asked guardedly when he entered the tent, although he saw at once.

'There's a leak here,' Orr said. "I'm trying to fix it."

"Please stop it," said Yossarian. "You're making me nervous."

The exchange above is narrated by a narrator who is outside the interaction between Yossarian and Orr; such distance is the hallmark of third person point of view.

Third person narration can be omniscient (omniscient point of view), meaning the narrator can see and know everything within the story, or limited (limited point of view), meaning the narrator is restricted in what they see and know of the story.

Third person omniscient POV

The third person omniscient point of view is the most open and flexible POV available to writers. As the name implies, an omniscient narrator is all-seeing and all-knowing. While the narration outside of any one character, the narrator may occasionally access the consciousness of a few or many different characters.

George Eliot's (1819–1880) *Middlemarch, A Study of Provincial Life* (1871).

It was hardly a year since they had come to live at Tipton Grange with their uncle, a man nearly sixty, of acquiescent temper, miscellaneous opinions, and uncertain vote. He had traveled in his younger years, and was held in this part of the county to have contracted a too rambling habit of mind. Mr. Brooke's conclusions were as difficult to predict as the weather: it was only safe to say that he would act with benevolent intentions, and that he would spend as little money as possible in carrying them out.

In this short passage, the reader is introduced to a new character, Mr. Brooke, and immediately the narrator reveals an important detail about his past (he traveled too much) as well as the general opinion of him in the village where he lives (that his travels have made him too rambling and digressive). Here, our sense of Mr. Brooke's character is deepened with this information that only an omniscient narrator could provide.

A third person omniscient narration is allowed to move between the perspectives of multiple major characters. This can make it an ideal literary device for exploring the relationships between characters. With **third person multiple** POV, the narrator knows the thoughts, motivations and actions of more than one character in the story. A good example of this might be Jane Austen's (1775–1817) *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). Though most of the story follows Elizabeth Bennet's perspective, Austen's omniscient narrator also enters Darcy's consciousness on occasion, without which the story would lose much of its tension

Third person **omniscient** narration in *Northanger Abbey* (1818) by Jane Austen (1775–1817).

No one who had ever seen Catherine Moreland in her infancy, would have supposed her born to be a heroine. Her situation in life, the character of her father and mother her own person and disposition, were equally against her. Her father was a clergyman, without being neglected, or poor, and a very respectable man, though his name was Richard – and he had never been handsome. He had a considerable independence, besides two good livings – and he was not in the least addicted to locking up his daughters. Her mother was a woman of useful plain sense, with a good temper, and, what is more remarkable, with a good constitution.

Third person limited POV

Writers choose third person limited POV to create a deeper bond between a specific character and the reader. The reader can infer what other people feel and think only from what the viewpoint character observes. Third person limited POV works well for showing how others' actions

impact your viewpoint character. Because you can only share what your viewpoint character knows or guesses, other characters' actions keep all of their mystery.

Third person limited is popular in mystery novels because when we don't know what secondary characters are thinking and feeling explicitly, they remain an intriguing mystery.

Third person limited POV is used to show assumptions and the surprises they lead to.

In third person limited, although your narrator occupies a limited viewpoint in the scene, showing the reader only what a single mind sees, hears, thinks and assumes, you can still alternate between viewpoint characters.

Third person limited narration in *The Story of an Hour* (1894) by Kate Chopin (1850–1904).

She said it over and over under her breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

Chopin's short story is told through a third person limited point of view. The narrative perspective is that of Louise Mallard, the protagonist of the story, though she does not relay the narrative herself in the first person. Instead, the narrator relays to the reader Louise's actions, thoughts, and feelings as she learns of her husband's supposed death. This is a clever literary choice due to the fact that Louise spends much of her time in the story in a room alone, away from the other characters.

Chopin establishes a relationship between the third person narrator and the reader in terms of access to Louise's mind. This is reflected in the passage as the narrator conveys to the reader that Louise feels "free" at the news of her husband's death. This "freedom" is something that Louise would not have expressed to any character in the story, yet the narrative perspective allows the reader to know and understand her thoughts.

A great example of third person limited point of view in literature is the first line from Kafka's (1883–1924) *Metamorphosis* (1915).

As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect.

For the remainder of the book, Kafka follows the protagonist, Gregor Samsa, in a limited third person point of view as he struggles to come to terms with his sudden transformation into an insect. For as long as Gregor remains alive, the third person narrator remains limited by Gregor's own consciousness – the story is told in the third person, but the narrator never knows or sees any more than Gregor himself does.

However, in the few pages of the story that continue after Gregor dies, the narrator shifts into a third person omniscient point of view, almost as if Gregor's death has freed the narrator in a way not so dissimilar to how his death tragically relieves a burden on his family.

Alternating Point of View

Many stories are told from alternating points of view – switching between different characters, or even between different modes of storytelling.

Stories can switch between third person points of view. For instance, the chapters of George R.R. Martin's (1948–) *The Song of Ice and Fire* (1996–2011) books are all named after characters, and each chapter is told from the limited third person point of view of the named character.

Stories can switch between first person points of view. William Faulkner's (1897–1962) novel *As I Lay Dying* (1930) is structurally similar to the *Song of Ice and Fire* books in the sense that each chapter is named after a character. However, each chapter is told in the first person by the named character. The Darl chapters are told in the first person by Darl, the Cash chapter are narrated by Cash, the Vardamon chapters by Vardamon, and so on.

Stories can switch between modes of storytelling. Though less common than other sorts of alternating points of view, some stories can shift not only between different character's points of view, but between actual modes of storytelling. For example, Faulkner's (1897–1962) *The Sound and the Fury* (1831) has four parts. The first three parts are all narrated in the first person, with the first part narrated by Benjy, the second part by Quentin, and the third part by Jason. But the fourth part is told in the third person omniscient and follows a bunch of different characters at different times.

The Functions of Point of View in Literature

Point of view is the means by which an author relays either one or a multiplicity of perspectives about the events of their story. It is the lens crafted by the writer that allows the reader to see a story or argument unfold. Depending on how much information the writer wants to give the reader, this lens will be constructed differently – or in other words, a different mode of point of view will be chosen.

If the writer wants the reader to have full access to a particular character's internal life, then they might choose either first person or a closely limited third person point of view.

If the writer wants the reader to know select bits and pieces about every character, they might choose an omniscient third person point of view.

If the writer wants the reader to know about the rich internal lives of multiple characters, they might choose an alternating first person point of view.

Lastly, if the writer wants the reader to feel like they themselves are in the centre of the action, they might choose a second person point of view.

Task

Give examples of different types of narrative perspective in literature.

VIII. SETTING

The term ‘setting’ denotes the location, historical period, and social surroundings in which the action of a text develops.

Setting is *where* and *when* a story or scene takes place. The *where* can be a real place like the city of New York, or it can be an imagined location, like Middle Earth in J.R.R. Tolkien’s (1892–1973) *The Lord of the Rings* (1937–1949). Similarly, the *when* can be a real time period (the past or the present) or imagined (the future). Other aspects that determine a setting include landscape, architecture, the time of day, social context, and weather. For example, the setting of Jane Austen’s (1775–1817) *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) is the upper-middle class countryside of 19th century England, while the setting of Edward Albee’s (1928–2016) one-act play *The Zoo Story* (1958) is a park bench in New York’s Central Park.

Authors hardly ever choose a setting for its own sake, but rather in order to support action, characters, and narrative perspective from an additional level. In certain forms of prose fiction, such as the gothic novel, setting is one of the crucial elements of the genre as such.

Setting is sometimes also called ‘the scene’ or ‘sense of place.’

Far from being just a ‘backdrop’ for the story, the setting of a piece of literature often shapes the story’s main events and motivates the characters to act as they do.

Many works of literature have multiple settings – whether that means moving between the interior and exterior of the same house, different countries, or different centuries. It is important to note how plot developments and character developments correspond to changes in the setting.

Setting is an essential component of literature, and it’s one of the first things a writer considers when he or she invents a story. It not only influences a story’s characters and events, but also enhances the reader’s ability to imagine those characters and events. In other words, setting the scene lets the reader know what type of literary world he or she is entering, so that he or she can experience it more fully. But well-developed settings don’t necessarily need to be richly detailed. Consider Samuel Beckett’s (1906–1989) play *Waiting for Godot* (1953). To set the scene, Beckett writes only two lines:

A country road. A tree.

Evening.

The playwright’s spare description of setting isn’t underdeveloped – rather, it’s quite carefully considered. In this case, Beckett chooses to create

a sense of ‘nowhere’ or ‘no-place’ because he feels this will best complement the absurd, existentialist mood of his play. This sense of being ‘nowhere in particular’ is just as effective and important to *Waiting for Godot* as a highly specific description can be to a work of historical fiction.

Settings can be either imagined or real, fictional or non-fictional. A fictional story can be set in a real location.

James Joyce (1882–1941) is one example of a fiction-writer who worked in an innovative way with non-fictional settings. Joyce grew up in Dublin, and his most famous works are set in the city. Scholars and fans who attempt to retrace the steps of his characters have found that, with very few exceptions, his descriptions of the city’s geography are remarkably accurate to the last detail.

In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), Joyce chronicles the coming-of-age of Stephen Daedalus, an aspiring young writer growing up in Dublin. Stephen is Joyce’s literary alter ego – like Joyce, Stephen lives in Dublin and knows the city like the back of his hand. Joyce draws upon his extensive knowledge of Dublin to create an urban setting in his novel that is intensely detailed and often reflective of his characters’ emotions. In the example below, Stephen walks from his house in a poor neighborhood to Trinity College. On his way, he thinks about his favourite writers Newman, Cabalcanti, and Ibsen to distract himself from the poverty around him:

The lane behind the terrace was waterlogged and as he went down it slowly, choosing his steps amid heaps of wet rubbish, he heard a mad nun screeching in the nuns’ madhouse beyond the wall.

Jesus! O Jesus! Jesus!

He shook the sound out of his ears by an angry toss of his head and hurried on, stumbling through the mouldering offal, his heart already bitten by an ache of loathing and bitterness...but, as he walked down the avenue and felt the grey morning light falling about him through the dripping trees and smelt the strange wild smell of the wet leaves and bark, his soul was loosed of her miseries...His morning walk across the city had begun, and he foreknew that as he passed the slob lands of Fairview he would think of the cloistral silver veined prose of Newman, that as he walked along the North Strand Road, glancing idly at the windows of the provision shops, he would recall the dark humor of Guido Cavalcanti and smile, that as he went by Baird’s stonecutting works in Talbot Place the spirit of Ibsen would blow through him like a keen wind, a spirit of wayward boyish beauty...

Here, Joyce describes the ‘waterlogged lane’ and ‘mouldering offal’ around Stephen’s home to show that the Daedalus family lives in poverty,

which Stephen longs to escape. By providing detailed descriptions of the grim setting and *pairing* them with glimpses into Stephen's lofty imagination, Joyce is able to show the reader how Stephen creates a parallel, inner world for himself in order to escape his difficult circumstances.

Setting functions

Writers take great care in deciding on and describing the settings of their works, in order to:

Reflect or emphasise certain character traits belonging to people who inhabit certain settings. For example, in the *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) quotation, Austen's descriptions of Mr. Darcy's graciousness and of his estate's natural beauty mirror one another. Darcy is described as being *'...Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble men, and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked on with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud; to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared to his friend....'*

Give physical form to a theme that runs throughout the narrative. For example, the fire escape in Tennessee Williams (1911–1983) *The Glass Menagerie* (1944) quotation becomes a physical symbol of Tom Wingfield's desire to escape his surroundings: *I descended the steps of this fire escape for a last time and followed, from then on, in my father's footsteps, attempting to find in motion what was lost in space. I traveled around a great deal. The cities swept about me like dead leaves, leaves that were brightly colored but torn away from the branches.*

Indicate the social and economic statuses of their characters, as well as how those characters do or do not conform to those statuses. In the *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) quotation above, Joyce's description of Stephen's neighborhood emphasises his family's poverty. However, Joyce's description of Stephens's thoughts as he passes through the neighborhood shows that Stephen uses his love for literature to insulate himself from poverty.

Create a source of pressure or stress that causes characters to act in a certain way. For instance, in Ben Lerner's (1979) *10.04* (2014), the storm brings out the narrator's suppressed attraction to his friend and gives him an excuse to act on it. Similarly, the tenement house in *The Glass Menagerie* creates an environment of desperation that drives the main characters' behaviour.

Task

Give examples of the importance of setting in literature.

IX. PLOT TECHNIQUES

A plot technique in a narrative is used to move the plot forward.

Chronological narrative is by far the most common narrative device, to the extent that it is the default of ninety-nine percent of novels, films, and memoirs.

In a chronological narrative, the events follow chronological and sequential order. Flashbacks, memories, and dreams may also be used to give information and show events to the reader at the right moment, but the narrative soon returns to chronological order of events.

Reverse chronological narrative, the opposite of chronological narrative, is when the scenes follow the reverse of chronological order. That is, the story starts at the end and goes *backwards*, telling the story in reverse order.

Unlike chronological narrative, the reverse is not a common device.

Ex. Christopher Nolan (1970) film *Memento* (2001).

Breaking the Fourth Wall device originated in theatre, the fourth wall referring to an imaginary wall between the audience and the actors. By "breaking" the fourth wall, the actors speak directly to the audience. The narrator or specific characters (rarely *all* characters) can address the reader or viewer directly, sometimes referring to them as "dear reader."

While first found in theatre, this device is also used in other forms, including novels, memoir, and film.

Ex.

Cressida Cowell's (1966–) *How to Train Your Dragon* (2003);

Woody Allen's (1935–) *Annie Hall* (1977);

William Goldman's (1931–2018) *The Princess Bride* (1973);

Shakespeare's (1564–1616) *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594);

Cervantes' (1547–1616) *Don Quixote* (1605);

Chaucer's (1343–1400) *Canterbury Tales* (the end of the 14 century).

A **cliffhanger** or **cliffhanger ending** is a plot device in fiction which features a main character in a precarious or difficult dilemma or confronted with a shocking revelation at the end of an episode.

The narrative ends unresolved, to draw the audience back to a future episode for the resolution.

A flashback (or analepsis) is an interjected scene that takes the narrative back in time from the current point in the story. Flashbacks are often used to recount events that happened before the story's primary sequence of events to fill in crucial backstory.

A flashforward (or prolepsis) refers to a scene that temporarily jumps the narrative forward in time. A flashforward often represents events expected, projected, or imagined to occur in the future. They may also reveal significant parts of the story that have not yet occurred, but soon will in greater detail.

A **frame story** (also known as a **frame tale**, **frame narrative**, **sandwich narrative** or **intercalation**) is a literary technique that serves as a companion piece to a story within a story, where an introductory or main narrative sets the stage either for a more emphasised second narrative or for a set of shorter stories. The frame story leads readers from a first story into one or more other stories within it.

In medias res (Latin "into the middle of things") opens in the midst of the plot Often, exposition is bypassed and filled in gradually, through dialogue, flashbacks or description of past events. For example, *Hamlet* begins after the death of Hamlet's father. Characters make reference to King Hamlet's death without the plot's first establishment of said fact. Since the play is about Hamlet and the revenge more so than the motivation, Shakespeare uses *in medias res* to bypass superfluous exposition.

A **plot twist** is a literary technique that introduces a radical change in the direction or expected outcome of the plot in a work of fiction. When it happens near the end of a story, it is known as a **twist** or **surprise ending**. It may change the audience's perception of the preceding events, or introduce a new conflict that places it in a different context. A plot twist may be foreshadowed, to prepare the audience to accept it. There are a variety of methods used to execute a plot twist, such as withholding information from the audience or misleading it with ambiguous or false information.

Task

Choose one of the narrative devices and write your story “A Mysterious Adventure of …”.

X. STYLE

The style in writing can be defined as the way a writer writes. It is the technique that an individual author uses in his writing. It varies from author to author, and depends upon one's syntax, word choice, and tone. It can also be described as a 'voice' that readers listen to when they read the work of a writer.

Types of Style

There are four basic literary styles used in writing. These styles distinguish the works of different authors, one from another. Here are four styles of writing:

Expository Style

Expository writing style is a subject-oriented style. The focus of the writer in this type of writing style is to tell the readers about a specific subject or topic, and in the end the author leaves out his own opinion about that topic.

The Pleasures of Imagination (1712) by Joseph Addison (1672–1719) is an example of expository writing style, in which the author describes advantages of imagination with facts and logical sequence, and tells his delight of imagination. Then, he discusses its benefits and finally gives opinions in its favour.

The pleasures of the imagination, taken in their full extent, are not so gross as those of sense. ... A man of polite imagination is let into a great many pleasures ... A man should endeavour, therefore, to make the sphere of his innocent pleasures as wide as possible, that he may retire into them with safety ... Delightful scenes, whether in nature, painting, or poetry, have a kindly influence on the body, as well as the mind, and not only serve to clear and brighten the imagination, but are able to disperse grief and melancholy ...

Descriptive Style

In descriptive writing style, the author focuses on describing an event, a character or a place in detail. Sometimes, descriptive writing style is poetic in nature in, where the author specifies an event, an object, or a thing rather than merely giving information about an event that has happened. Usually the description incorporates sensory details.

Emily Dickinson's (1830–1886) poem *Summer Shower* gives an example of descriptive style. Ms. Dickinson describes a summer rainstorm in detail, with beautiful images, so that the readers can visualise this storm in their own minds as if it is actually happening.

A drop fell on the apple tree,
Another on the roof;
A half a dozen kissed the eaves,
And made the gables laugh.

A few went out to help the brook,
That went to help the sea.
Myself conjectured, Were they pearls,
What necklaces could be!

The dust replaced in hoisted roads,
The birds jocoser sung;
The sunshine threw his hat away,
The orchards spangles hung.

The breezes brought dejected lutes,
And bathed them in the glee;
The East put out a single flag,
And signed the fete away.

Dorian Gray (1890) by Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) is a good example of descriptive writing style since the author gives visualisations, feelings, description of a location and details about bees that could be seen and heard.

The studio was filled with the rich odor of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden… The sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through… or circling with monotonous insistence…

Persuasive Style

Persuasive style of writing is a category of writing in which the writer tries to give reasons and justification to make the readers believe his point of view. The persuasive style aims to persuade and convince the readers. It is mainly used in academic papers. Any 'argumentative' essay should be in the persuasive style of writing.

Narrative Style

Narrative writing style is a type of writing wherein the writer narrates a story. It includes short stories, novels, novellas, biographies, and poetry.

In the poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1834) Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) uses narrative style, as he tells a story about the ancient mariner. He uses dialogues, disputes, actions, and events in a sequence, thus providing a perfect example of the narrative style of writing.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
«By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin ;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din.»

He holds him with his skinny hand,
«There was a ship,» quoth he.
«Hold off ! unhand me, grey-beard loon !»
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

Parts of style

There are many important pieces that together make up a writer's style: diction (the author's word choice), tone (the mood of the story, the feeling or attitude a work creates), sentence structure (the way words are arranged in a sentence), grammar and the use of punctuation, narrative perspective (who tells a story), narrative devices (any of several specific methods the author of a narrative uses to convey what they want).

Functions of style

A unique literary style can have great impact on the piece in which it is used, and on the readers. When authors write and put their ideas into words, they have many choices to make, which include: words, sounds, logic, sentence structures. An author's style might change with each piece they write. However, different authors use different literary styles that depend on their distinct expression, and their utilisation of these choices. For example, the famous tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* by W. Shakespeare is perhaps literature's most famous love story but difficult to read in the original. Changing the style of the way a story is told can make it appealing and interesting for people who may not like the original. In the film *Romeo + Juliet*, the director tells the story in a hip, modern setting. While the film tells the exact same story as the original *Romeo and Juliet*, even using the exact same language, its rough, flashy style is fresh and relevant for today's audiences. Here, Verona, Italy is replaced with Verona Beach, California; instead of swords and robes, the actors bear guns and tattoos.

Task

Choose a writer and two pieces of his / her work and comment on the writer's style.

XI. POETRY

Poetry is one of the oldest genres in literary history. Its earliest examples go back to ancient Greek literature.

The term ‘poetry’ goes back to the Greek word ‘poieo’ (to make, to produce), indicating that the poet is the person who ‘makes’ verse.

Most traditional definitions of poetry juxtapose poetry with prose. The majority of these definitions are limited to characteristics such as verse and rhyme (the classical elements that distinguish poetry from prose). But these criteria cannot be applied to modern experimental poetry (non-traditional forms such as free verse or prose poems). These approaches examine as lyric phenomena the choice of words as well as the use of syntactic structures and rhetorical figures. BUT these elements also appear in drama or fiction.

Precursors of modern poetry are Old English riddles and charms.

Two major categories of poetry

Narrative poetry tells stories with clearly developed, structured plots	**Lyric poetry** is mainly concerned with one event, of the impression or idea
– the **epic** long poem; – the **romance**; – the **ballad**	– the **elegy** – laments the death of a dear person – the **ode** praises people, natural scenes, and abstract ideas; – the **sonnet’s** main theme – ‘worldly love’

Levels of poetic language

The concrete character of poetic language can be achieved on *four* levels which reflect the most important elements in poetry:

Idea level (theme)
Imagery level (diction, rhetorical figures)
Sound level (rhyme and meter, onomatopoeia)
Visual (graphical) level (stanzas, concrete poetry)

1. Idea level

The idea level is the poem’s theme – the central idea that the poet is conveying in the poem. A theme can be overemphasised by writers.

The poet has to allow the imagery and words to unfold the theme. If they directly state the theme, the poetic elements are lost.

Like fiction, a poem's theme can be a universal theme such as childhood, nature, aging, death, etc. For example, Emily Dickinson's poem *The Chariot* (1890) also known as *Because I Could Not Stop for Death*:

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played,
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

2. Imagery level

In poetry the issue of the narrator (in the context of *point of view* and *characters* in fiction) is usually referred to with the terms 'voice' or 'speaker.' The speaker is central in the analysis of poems (the expression of subjective, personal events). The question whether the speaker and the author are one and the same person is also relevant for fiction. In the novel and in the short story, however, a distinctive use of point of view techniques easily creates a distance between the narrator and the author.

In longer poetic forms, the narrative situation can be as complex as that of the novel or the short story.

In Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (1772–1834) ballad '*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'* (1798) a *frame narrative* in a figural narrative situation relates an incident in which a wedding guest is addressed by a mariner.

It is an ancyent Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three" (Line 1–2).

The Mariner then recounts his adventures in a detailed *first person narration*:

Listen, Stranger! Storm and Wind,
A Wind and Tempest strong!
For days and weeks it play'd us freaks" (Lines 45–47).

By placing the story of the 'Mariner' within a frame narrative, Coleridge presents the plot of the ballad on two levels (frame narrative and actual plot) as well as in two narrative situations (figural and first person narration).

The use of poetic language, more than the use of complex narrative situations, distinguishes poetry from other literary genres.

Poetry tries to convey themes in a concrete language of **images**. The term 'image' or 'imagery' can be traced back to the Latin 'imago' (picture) and refers to a predominantly visual component of a text which can also include other sensory impressions.

Images and concrete objects often serve the additional function of **symbols** if they refer to a meaning beyond the material object (Ex. a cross in Christian thinking)

The poet can either use a commonly known, **conventional symbol** or create his own **private symbol** which develops its symbolic function in its particular context.

The albatross in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is a private symbol. The murdered bird becomes a symbol of natural order which has been destroyed by man. The killing of the innocent bird, and the Mariner's line that "*Instead of the cross, the Albatross / About my neck was hung,"* suggests that the Albatross can be read as a symbol of Christ. It is only in the context of Coleridge's ballad that the albatross takes on this symbolic meaning.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the movement of **imagism** continued this tradition of pictorial expression in poetry. This literary school is closely associated with the American poet Ezra Pound (1885–1972), focused on the 'condensation' of poetry into powerful, essential images.

The German word for poetry 'Dichtung' was considered to mean the same as the Latin 'condensare' (to condense), thus fitting very well

the imagists' preoccupation with the reduction of poetry to essential 'pictures' or 'images.' Poetry should achieve the clarity of expression without any adornment. Ezra Pound's poem *In a station of the metro* (1916) is a practical example of imagism.

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

This poem was preceded by several longer versions until Pound reduced it. Pound drew on the Japanese poetic form of *haiku* as examples of this 'condensing' form of poetry.

So, imagery in traditional poetry revolves around a transformation of objects into language.

Imagery is often regarded as the most common manifestation of the 'concrete' character of poetry. Even if an abstract theme is at the centre of the poem, the poet still uses concrete imagery in order to make it more accessible.

Further stylistic features include **rhetorical figures,** or **figures of speech**. These classified stylistic forms are characterised by their non-literal meanings. Simile and metaphor are those most commonly used in poetry.

A **simile** is a comparison between two different things which are connected by "like," "than," "as," or "compare," as in Robert Burns' (1759–1796) poem *A Red, Red Rose* (1796).

Oh, my love is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
My love is like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.…

A Metaphor is the equation of one thing with another without actual comparison. If Burns said *My love is a red, red rose*, instead of *Oh, my love is like a red, red rose*, the simile would be transformed into a metaphor.

3. Sound level

The sound level is the musicality of the language when the poem is read aloud. It may include rhyme, rhythm, repetition, alliteration, assonance, consonance, caesura, or other techniques. Read aloud this stanza (excerpt) from Edgar Allan Poe's poem *The Bells* (1849).

Hear the sledges with the bells –
Silver bells!

What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

Notice the use of rhyme (bells, foretells, wells and tinkle, oversprinkle, twinkle), the repetition of words in some lines (tinkle, time, and bells have repeating words three times each), the alliteration (words that sound the same at the beginning), the assonance (words that have the same vowel sounds), the consonance p (words that have the same consonant sounds).

The sound (acoustic) element can enhance the meaning of a poem.

The following passage from Alexander Pope's (1688–1744) *Essay on Criticism* (1711) is a self-reflexive example of this technique:

Sound and sense
True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offense,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense:
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
and the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges slash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labors, and the words move slow;
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.
Hear how Timotheus' varied lays surprise,
And bid alternate passions fall and rise!

Pope points out that in a good poem content and sound harmonise and form a unity (*The sound must seem an echo to the sense*). The poet suggests

natural sounds through the deliberate choice of words: sounds “z,” “ph,” “w,” “oo,” “th” are reminiscent of a gentle breeze, “sh,” “gh,” “v,” “rr” – the harsh noise of the sea breaking on the shore

Rhythm and Meter in English Poetry

Meter and rhyme (less often, rime) are further devices in the acoustic dimension of poetry.

The smallest elements of meter are **syllables** *(*stressed or unstressed).

In the analysis of the meter, a line is first divided into syllables.

English poetry employs five basic **rhythms** of varying stressed (/) and unstressed (x) syllables. The meters are **iambs**, **trochees**, **spondees**, **anapests** and **dactyls**. In the examples the stressed syllables are marked in boldface type.

Each unit of rhythm is called a "**foot**" of poetry.

The meters with two-syllable feet are

IAMB (x /) : That **time** of **year** thou **mayst** in **me** be**hold**.

TROCHEE (/ x): **Tell** me **not** in **mourn**ful **num**bers.

SPONDEE (/ /): **Break**, **break**, **break**/ On thy **cold gray stones**, O **Sea**!

Meters with three-syllable feet are.

ANAPEST (x x /): And the **sound** of a **voice** that is **still**.

DACTYL (/ x x): **This** is the **for**est pri**me**val, the **mur**muring **pines** and the **hem**lock (a trochee replaces the final dactyl).

Each line of a poem contains a certain number of feet of iambs, trochees, spondees, dactyls or anapests. A line of one foot is a **monometer**, 2 feet is a **dimeter**, and so on – **trimeter** (3), **tetrameter** (4), **pentameter** (5), **hexameter** (6), **heptameter** (7), and **octameter** (8).

The number of syllables in a line varies therefore according to the meter.

Examples of various meters

A good example of **trochaic monometer**, for example, is the poem entitled *Fleas*

***A**dam*
***Had**’em.*

Iambic pentameter (5 iambs, 10 syllables)
*That **time** | of **year** | thou **mayst** | in **me** | be**hold.***

Trochaic tetrameter (4 trochees, 8 syllables)
***Tell** me | **not** in | **mourn**ful | **num**bers.*

Anapestic trimeter (3 anapests, 9 syllables)
*And the **sound** | of a **voice** | that is **still**.*

Dactylic hexameter (6 dactyls, 17 syllables; a trochee replaces the last dactyl)
***This** is the | **for**est pri | **me**val, the | **mur**muring | **pine** and the | **hem**locks.*

Rhyme adds to the dimension of sound and rhythm in a poem. We distinguish **internal rhyme, end rhyme** and **eye rhyme**.

Internal rhymes – *alliteration* and *assonance*.

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds, especially at the beginning of words, as in *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*

Assonance is the repetition of similar vowel sounds in a sentence or a line of poetry or prose, as in *I rose and told him of my woe*.

End rhyme is based on identical syllables at the end of certain lines. To describe rhyme schemes, letters of the alphabet are used to represent identical syllables at the ends of a line.

Sonnet 18 by W. Shakespeare (1564–1616) is a typical English or Shakespearean sonnet, having 14 lines of iambic pentameter: three quatrains followed by a couplet. It also has the characteristic rhyme scheme: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?	A
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:	B
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,	A
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;	B
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,	C
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;	D
And every fair from fair sometime declines,	C
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;	D
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,	E
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;	F
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,	E
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:	F
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,	C
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.	C

Eye rhymes stand between the visual and the acoustic dimension of a poem, playing with the spelling and the pronunciation of words, as in these lines from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (1772–1834) *Kubla Khan* (1816)

*Then reached the caverns measureless to m**an**,*
*And sank in tumult to a lifeless oce**an**:*
*And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from f**ar***
*Ancestral voices prophesying w**ar**!*

The syllables '**an**' are examples of eye rhyme, as they are identical, but pronounced differently in the two lines.

4. Visual level

Concrete poetry concentrates on the poem's shape or visual appearance.

This movement, which was revived in the twentieth century, has a long tradition, reaching from classical antiquity to the Latin Middle Ages and on to seventeenth-century England. Among the best-known picture-poems of English literature are George Herbert's (1593–1633) *Easter Wings* (1633) and *The Altar* (1633).

George Herbert was a Welsh-born poet, orator, and priest of the Church of England. His poetry is associated with the writings of the metaphysical poets, and he is recognised as one of the foremost British devotional lyricists, notable for the purity and effectiveness of his choice of words.

***Easter Wings* by George Herbert**

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poore:
With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did beginne
And still with sicknesses and shame.
Thou didst so punish sinne,

That I became
Most thinne.
With thee
Let me combine,
And feel thy victorie:
For, if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

Easter Wings is a religious meditation that focuses on the atonement of Jesus Christ. As well as the poem's being emblematic of the redeemed soul overall, the expansion and contraction of the lines imitates the meaning of the words. Thus in the first stanza the line *O let me rise* occurs as the wing unfurls again and is answered by the theme of climbing in the second. There is also similar imitative wording at the centre of both stanzas, *Till he became/ Most poore* in the first being answered by *That I became/ Most thinne* in the second.

Herbert's pattern poem conveys a visual as well as a verbal image of wings. Herbert assembles words in the shape of wings. This poem got shape and form. It lifts right off the page like a butterfly about to launch off a flower. By giving visual structure to his content, Herbert lifts poetry into a multimedia experience that engages both the brain and the eyes.

The poems by E.E. Cummings (1894–1962) are modern examples of an abstract visual-verbal arrangement. E.E. Cummings was an American poet, painter, essayist, author, and playwright. He wrote approximately 2,900 poems, two autobiographical novels, four plays, and several essays. He is often regarded as one of the most important American poets of the 20th century. Cummings is associated with modernist free-form poetry. Much of his work has idiosyncratic syntax and uses lower case spellings for poetic expression.

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The text of the poem can be reconstructed as follows: “a leaf falls loneliness” or “l(a leaf falls)oneliness”.

E.E. Cummings uses a single leaf falling from a tree as a motif for loneliness, arranging the letters vertically instead of horizontally in order to trace the leaf’s movement visually.

As these examples show, attempts to turn a poem into a quasimaterial object can be achieved not only on a thematic level through the use of concrete nouns or scenes, but also on the visual level through a particular layout of letters, words or stanzas.

In traditional poetry the imagery, thematic, sound and visual dimensions are used to illustrate the most idea of unity. However, **experimental poetry** abandons these rigid structures in order to explore new open forms, such as poems in prose or free verse.

Types of Poems

Haiku – A type of Japanese poem consisting of three unrhymed lines, with mostly five, seven, and five syllables in each line.

Free Verse – Consists of non–rhyming lines, without any metrical pattern, but which follow a natural rhythm.

Epic – A form of lengthy poem, often written in blank verse, in which poet shows a protagonist in action of historical significance, or a great mythic.

Ballad – A type of narrative poem in which a story often talks about folk or legendary tales. It may take the form of a moral lesson or a song.

Sonnet – It is a form of lyrical poem containing fourteen lines, with iambic pentameter and tone or mood changes after the eighth line.

Elegy – A melancholic poem in which the poet laments the death of a subject, though he gives consolation towards the end.

Epitaph – A small poem used as an inscription on a tombstone.

Hymn – This type of a poem praises spirituality or God’s splendour.

Limerick – This is a type of humorous poem with five anapestic lines in which the first, second, and fifth lines have three feet, and the third and fourth lines have two feet, with a strict rhyme scheme of aabba.

Task

1. Give examples of similes and metaphors in William Blake’s poems “Of Innocence and Experience”.
2. Analyse the poem “2 little whos” by E. E. Cummings.
3. Find examples of experimental poetry.

XII. DRAMA

Origin of drama

Drama evolved from rituals of ancient man. These rituals contained dramatic elements: music, dance, masks, costumes, performance / audience division, specific performance area.

The Egyptians were the first people to establish a definite drama. It took shape as early as 4000 BC. The oldest dramas are the 55 Pyramid texts (3000 BC and before), which were written on tomb walls. They show the ascent of the soul becoming a star, which means the resurrection of a body.

In **Greece** tragedies and comedies were performed during festivals in honour of Dionysos, the god of wine.

Drama continued after the fall of **Rome**, but little is known about it since the Church opposed it. Many pagan rites continued despite Church opposition. Some believe that the church introduced its own dramatic activities to combat the appeal of the pagan rites.

Dramatic interludes were first used in church services in the 9th or 10th century probably to make parts of the mass clearer to the congregation who did not understand the Latin service. Easter was the first event to be dramatised.

Plays began to be given outdoors around 1200, staged in spring, summer. From this point on, the church had little direct involvement with drama.

Early drama

Between the 14th and 15th centuries, we mark two major occurrences in the world of literature: the emergence of the printed book and the emergence of theatre as we now know it.

English drama, like drama in other countries and cultures, began on the streets of English towns, with townspeople for actors. It was open to all, not just to the few people who were literate.

Theatre in England in its modern form began with the so-called **mystery** or **miracle** plays. In the medieval period, the most important story was the Bible.

England was undergoing urbanisation during the late 15th and early 16th centuries, and in the growing towns, the guilds and craft associations were very powerful. In the Middle Ages, the word *mystery* was connected with the French word *metier*, which means ‘trade’ or ‘profession’ but had overtones of secrecy. The early industries that evolved in the medieval period, such as goldsmithing, glass-blowing, and so on, required mastery of

tools and skills, but these abilities were kept as jealously guarded secrets and passed on only through a system of apprenticeship and guilds. The guilds, or *metiers*, became rich and powerful and took it upon themselves to spread the word of Christianity, the mysteries of the greatest story ever told. Annually, usually at Easter, dramatic cycles would be staged, in which each of the guilds would sponsor a wagon or a float. Typically, each guild would choose an episode from the Bible that fit with its profession. The carpenters, for example, would tell the story of the crucifixion; the bargemen might tell the story of Noah. The church was generally tolerant of this activity. Indeed, some clerics, who were usually the most literate members of society, may have helped write the scripts.

The mystery plays were extremely popular and probably influenced future dramatists, such as Shakespeare and Marlowe. Hamlet, for example, instructs the players who are visiting Elsinore not to *"out-Herod Herod."* This line is an allusion to the figure of Herod in the mystery plays, who was traditionally played to the gallery, with crowd-pleasing ranting and roaring.

The **morality play** is a genre of Medieval and early Tudor theatrical entertainment. They attempted to educate via entertainment. It is thought that the monks developed the morality play in the 13th century by adding actors and theatrical elements to their sermons. By doing so, the (mainly illiterate) masses could more easily learn the basics of Christianity through dramatic spoken word. This made complex topics such as original sin and atonement more easily understood. By personifying vices, virtues, the Devil and the Good Angel, stories of temptation were made accessible to those who were unable to read them themselves. The plays were most popular in Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries. Having grown out of the religiously based mystery plays of the Middle Ages, they represented a shift towards a more secular base for European theatre.

Interlude is sometimes considered to be the transition between medieval morality plays and Tudor dramas. Interludes were performed at court or at 'great houses' by professional minstrels or amateurs at intervals between some other entertainment, such as a banquet, or preceding or following a play, or between acts. Although most interludes were sketches of a nonreligious nature, some plays were called interludes that are today classed as morality plays.

Elizabethan England

By the late 16th century two kinds of theatres appeared **public** (open-air) and **private** (indoor halls). Anyone could attend both; but the private theatres charged a higher admission. Due to local government (primarily

Puritans, who viewed theatre as the work of the devil) distrust and objections, theatres were built outside London. The first playhouse was the 'Theatre' (1576). This was followed by others, notably, 'The Globe' (1599; burned and rebuilt in 1614).

The Globe theatre hold about 1500 people but more than 2000 people could crowd in to watch a good play. Those who stood on the ground before the stage paid only a penny for entrance. If they wanted to sit in the gallery they paid another gatherer another penny. To sit in the Lord's room, they had to pay another gatherer another fee. The action of the plays was continuous with no act / scene breaks and little scenery. Playwrights used vivid words instead of scenery to picture the scene on the stage.

The actors could interact with the audience and vice verse. There were no women actors at that time. Even female parts were played by men.

To advertise plays flags were hoisted above the theatre: white meaning a comedy, red – a historic play, black – a tragedy.

Commonwealth

Under the rule of Oliver Cromwell (1649–1660) the Puritans, who wanted to refine religious practice and became increasingly powerful in the 17th century, never approved of what they called 'mummery' or 'imitations.' There was always the suspicion that drama was somehow pre-Christian, immoral and dangerous. English theatres were shut down on moral and religious grounds, drama lost its status as a major genre. As a result of Puritan pressure, English theatre was controlled and censored from the 18th century onward for 200 years. As late as 1960, every play produced on the English stage had to be approved for performance by the Lord Chamberlain, who rigorously excluded references to royalty and blasphemy.

Because of the prominent position of Puritanism in American history, drama was almost non-existent in the early phases of American literature and was only re-established as a serious genre at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The Restoration Period

Two types of plays dominated Restoration stages The Comedy of Manners and the Heroic Drama.

The Comedy of Manners was witty, sometimes cynical and occasionally indecent. The plays, dealing mostly with love actions in the setting of the court or of fashionable London life, deliberately ridiculed moral principles and institutions, especially marriage.

Ex. Ben Jonson's (1572–1637) *Every Man in His Humour* (1598).

The **Heroic Drama** tried to recreate and adapt epic themes on stage. It had a complicated plot and dealt with the conflict between love and honour. Little action took place on the stage, the characters spoke in elegant, noble sounding heroic couplets.

Ex. John Dryden's (1631–1700) *All for Love* (1677).

The Romantic Period

The so called **closet drama** appeared **(**a special form of drama which was not meant to be performed on stage but rather to be read in private).

Ex. Percy Bysshe Shelley's (1792–1822) *Prometheus Unbound* (1820).

Realism and naturalism

Drama regained its importance as a major genre, albeit one which is intricately interwoven with developments in fiction.

Ex. George Bernard Shaw's (1856–1950) *Widower's House* (1893).

Oscar Wilde's (1854–1900) *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895).

The XX century

All major developments in the theatre of the XX century can be seen as reactions to the movement, which favoured a realistic representation of life.

The Expressionist Theatre and the Theatre of the Absurd do away with the illusion that reality can be truthfully portrayed on stage, emphasizing more abstract and stylised modes of presentation.

Ex. Tom Stoppard's (1937) *Travesties* (1974) and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966)

Samuel Beckett's (1906–1989) *Waiting for Godot* (1952).

Task

1. Describe Elizabethan playhouses (their common characteristics).
2. Read about the above mentioned playwrights. Comment on their works and style.
3. Comment on S. Beckett's Waiting for Godot. Identify the central idea, main parts.

XIII. THE THREE MAIN PARTS IN THEATRE: TRAGEDY, HISTORY, COMEDY

Tragedy

Tragedy is a type of drama that presents a serious subject matter about human suffering and corresponding terrible events in a dignified manner.

The term is Greek in origin, dating back to the 5th century BC, when it was assigned by the Greeks to a specific form of plays performed at festivals. The local governments supported such plays, and the mood surrounding the presentation of these plays was that of a religious ceremony, as the entire community, along with the grand priest, attended the performances.

The subject matter of Greek tragedies was derived chiefly from Homer's *Iliad*, and *Odyssey* (circa the 8th century BC), which included misfortunes of heroes of history and religious mythology. The three prominent Greek dramatists were Aeschylus (525–456 BC), Sophocles (496–406 BC), and Euripides (480–406 BC).

In the sixth book of *The Poetics* Aristotle (384–322 BC) characterises tragedy as 'an imitation of an action that is admirable, complete (composed of an introduction, a middle part and an ending), and possesses magnitude; in language made pleasurable, each of its species separated in different parts; perfume by actors, not through narration; effecting through pity and fear the purification of such emotions'.

By watching the tragic events on stage, the audience is meant to experience a catharsis or spiritual cleansing. The tragic hero is successful, respected, and happy. But he has some tragic flaw that will ultimately cause his downfall. Usually, the plot of the story follows a gradual descent from greatness to destruction. It's especially important that the hero ends up isolated from all of his friends and companions. In the end, we feel deep sadness and pity (pathos) for the hero. But we also feel a sense of understanding – the story warns us to guard against the ordinary flaws that brought down the hero.

Shaped on the models of Seneca, the first English tragedy *Gorboduc* appeared in 1561, written by Thomas Norton (1532–1584) and Thomas Sackville (1536–1608). The play chose the story of a British king and his sufferings at the hand of his two disobedient sons as a subject matter. The importance of the play lies in the fact that it transformed the style of English drama, from morality and mystery plays, to the writing of tragedies in the Elizabethan era.

Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) was the first English dramatist worthy of the tradition of Greek tragedy. The characters of his tragedies are the great men of history, who became victims of their own fate.

Tamburlaine
Doctor Faustus
The Jew of Malta
Edward III

William Shakespeare (1564–1616), the most popular of all playwrights, knew the Greek tragedy style well and used several Greek themes but modified them to his own purpose. He intentionally violated the unity of action and mixed tragic actions with comical.

Hamlet
Othello
King Lear
Macbeth
Antony and Cleopatra
Troilus and Cressida
Titus Andronicus

John Webster (c. 1580–1632) was a Jacobean dramatist who modeled his tragedies on the Shakespearean model.

The White Devil
The Duchess of Malfi

Henrick Ibsen (1828–1906) is known as ‘the father of realism’. He was the creator of some of the well-known tragedies also called ‘problem plays’.

A Doll’s House
Hedda Gabler
The Wild Duck
Emperor and Galilean

Arthur Miller (1915–2005) is a famous American playwright and essayist.

All My Sons
Death of a Salesman
The Crucible
A View from the Bridge

Task

Read about the above mentioned playwrights. Comment on their works and style.

Comedy

Comedy is a literary genre and a type of dramatic work that is amusing and satirical in its tone, mostly having a cheerful ending. The motif of this dramatic work is triumph over unpleasant circumstance by creating comic effects, resulting in a happy or successful conclusion.

Comedy has multiple sub-genres depending upon the source of the humour, context in which an author delivers dialogues, and delivery methods, which include farce, satire, and burlesque.

The five types of comedy in literature

Romantic Comedy

Romantic comedy involves a theme of love leading to a happy conclusion. We find romantic comedy in Shakespearean plays and some Elizabethan contemporaries. These plays are concerned with idealised love affairs. It is a fact that true love never runs smoothly; however, love overcomes difficulties and ends in a happy union.

A Midsummer Night's Dream (c. 1595) by William Shakespeare (1564–1616) is a good example of a romantic comedy, presenting young lovers falling comically in and out of love for a brief period. Their real world problems get resolved magically, enemies reconcile, and true lovers unite in the end.

Comedy of Humours

Ben Johnson is the first dramatist who conceived and popularised this dramatic genre during the late sixteenth century. The term 'humour' derives from the Latin word *humor*, which means "liquid." It comes from a theory that the human body has four liquids, or humors, which include phelgm, blood, yellow bile, and black bile. It explains that, when human beings have a balance of these humors in their bodies, they remain healthy.

Ex. *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) by Ben Jonson (1572–1637).

Comedy of Manners

This form of dramatic genre deals with intrigues and relations of ladies and gentlemen living in a sophisticated society. This form relies upon high comedy, derived from sparkle and wit of dialogues, violations of social traditions, and good manners, by nonsense characters like jealous husbands, wives, and foppish dandies.

The comedy of manners has been employed by Roman satirists since as early as the first century BC. Horace's (65 BC) *Satire 1.9* is a prominent

example, in which the persona is unable to express his wish for his companion to leave, but instead subtly implies so through wit.

William Shakespeare's (1564–1616) *Much Ado about Nothing* (c. 1598) might be considered the first comedy of manners In England, but the genre really flourished during the Restoration period.

Restoration comedy made fun of affected wit and acquired follies of the time. The masterpieces of the genre were the plays of William Wycherley (1640–1715) *The Country Wife* (1675) and William Congreve (1670–1729) *The Way of the World* (1700).

In the late 18th century Oliver Goldsmith (1730–1774) *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) and Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816) *The Rivals* (1775); *The School for Scandal* (1777) revived the form.

The tradition of elaborate, artificial plotting, and epigrammatic dialogue was carried on by the Irish playwright Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) in *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895).

In the 20th century, the comedy of manners reappeared in the plays of the British dramatists Noël Coward (1899–1973) *Hay Fever* (1925) and the plays of Somerset Maugham (1874–1965). Other early 20th century examples of comedies of manners include George Bernard Shaw's (1856–1950) play *Pygmalion* (1913) later adapted into the musical *My Fair Lady* (1964), E. M. Forster's (1879–1970) *A Room with a View* (1908).

Sentimental Comedy

Sentimental drama contains both comedy and sentimental tragedy. It appears in literary circles due to reaction of the middle class against obscenity and indecency of Restoration Comedy of Manners. This form, which incorporates scenes with extreme emotions evoking excessive pity, gained popularity among the middle class audiences in the eighteenth century.

Ex. Sir Richard Steele's (1672–1729) play *The Conscious Lovers* (1722).

Tragicomedy

This dramatic genre contains both tragic and comedic elements. It blends both elements to lighten the overall mood of the play. Often, tragicomedy is a serious play that ends happily.

Ex. William Shakespeare's (1564–1616) *All's Well that Ends Well* (c. 1601–1608).

Functions of Comedy

Comedy tends to bring humor and induce laughter in plays, films, and theaters. The primary function of comedy is to amuse and entertain the audience, while it also portrays social institutions and persons as corrupt, and ridicules them through satirizing, parodying, and poking fun at their vices. By doing this, authors expose foibles and follies of individuals and society by using comic elements.

Task

Comment on Ben Jonson's comedy play *Volpone*.

History plays

History is one of the three main genres in Western theatre alongside tragedy and comedy, although it originated, in its modern form, thousands of years later than the other primary genres. For this reason, it is often treated as a subset of tragedy.

A play in this genre is known as a history play and is based on a historical narrative, often set in the medieval or early modern past. History emerged as a distinct genre from tragedy in Renaissance England. The best known examples of the genre are the history plays written by William Shakespeare, whose plays still serve to define the genre.

A history play (sometimes known as a chronicle play) is a dramatic work where the events of the plot are either partially or entirely drawn from history.

Renaissance history plays, such as Shakespeare's (1564–1616) *Richard II* (1597) or *Henry IV* (c. 1597), adapt English history for stage performances.

These plays portray a historical event or figure, make general statements about human weaknesses and virtues.

Task

Comment on Mike Bartlett 'future history' play *King Charles III*.

XIV. THREE LEVELS OF A PLAY

The written word is the basis of drama. Then the written word is transformed into a performance (a spoken word) before an audience. Thus we speak about three interdependent levels of a play: text, transformation and performance.

Text	Transformation	Performance
dialogue		actors
monologue	directing	facial expressions
plot	stage	gestures
setting	props	voice
stage directions	lighting	language

TEXT

Verbal communication in drama

The spoken word – the foundation for **dialogue** (verbal communication between two or more characters) and **monologue** (soliloquy).

The **aside** is a dramatic device in which a character speaks to the audience. The audience is to realise that the character's speech is unheard by the other characters on stage. It may be addressed to the audience expressly or represent an unspoken thought. An aside is usually a brief comment, it occurs within the context of the play. An aside is, by convention, a true statement of a character's thought; a character may be mistaken in an aside, but may not be dishonest. In literature, a narrator's aside provides commentary on a character or other important information for the reader

Nonverbal communication in drama

Eye contact, facial expression, tone of voice, posture, gesture, touch, intensity, timing, music, silences, action, movement or immobility, characterisation, grouping, costuming and make-up, setting, props, lighting and use of colour, use of contrast or juxtaposition, tension and pace are all elements of nonverbal communication we use to interpret the emotional content of a communication exchange.

In the Experimental Theatre and the Theatre of the Absurd of the XX century nonverbal aspects of drama are brought to the foreground. Non-

verbal features, which traditionally functioned as connecting devices between text and performance, abandon their supporting role and achieve an artistic status equal to that of the text.

Plot structure

The basic elements of plot are exposition, complication, climax, and denouement. In connection with plot, the **three unities of time, place and action** are also of primary significance. These unities prescribe that the time span of the action should be roughly the same as the duration of the play (or a day at the most) and that the place where the action unfolds should always be constant. Furthermore, the action should be consistent and have a linear plot.

The three unities, which were supposed to characterise the structure of a 'good' play, have been ascribed to Aristotle (384–322 BC). They are better identified for the most part as adaptations of his Poetics in the 16th century by the Italian humanist Lodovico Castelvetro in his interpretation of Aristotle, and they are usually referred to as 'Aristotelian rules' for dramatic structure.

These rigid rules for the presentation of time, setting and action were designed to produce the greatest possible dramatic effect.

Shakespeare's plays, however, only very rarely conformed to these rules. Probably this is why the three unities were never respected in English-speaking countries as much as they were elsewhere in Europe.

The division of a play into acts and scenes

The structure of the drama (5 acts and scenes) was adopted from classical antiquity and was popular in Elizabethan Theatre.

In the nineteenth century the number of acts was reduced to four and in the twentieth century – to three.

With the help of act and scene changes, the time, setting and action of a play can be altered, thereby allowing the traditional unity of time, place and action to be maintained within a scene or an act.

The Theatre of the Absurd consciously does away with traditional plot structures and leads the spectator into complicated situations which often seem absurd or illogical. The complication often does not lead to a climax, resolution or a logical ending. In this manner, the Theatre of the Absurd, like many postmodern novels or films, attempts artistically to portray the general feeling of uncertainty of the postwar era.

Ex. Samuel Beckett's (1906–1989) *Waiting for Godot* (1952) has no classical plot, no climax, no logical messages. The main characters don't

undergo any development by the end of the play. The time and place are unknown. The play consists of 2 acts. Each act begins early in the morning, just as the tramps are awakening, and both acts close with the moon having risen. None of the characters seems to have any real purpose in life. All the actions that happen in the novel don't really lead to anything; thus we may suggest that life has no purpose at all.

Tasks

1. Watch the video about S. Beckett Samuel Beckett. URL: https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpgOcWZHEcY
2. How does Beckett's play violate the expectations of audiences familiar only with traditional theatre? Comment on the time, place and action.

TRANSFORMATION

Drama, as an art form, is a constant process of transformation / translation: from original concept to script, to producer / director's interpretation, to contribution by designers and actors / actresses, to visual and / or aural images to audience response. Within each medium, there are yet further processes of transformation / translation involved in the choice and arrangement of the verbal and nonverbal elements of theatre. Thus transformation is the connecting phase between text and performance. It influences almost all elements of the performance.

It comprises all logistic and conceptual steps that precede the performance and are usually summarised under the heading directing. The director is therefore responsible for the entire artistic coordination that guides the text into performance. The profession of the director began to evolve in the late 19th century and is thus a relatively new phenomenon in the development of drama. Before that either the author himself would lead a production, or a more experienced actor would be given the task of directing.

The task of a contemporary director includes choosing the script or text, working out a general concept, casting, adapting the stage, selecting props, costumes and make-up and guiding the actors through rehearsals. The director is therefore responsible for the entire artistic coordination that guides the text into performance.

Among the early directors, the Russian Konstantin Stanislavsky (1863–1938) is probably the most famous. His ideas and methods were adopted by the prestigious Lee Strasberg (1901–1982) school of acting in New York and greatly influenced the American theatre tradition.

The Austrian director Max Reinhardt (1873–1943) also caused an uproar in the American theatre world with some spectacular productions before World War I.

A good (dramatic) example of the importance of the director is demonstrated by Samuel Beckett's (1906–1989) *Catastrophe* (1982), a short play with a comparatively large number of stage directions, whose self-reflexive subject is the production of a play.

The highly stylised drama centres around a director, actor and helper who are engaged in the production of a performance. In this respect, *Catastrophe* is a highly postmodern work; the several levels of the play, including the transformation from text to performance, are already an integral part of Beckett's text, thereby laying bare the principles of drama by itself.

An autocratic Director and his female Assistant put the 'final touches to the last scene' of some kind of dramatic presentation, which consists entirely of a man (The Protagonist) standing still on the stage. The bulk of the drama consists of the irritable and impatient Director moulding the man on the stage to suit his personal vision.

Tasks

1. Watch the play "Catastrophe" by Samuel Beckett. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FkZI5ZtMig

2. Comment on its title and theme.

The spatial dimension

In drama space is expressed through the use of dialogue, monologue, body language, and the design of the stage, scenery, props and lighting for this purpose.

Directors adapt older features and elements of space for modern productions.

Ex. The arrangement of the theatre in a circle dates back to ancient theatre and is now being re-used in modern productions to create a special interaction between the spectators and the actors.

'Modern' theatre was characterised by realism which required stage, scenery and props to be redesigned.

In the 18th century the **proscenium stage** was established. The stage took on the basic shape of a box with three walls and a ceiling, separating the audience from the actors. Watching the performance on stage is like looking through an invisible fourth wall. It has remained the dominant form of stage design to this day.

Ex. George Bernard Shaw's (1856–1950) *drawing room plays*. The plays are staged in an almost authentic reconstruction of a drawing room and closely follows the three unities of place, time and action.

In reaction to the realistic movement, there are a number of modern developments which try to find new modes of presentation.

Ex. **Expressionist Theatre** in America was influenced by German Expressionist drama. In drama, Expressionism is characterised by heavy, exaggerated make-up, costumes and settings.

Characteristics associated with expressionism

The atmosphere is often vividly dreamlike and nightmarish.

The plot and structure of the play tend to be disjointed and broken into episodes, incidents and tableaux, each making a point of its own. Instead of the dramatic conflict of the well made play, the emphasis was on a sequence of dramatic statements made by the dreamer, usually the author himself.

Settings are virtually abstract and unlocalised, and the scene frequently appears angular and distorted, suggesting a bad dream. The properties are few and symbolic.

The action of the play is still broken into episodes, and these may represent stages in the hero's life or a sequence of visions as seen through his subconscious mind, as in a dream play.

The characters for the most part remain nameless and impersonal, often moving grotesquely. They always represent some social class, their characteristics being emphasised by costume, masks or make-up. They are merely identified by nameless designations, like The Man, The Father, The Son. Such characteristics are stereotypes and caricatures rather than individual personalities.

Crowds are also impersonalised, and move with mass rhythmic movements, often mechanically.

The dialogue is increasingly clipped, fragmented and unreal. It became known as 'telegram style'.

The style of acting is hard to reconstruct from the text, but expressionist films have established its general characteristics. Known as the 'ecstatic' style, it was intense and violent, and expressed tormented emotions. Actors might erupt in sudden passion and attack each other physically. Speech is rapid, breathless and staccato, with gesture and movement urgent and energetic – eyes rolling, teeth bared, fingers and hands clutching like talons and claws.

Ex. Elmer Rice's (1892–1967) *The Adding Machine* (1923).

Expressionist Theatre and the Theatre of the Absurd both return to simple, abstract scenery and props. Expressionist make-up (which recreates the effect of the mask) and the empty stage of the Theatre of the Absurd resemble older forms that were centred around the spoken word and the actor. In Samuel Beckett's (1906–89) *Waiting for Godot* (1952), the scenery consists merely of a park bench and a stylised tree; the stage design thus mirrors the emptiness of the dialogues.

'Free theatre' groups

Experiments with stage forms (Ex. abandoning the traditional proscenium stage) allowed for the discovery of new modes of interaction between actors and audience. The gap between stage and auditorium became less obvious and the audience could be included in the performance.

In the 20th century there appeared 'Fringe Theatres' in England and 'Off-Broadway' and 'Off-Off-Broadway Theatres' in America.

The term 'Free theatre' groups came into use in the late 1950s, and the show *Beyond the Fringe* premiered in Edinburgh in 1960, before transferring to Broadway.

As these examples show, plays designed for an unconventional stage generally differ from traditional plays in form and content.

Task

1. What did a classical Greek amphitheater look like?
2. Watch one of the parts of Adding Machine by Elmer Rice to get an idea of what Expressionist theatre is. URL: https://www.youtube.com
3. Comment on Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot:* verbal and nonverbal communication, the scenery

PERFORMANCE

The performance centres around the actor, who conveys the combined intents of the author and the director. More than other genres, drama relies on acting characters (dramatis personae). The terms 'flat' and 'round' for characters are also valid for drama.

Some types of drama, like comedy, have recurring character types, called **stock characters**. A stock character is a stereotypical fictional person or type of person in a work of art such as a novel, play, or a film whom audiences recognise from frequent recurrences in a particular literary tradition. There is a wide range of stock characters, covering men and women of various ages, social classes and demeanors. They are archetypal

characters distinguished by their simplification and flatness. As a result, they tend to be easy targets for parody and to be criticised as clichés. They often help to identify a genre or subgenre. For example, a story with a knight-errant and a witch is probably a fairy tale or fantasy.

There are several purposes to using stock characters. Stock characters are a time- and effort-saving shortcut for story creators, as authors can populate their tale with existing well-known character types. Another benefit is that stock characters help to move the story along more efficiently, by allowing the audience to already understand the character and their motivations.

Facial expressions can tell us a lot about characters, situations and subtext. It's important that you learn what they reveal about emotions and moods, and how to create and describe them. A facial expression conveys an emotion that tells us about the character and the way they react to the situation. It may also tell us something about that situation, for example if the character is very shocked when something happens. A facial expression can also convey the character's true feelings. A character may be flattering another character verbally but a mocking eye-roll will show the audience the character's true emotion. An actor's facial expression may reveal a subtext or deeper meaning that contradicts what they say or do in the scene.

Gesture is an important part of the drama medium. It's usually included with movement and mime. The most significant is usually hand gestures.

The **voice** is one of the actor's most powerful tools, as part and parcel of their characterisation and how the text is interpreted for the audience. When you describe vocal work, consider elements such as pitch, pace, projection and intonation. Characters should always use a suitable language register.

The use of **language** in performance can be verbal, vocal or non-verbal. Language is the spoken text. It is the written script realised in performance. While normally spoken by the actor, language can also be chanted or sung. It can also be deliberately nonsensical (gibberish) for dramatic effect. The choice of language in performance is crucial, as it forms a major means of communicating the story of the drama to the audience. Exactly how the actor in performance uses language is usually determined by the expressive skill of voice. However, language can also be non-verbal, commonly referred to as body language.

XV. FILM

Drama and film are performing arts because they use actors as their major means of expression.

In both genres, a performance (a visual representation by people) stands at the centre of attention. The visualisation of the action is not left merely to the imagination of a reader, but rather comes to life in the performance, independent of the audience.

However, typical elements of the novel – varied narrative techniques, experimental structuring of the plot, foreshadowing and flashback, the change of setting and time structure – are commonly used in film.

The stage offers only limited space for the realisation of many of these techniques. There is the difference between drama and film: a theatre performance is individually staged in the unrepeatable manner while film is recorded and reserved.

The history of film in the 19th century is closely connected with that of photography. A quick succession of individual shots produces for the human eye the impression of a moving picture. To create this illusion, twenty-four pictures per second have to be connected. Although performance is at the heart of both drama and film, it takes on a completely different character in film, due to the idiosyncrasies of a mechanically reproducible medium.

Postmodern fiction also derives some of its structural features from film. Film's idiosyncratic modes of presentation – such as camera angle, editing, montage, slow and fast motion – often parallel features of literary texts or can be explained within a textual framework.

Although film has its own specific characteristics and terminology, it is possible to analyse film by drawing on methods of literary criticism, as film criticism is closely related to the traditional approaches of textual studies.

XVI. LITERARY HISTORY

Names of literary epochs or periods have mostly been ‘invented’ in retrospect. The underlying assumptions are based on certain common features, not merely of texts but of socio-cultural developments and phases in the history of literary production.

In English literature, historians for convenience often use the name of the sovereign in power at a certain time. Thus, they speak about the Elizabethan Age or the Victorian Period.

Sometimes, approximately the same period of time can have various names, depending on the perspective adapted by the historian. The Elizabethan Age, for example, is also referred to as the Early Modern Period or the Renaissance. While the term ‘Early Modern’ focuses on the historical process of modernisation, ‘Renaissance’ is a term borrowed from art history and captures the idea of the ‘re-birth’ of antiquity in various art forms of the sixteenth century.

As their names suggest, periods derive their labels from divergent sources. Frequently, they are analogous to philosophical movements such as the Age of Sensibility. Sometimes periods are named after artistic avantgarde movements, which also express the predominant mood of the time, e.g., Aestheticism and Decadence. The Romantic Period derives its name from a genre, the Medieval romance or chivalric romance, which was popular at the time and set an example with its fantastic and exaggerated subject matters. Postmodernism is given its name because it succeeds and goes beyond Modernism in terms of literary conventions, philosophical assumptions, etc.

A division into literary periods is useful for our understanding and discussion of connections between literary and socio-historical developments. They help us compare texts within one period and also across periods.

Even though exact numbers, names and dates vary in books of literary history, one can come up with a general list of periods which underlies common practice.

Periods of English Literature

Old English (or Anglo-Saxon) Period	450–1066
Middle English Period	1066–1500
The Renaissance (or Early Modern Period)	1500–1660
Elizabethan A	1558–1603
Jacobean Age	1603–1625

Caroline Age	1625–1649
Commonwealth Period (or Puritan Interregnum)	1649–1660
The Neoclassical Period	1660–1785
The Restorati	1660–1700
The Augustan Age (or Age of P)	1700–1745
The Age of Sensibility (or Age of Johnson)	1745–1785
The Romantic Period	1785–1830
The Victorian Period	1832–1901
The Pre-Raphaelites	1848–1860
Aestheticism and Decadence	1880–1901
The Edwardian Period	1901–1914
The Georgian Period	1910–1936
The Modern Period	1914–
Postmodernism	1945–

Periods of American Literature

Romantic Period and Realism and Naturalism	Second half of 19th century
Modernism	First to Second World War
Postmodernism	1960s and 1970s

XVII. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO LITERATURE

As with the classification systems of genres and text types, literary history, the approaches to literary texts are characterised by a number of divergent methodologies.

The word ‘theory’ comes from Greek and means to ‘speculate’. Literary interpretations always reflect a particular institutional, cultural, and historical background.

The various scholarly approaches to literary texts partly overlap; they differ in their theoretical foundations.

Historically speaking, the systematic analysis of texts developed in the **magic** and **religious** realm, and in **legal** discourse. The interpretation of oracles and dreams forms the starting point of textual analysis and survives as the basic structures in the study of the holy texts of all major religions. Juridical texts, like religious ones, are only indirectly accessible since by nature they demand interpretation with regard to a particular situation.

Literary criticism derived its central term ‘interpretation’ from these two areas of textual study. The interpretation of religious and legal texts was based on the assumption that the meaning of a text could only be retrieved through the act of interpretation. Biblical scholarship coined the term ‘hermeneutics’ for this procedure, and it has been integrated into literary interpretation over the past several centuries.

Since literary criticism as a discipline holds a variety of opinions, concerning the purpose and applicability of textual interpretation, a number of theoretical trends and methodological approaches characterise the field.

Among the many diverse methods of interpretation it is possible to isolate four basic approaches according to which most schools or trends can be classified. One can distinguish between *text-oriented, author-oriented, reader-oriented, and context-oriented approaches.*

The following theoretical schools can be subsumed under these four basic perspectives.

Text-oriented approaches	Author-oriented approaches
Philology Rhetoric Formalism and Structuralism New Criticism Semiotics and Deconstruction	Biographical Criticism Psychoanalytic Criticism Phenomenology

Reader-oriented approaches	Context-oriented approaches
Reception Theory Reception History Reader-Response Criticism	Literary History Marxist Literary Theory Feminist Literary Theory New Historicism and Cultural Studies

The text-oriented approach is primarily concerned with questions of the 'materiality' of texts, including editions of manuscripts, analyses of language and style and the formal structure of literary works.

Author-oriented schools put the main emphasis on the author, trying to establish connections between the work of art and the biography of its creator.

Reader-oriented approaches focus on the reception of texts by their audience and the texts' general impact on the reading public.

Contextual approaches try to place literary texts against the background of historical, social or political developments while at the same time attempting to classify texts according to genres as well as historical periods.

Despite overlaps between many of the schools, each school's general outlook is dominated by one approach.

Text-oriented approaches

Text-oriented approaches place the main emphasis on the internal textual aspects of a literary work, primarily investigating its formal or structural features. Traditional *Philology,* for example, highlights 'material' elements of language, *Rhetoric* and *Stylistics* analyse larger structures of meaning or means of expression, and the Formalist-Structuralist Schools, including *Russian Formalism,* the *Prague School of Structuralism, New Criticism, Semiotics* and *Deconstruction* attempt to trace general patterns in texts or illuminate the nature of 'literariness.'

Philological approach

In literary criticism, the term 'Philology' generally denotes approaches which centre around editorial problems and the reconstruction of texts. Philology, which experienced its heyday in the Renaissance with the rediscovery of ancient authors, the invention of the printing press, and the desire for correct editions of texts, remained one of the dominant schools into the nineteenth century. Informed by the rise of modern science, these philological approaches tried to incorporate advanced empirical methodologies into the study of literature.

This positivist spirit is directly reflected in the major concordances (alphabetical lists of words) of nineteenth century literary scholarship, which document the exact frequency and usage of words by a particular author. These empirical studies not only list all words employed by Shakespeare in his dramas and poems, for example, but also provide the exact line reference for each entry.

Task

Have a look at a concordance of William Wordsworth's poetry published by Professor Lane Cooper in 1911. It helped scholars easily locate words in which they were interested. URL: https://archive.org

Rhetoric and Stylistics

Rhetoric originally mediated rules concerning eloquence and perfect speech and was hence primarily prescriptive. It offered guidelines for every phase of textual composition including *inventio* (selection of themes), *dispositio* (organisation of material), *elocutio* (verbalisation with the help of rhetorical figures), *memoria* (the technique of remembering the speech) and *actio* (delivery of the speech).

In the nineteenth century, Rhetoric eventually lost its influence and partially developed into **Stylistics.** Stylistics focused on grammatical structures (lexis, syntax), acoustic elements (melody, rhyme, meter, rhythm) and overarching forms (rhetorical figures) in its analyses of texts.

Formalism and Structuralism

Things in the world only exist because shapeless matter receives structure through superimposed form. Form thus functions as a container in which content is presented. This basic philosophical principle, which distinguishes between a level of structure and a level of content, was introduced into literary criticism as early as classical antiquity. Aristotle (384–322 BC), for instance, in his *Poetics* (4th century BC) adopts the notion of the determining function of form over matter for literary phenomena by using formal schemes to explain generic features of drama.

The main goal of Formalism and Structuralism lies in the explication of the formal and structural patterns of literary texts. While a number of schools of literary criticism focus primarily on the level of content (the "what?" of a text), formalists and structuralists emphasise the level of form (the "how?" of a text).

The consecutive schools of Russian Formalism, the Prague School of Structuralism, New Criticism and Poststructuralism explain levels of content in relation to formal and structural dimensions of texts.

New Criticism

The main concern of New Criticism – whose name deliberately negates preceding critical methods – is to free literary criticism of extrinsic factors and thereby shift the centre of attention to the literary text itself.

New Criticism therefore does not try to match certain aspects of a literary work with biographical data or psychological conditions of the author; instead, its aim is the analysis of a text based solely on the text's intrinsic dimensions.

In its analyses, New Criticism therefore focuses on phenomena such as multiple meaning, paradox, irony, word-play, puns, or rhetorical figures, which form interdependent links with the overall context. A central term often used synonymously with New Criticism is close reading. It denotes the meticulous analysis of these elementary features, which mirror larger structures of a text.

Semiotics and Deconstruction

Semiotics and Deconstruction are the most recent trends in text-oriented literary theory of the 1970s and 1980s, which regards a text as a system of signs. The basis for these complex theoretical constructs is the linguistic model of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913). The Swiss linguist starts from the assumption that language functions through representation, in which a mental image is verbally manifested or represented. Before a human being can, for example, use the word 'tree' he or she has to envision a mental concept of a tree. Building on this notion, Saussure distinguishes between two fundamental levels of language by referring to the pre-linguistic concept (in this case the mental image of a tree) as the signified and its verbal manifestation (the sequence of the letters or sounds T-R-E-E) as the signifier.

Author-oriented approaches

Author-oriented approaches established a direct link between the literary text and the biography of the author. Dates, facts and events in an author's life are juxtaposed with literary elements of his or her works in order to find aspects which connect the biography of the author with the text.

Research into the milieu and education of the author is conducted and then related to certain phenomena in the text. In addition, an author's library can be examined in order to gain insight into the author's background reading or letters and diaries may be consulted for personal reflections.

Autobiographies are suitable for this kind of approach, which compares the fictional portrayal with the facts and figures from the author's life. In many cases, autobiographical material enters the fictional text in codes.

Canonical authors in particular – those who are highly regarded in literary criticism, like Shakespeare, Milton or Joyce – often tend to be mythologised. This leads to attempts to reconstruct the author's spirit through his work. **Phenomenological approaches** assume that the author is present in his text in encoded form and that his spirit can be revived by an intensive reading of his complete works.

Many biographical approaches also tend to employ psychological explanations. This has led to **Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism,** a movement which sometimes deals with the author, but primarily attempts to illuminate general psychological aspects in a text that do not necessarily relate to the author exclusively. For instance, characters in a text can be analyzed psychologically, as if they were real people. An example which has often been cited in this context is the mental state of Hamlet in Shakespeare's (1564–1616) drama; psychoanalytic critics ask whether Hamlet is mad and, if so, from which psychological illness he is suffering.

Reader-oriented approaches

As a reaction to the dominant position of text-oriented New Criticism, a reader-oriented approach developed in the 1960s called **Reception Theory, Reader-Response Theory** or **Aesthetics of Reception**. All three terms are used almost synonymously to summarise those approaches which focus on the reader's point of view.

Reader-centred approaches examine the readership of a text and investigate why, where and when it is read. They also examine certain reading practices of social, ethnic or national groups. Many of these investigations also deal with and try to explain the physiological aspect of the actual reading process. They aim at revealing certain mechanisms which are employed in the transformation of the visual signs on paper into a coherent, meaningful text in the mind of the reader.

These approaches assume that a text creates certain expectations in the reader in every phase of reading. These expectations are then either fulfilled or left unfulfilled.

Wolfgang Iser's (1926–2007) idea of blanks or gaps (unwritten parts of texts) refers to this phenomenon of expectation stimulated by the text and 'filled' by the reader. These blanks or gaps can be **typographical, syntactical, semantical or semiotic**. Iser believes that the unwritten stimulates the reader's imagination.

While reading even the first words of a sentence, the reader continually imagines how it might continue. In every phase, the reader attempts to complement what is missing through his own imagination and skill at combination.

The filling of the blanks, on the one hand, depends on subjective-individual traits and, on the other, on more general features, such as education, age, gender, nationality, and the historical period of the reader.

Context-oriented approaches

Context-oriented approaches refer to a heterogeneous group of schools and methodologies which do not regard literary texts as self-contained, independent works of art but try to place them within a larger context.

Depending on the movement, this context can be history, social and political background, literary genre, nationality or gender. The most influential movement to this day is **Literary History,** which divides literary phenomena into periods, describes the text with respect to its historical background, dates texts and examines their mutual influence.

Marxist Literary Theory is an important school which places literary works in the context of larger socio-political mechanisms. Texts are analysed as expressions of economic, sociological and political factors. Conditions of production in certain literary periods and their influence on the literary texts of the time are examined. A Marxist literary interpretation, for example, might see the development of the novel in the eighteenth century as a consequence both of new economic conditions for writers and readers and of new modes in the material production of printed books.

New Historicism, which arose in the USA in the 1980s, builds on Poststructuralism and Deconstruction, with their focus on text and discourse, but adds a historical dimension to the discussion of literary texts.

For example, one of the leading figures in New Historicism, Stephen Greenblatt (1943–), has analysed a colonial text of early American literature by Thomas Harriot (*c.* 1560–1621), comparing the relationship between Europeans and Indians in this text with the structures of dependence in Shakespeare's (1564–1616) play *The Tempest* (c. 1611). As a result, the

mechanisms of power are exposed as deeply rooted cultural structures which dominate the historical as well as the literary discourses of the time.

New Historicism takes an approach similar to that of the poststructuralist schools, including non-literary phenomena in the definition of 'text' and thus treating historical phenomena as they would be literary ones. The movement is comparatively new and, like deconstruction, opposed to rigid methods associated with a particular school.

Cultural Studies (1990s). Although firmly rooted in literary studies this approach deliberately analyses the different aspects of human self-expression, including the visual arts, film, TV, commercials, fashion, architecture, music, popular culture, etc. as manifestations of a cultural whole.

Feminist Literary Theory and **Gender Theory (**1960s) start with the assumption that 'gender difference' is an aspect which has been neglected in traditional literary criticism and, therefore, argues that traditional domains of literary criticism have to be re-examined from a gender-oriented perspective.

At the beginning of this movement, thematic issues such as the portrayal of women in literary texts by male authors stood in the foreground. These early attempts of feminist literary criticism concentrated on stereotypes or distorted portrayals of women in a literary tradition dominated by men.

Assuming that gender difference determines the act of writing, i.e., the style, narrative structure, contents and plot of a text, feminist literary criticism entered domains which are usually treated by text-oriented formalist-structuralist schools.

Later works of this movement, which endeavour to account for the position of men in literary criticism and in feminism, produced one of the most distinctive paradigm changes in this field by shifting the emphasis from Feminist Theory to Gender Theory. In Gender Theory the object of analysis is no longer the female alone, but rather the interaction of the two genders.

The historical sequence of the various literary movements shows that there is a constant shifting of focuses and an alteration between text-, author-, reader-and context-oriented approaches. Especially over the last couple of decades, the various movements have changed quickly and have been short-lived, akin to fashions:

Antiquity and Middle Ages	Rhetoric
Modern times	Philology
Nineteenth century	Stylistics
	Biographic Criticism
First half of twentieth century	Psychoanalytic Criticism
	Mythological Criticism
c. 1920–1930	Russian Formalism
c. 1940–1960	New Criticism
c. 1970–1980	ReceptionTheory
c. 1970–	Semiotics
	Feminist Literary Theory
	Gender Theory
	Deconstruction
c. 1980–	New Historicism and Cultural Studies

In the interpretation of literary texts, it is important to decide which approaches are suitable for the text at hand and can lead to new results. Although a text might imply a certain approach because of its thematic, historical or structural qualities, different approaches might often produce more original and rewarding results. Postmodern works ask for a structural approach as they like to play with formal elements. Politically or ideologically motivated texts are ideal for a Marxist approach. Biographies or autobiographies lend themselves to a comparison with the life of the author.

However, these obvious approaches do not have to dominate the discussion of a text. On the contrary, the choice of methodological approach should be guided primarily by the originality of the results it might produce, while reflecting one's personal interests, the state of current research or the trends of the time.

Task

Analyse "Araby" by James Joyce: https://www.gutenberg.org

APPENDIX

ANALYSING NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES

Setting is a description of where and when the story takes place.

What aspects make up the setting?

Geography, weather, time of day, social conditions?

What role does setting play in the story? Is it an important part of the plot or theme? Or is it just a backdrop against which the action takes place?

Study the time period which is also part of the setting

When was the story written?

Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?

How does the time period affect the language, atmosphere or social circumstances of the novel?

Characterisation deals with how the characters are described.

through dialogue?

by the way they speak?

physical appearance? thoughts and feelings?

interaction – the way they act towards other characters?

Are they static characters who do not change?

Do they develop by the end of the story?

What type of characters are they?

What qualities stand out?

Are they stereotypes?

Are the characters believable?

The *plot* is the main sequence of events that make up the story.

What are the most important events?

How is the plot structured? Is it linear, chronological or does it move back and forth?

Are there turning points, a climax and/or an anticlimax?

Is the plot believable?

The *narrator* is the person telling the story. *Point of view*: whose eyes the story is being told through.

Who is the narrator or speaker in the story?

Is the narrator the main character?

Does the author speak through one of the characters?

Is the story written in the first person “I” point of view?

Is the story written in a detached third person “he/she” point of view?

Is the story written in an “all-knowing” 3rd person who can reveal what all the characters are thinking and doing at all times and in all places?

Conflict or tension is usually the heart of the novel and is related to the main character.

How would you describe the main conflict?

Is it internal where the character suffers inwardly?

is it external caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds himself/herself in?

The *theme* is the main idea, lesson or message in the novel. It is usually an abstract, universal idea about the human condition, society or life, to name a few.

How does the theme shine through in the story?

Are any elements repeated that may suggest a theme?

What other themes are there?

The author's style has to do with the author's vocabulary, use of imagery, tone or feeling of the story. It has to do with his attitude towards the subject. In some novels the tone can be ironic, humorous, cold or dramatic.

Is the text full of figurative language?

Does the author use a lot of symbolism? Metaphors, similes? What images are used?

Your literary analysis of a novel will often be in the form of an essay or book report where you will be asked to give your opinions of the novel at the end. To conclude, choose the elements that made the greatest impression on you. Point out which characters you liked best or least and always support your arguments. Try to view the novel as a whole and try to give a balanced analysis.

ANALYSING A POEM

Poetry involves different elements like language, rhythm, and structure. Together, they tell a story and create a complexity that is unique to poetic verse. When studying poems in-depth, look at these individual elements:

Theme: Poetry often conveys a message through figurative language. The central idea and the subject matter can reveal the underlying theme of a poem.

Language: From word choice to imagery, language creates the mood and tone of a poem. The way language is arranged also impacts the rhythm of a poem.

Sound and rhythm: The syllabic patterns and stresses create the metrical pattern of a poem.

Structure: The framework of a poem's structure affects how it is meant to be read. A poet sculpts their story around stanzas, line breaks, rhyme patterns, punctuation, and pauses.

Context: The who, what, where, when, and why of a poem can help explain its purpose. Look at these elements to discover the context of a poem.

How to Analyze a Poem in 10 Steps

Reading poetry is a rewarding experience in and of itself. But to really see how all of the elements of a poem work together, you'll want to study the qualities and characteristics of each. Follow this step-by-step guide to analyze a poem:

Read the poem. The first time you approach a poem, read it to yourself. Go through it slowly, appreciating the nuances and details you might miss when reading it quickly. Examine the title of the poem and how it relates to the meaning of the piece.

Read the poem again, this time aloud. Given its rhythmic patterns, poetry is designed to be read aloud. As you read a poem aloud, listen to how the words and syllables shape the rhythm. It can also help to hear someone else read the poem. Look online and find a recording of the poem, if you can. Listen to how the words flow from line to line, where the breaks are, and where the stress is placed.

Map out the rhyme scheme. You'll notice right away if a poem has a rhyme scheme or is written in free verse (i.e. without a rhyme scheme or regular meter). Map out the rhyming pattern by assigning each line a letter, giving lines that rhyme the same letter. See if there is a distinct pattern and

a formal rhyme scheme, like terza rima (three-line stanzas with interconnected scheme of ABA BCB, etc.)

Scan the poem. Scansion is how you analyze the meter of poetry based on the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in each line. Mark each foot—the basic measurement of a poetic line consisting of one stressed syllable paired with at least one unstressed syllable. Next, mark the pattern of stresses throughout the line. Identify the meter based on this information. For example, a poem written in iambic pentameter will have five feet with a syllabic pattern of da DUM, da DUM, da DUM, da DUM, da DUM.

Break down the structure. Take a step back and look at the poem on the page. Notice the white space around the words. Poetry is meant to make a visual statement as well as an emotional one. Look at the details of this structure—like how many lines are in each stanza. Notice where the line breaks are. Does the end of every line coincide with the end of the thought? If not, the poet may be using enjambment, where one line continues into the next.

Determine the form of the poem. In your poem analysis, note what type of poem you're reading based on the elements you've examined. For example, if a poem has three quatrains (four-line stanzas) followed by a couplet, the poem is a sonnet. Other formal types of poetry include sestina, haiku, and limerick.

Study the language in the poem. Poets make deliberate word choices to craft their poems. Examine each word and its significance in the line and the poem. How does it contribute to the story? If there are words you don't know, look them up. See how the poet plays with language through the use of metaphors, similes, and figurative language. Note any literary devices used, like alliteration and assonance, that help sculpt the poem's language.

Study the content of the poem. As you wade through the language of the poem, look at the content and message of the piece to uncover the theme. Learn when it was written to learn the historical context of the poem. Find out where it was written, and what language the poet used. If you're reading a translation, see if there are other variations that can show how different translators interpreted the original work.

Determine who the narrator is. Try to identify the speaker of the poem. Is it told through first-person point of view, second-person, or third-person? What tone does the narrator convey? The speaker's identity influences the telling of the poem based on their personal perspective.

Paraphrase the poem line by line. Finally, go through the poem again. Beginning with the first line, paraphrase each line. In other words, interpret the meaning, writing down your summary as you go. Once you've gone through the entire piece, read your words to grasp the meaning of the poem.

WRITING A PLAY REVIEW

While analysing a play your stance is to be objective and critical, not impressionistic and merely nasty. A critic is not someone who simply 'criticises,' but a person who studies, analyses, and then renders a rational judgment of what he / she has seen.

Before You Attend the Production

Read the play before going to the production. (It is important to be prepared for the production you plan to attend; otherwise, you run the risk of having to see it several times.)

– In your mind, have a good sense of how a "standard" production might look, complete with a sense of what the characters might look like, the type of costuming that might be used, a suitable set design, and an appropriate rendering of the theme and tone of the work.

– Pick out, as you read, several critical or problematic points within the play that may be of particular interest to watch for in the production you are about to attend. If your instructor has asked you to pay particular attention to certain elements, make sure that you are prepared to recognise them in performance.

Attending the Production

Attend the play with an open mind, a willingness to accept the play as the director has presented it in production.

– Note any deviations from your concept of a 'standard' production and try to find a good explanation for that deviation. (Is the director trying to 'say' something new or different? Was your sense of the play somehow inaccurate, or were you shown new insights by the director's production?)

You may want to consider some of the following:

– The choice of costumes, and the set design?

– How did the actors deliver their lines (seriously, comically, realistically, formally)? Were there any significant actions or gestures that contributed to the play's meaning?

– Were any 'special effects' utilised (consider lighting, sound, audience participation, machinery)?

– Were any significant cuts made in the script?

After the performance, jot down the details you recall and talk about the performance with friends. You'll need these details for your paper in order to substantiate your argument.

Evaluate the performance.

– Did the director miss any important opportunities to convey something you were able to see in your reading of the play?

– Would you have liked to have seen more attention paid to what you perceived as critical passages, passages the director seemed less interested in?

– Why would you have preferred this attention, and why do you think the director avoided giving the passage such attention?

Consider the following practical aspects:

– What kind of stage does the director have at his disposal? What kinds of restrictions does the stage impose on the director concerning movement and set design?

– Are the actors professionals, amateurs, or students? What restrictions does this impose on the director? Are the actors capable of dealing with the script's requirements? (Be fair to the actors in your assessment of their talents and the level of their 'craftsmanship.')

Writing the play review

Writing the Introduction.

The introduction should include the following:

The title of the play, the name of the playwright, and any pertinent historical information regarding them (other similar works from this period? by this writer?).

The name of the director, the place and date of the production you attended, and the name of the production company (again, do you know of any previous work by this company? this director?).

The thesis of your review, which should include (possibly in more than a single statement) the following:

A general impression of the relative success or failure of the production, based on what you actually saw and on your initial impression of how the play should have been performed. (Note that even if the production did not exactly coincide with your own conception of the play, you should not feel obliged to condemn the performance outright. Be open-minded and willing to weigh pros and cons.)

Since you will not be expected to discuss all aspects of the production, focus your thesis on one or two major concerns that the performance has or has not addressed. Read your assignment carefully to find out which aspects of the performance are to be emphasised in your review.

Writing the Statement and Summary

– Include a brief thematic summary (but not a plot summary) of the play, and support that summary with concrete evidence from the text.

– You can include this summary in the introduction; or, if you wish to expand the summary, include it in a separate paragraph following the introduction.

Writing the Body of the Paper: The Review

– Remember that in the body of the paper you are obliged to deal specifically with each element of the production that you mentioned in the introduction and thesis.

– In order to give your review a tight internal logic and cohesiveness, you should also discuss these elements in the order that you outlined in the introduction. Such points of discussion might include the non-technical (acting, directing) and / or the technical (lighting, scenery, costumes) aspects of the production.

Writing the summary and conclusion

Your conclusion should not merely recapitulate your thesis in a mechanical way. Rather, you should try to show why your response to the play is valid and significant, based on what you have described in the body of the paper. Do not add any significant new material, but don’t be afraid to leave your reader with something to think about.

WRITING A FILM REVIEW

Characteristics

Films are similar to novels or short stories in that they tell a story. They include the same genres: romantic, historical, detective, thriller, adventure, horror, and science fiction. However, films may also include sub-groups such as: action, comedy, tragedy, westerns and war. The methods you use to analyse a film are closely related to those used to analyse literature; nevertheless, films are multimedial. They are visual media made for viewers. Films take command of more of our senses to create special atmospheres, feelings or to bring out emotions.

Along with the literary elements such as plot, setting, characterisation, structure, and theme, which make up the text or screenplay, there are many different film techniques used to tell the story or narrative. Attention is paid to sound, music, lighting, camera angles, and editing. What is important is to focus on how all the elements are used together in making a good film.

Below is a list of elements and questions to help you when analysing films.

Film Contents

Film Facts

The title of the film.

The year the film was produced.

Nationality.

The names of the actors.

The name of the director.

Genre

What main genre does the film fall under (romantic, historical, detective, thriller,

adventure, horror, and science fiction)?

What sub-grouping does the film fall under (action, comedy, tragedy, war and westerns)?

Setting is a description of where and when the story takes place.

Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?

What aspects of setting are we made aware of (geography, weather conditions,

physical environment, time of day)?

Where are we in the opening scene?

Plot and structure

What are the most important sequences?

How is the plot structured?

Is it linear, chronological or is it presented through flashbacks?

Are there several plots running parallel?

How is suspense built up?

Do any events foreshadow what is to come?

Conflict or tension is usually the heart of the film and is related to the main characters.

How would you describe the main conflict?

Is it internal where the character suffers inwardly?

Is it external caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds himself / herself in?

Characterisation deals with how the characters are described.

Through dialogue?

By the way they speak?

Physical appearance, thoughts and feelings?

Interaction – the way they act towards other characters?

Are they static characters who do not change?

Do they develop by the end of the story?

What type of characters are they?

What qualities stand out?

Are they stereotypes?

Are the characters believable?

Narrator and point of view

Is there a narrator in the film? Who?

The point of view means through whose eyes the story is being told.

Through whose eyes does the story unfold?

Is the story told in the first person ('I' point of view)?

Is the story told through an off-screen narrator?

Imagery

In films imagery are the elements used to create pictures in our minds. They may include:

Symbols – when something stands not only for itself (a literal meaning), but also stands for something else (a figurative meaning).

Ex. The feather in the film *Forrest Gump* symbolises his destiny.

What images are used in the film (e.g. color, objects etc)?

Can you find any symbols?

Theme

What are the universal ideas that shine through in the film (in other words, what is it about, in general)?

Cinematic Effects

Soundtrack includes both dialogue and music, as well as all the other sounds in a film. Enhances the atmosphere of the film.

What effect does the choice of music have? Does it suit the theme?

Are any particular sounds accentuated?

Use of the camera.

A camera shot is based on the camera's distance from the object. The four basic shots used in films are:

A close-up – a very close shot where the camera lens focuses on some detail or the actor's face.

Medium shot – a shot where the camera lens picks up some background or upper half of the actor.

Full shot – a shot where the camera lens has full view of the actor.

Long shot – shot taken at a distance from an object.

What camera shots can you identify in the film? How are they used?

A camera angle is how the camera is tilted while filming:

Straight-on angle – the camera is at the same height as the object.

High angle – the camera is filming from above the object.

Low angle – the camera is looking up at the object.

Oblique angle – the camera is tilted sideways.

Does the way in which the camera is held say anything about the character?

Lighting focuses the audience's attention on the main character or object in a film. It also sets the mood or atmosphere. While high-key lighting is bright and illuminating, low-key lighting is darker with a lot of shadows.

What special lighting effects are used during the most important scenes?

Filters are often used to soften and reduce harsh contrasts. They can also be used to eliminate haze, ultraviolet light or glare from water when shooting outside. EX. Using colour like red or orange can be used to enhance the feeling of a sunset.

Can you find any examples where a filter has been used in the film?

What effect did using a filter have on the scene?

What colours are most dominant?

Editing

Editing is the way in which a film editor together with the director cuts and assembles the scenes. The way the scenes are joined together creates the rhythm of the motion picture. Scenes can be long and drawn out or short and choppy.

Can you see a pattern to how the scenes are cut?

How would you describe the pace / tempo of the film?

Conclusion

When analysing films for school work or projects, you may be asked to use some or all of the characteristics above. Link those elements together that seem most logical. Try to think of the film as a whole and how the elements mentioned above work together to bring out the main message of the film.

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