Introduction to Literary Studies: A Script of Some Sorts
Mascha Hansen

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1. LITERARY CRITICISM

The main point – or the most basic point – of this lecture series is to sharpen your **awareness** of literary conventions, literary genres, literary traditions, and literary concepts. Finding out about these is essential, and getting to know the terminology involves *a fair amount of hard work (no, it's not an unfair one – think of all the things you'd have to learn if you had chosen medicine instead!).*

1.1 Theoretical and Practical Criticism

The English term "criticism" is not synonymous with the German "Kritik". Whereas the German term is mainly concerned with evaluation, the English one is broader, encompassing discussion, context, theoretical foundations, general ideas etc. Criticism "in the old days" meant evaluation: how do we know whether this is "good" literature? Nowadays, we see criticism rather as a "descriptive" than as a "prescriptive" exercise (i.e. *beschreibend*, not *vorschreibend*). This is why we try to come up with new insights on what literature actually is: **a broad definition** would include pretty much everything that is written down; **a narrower one** cites some criteria: **fictionality for instance, the lack of a pragmatic function, specialised language or ambiguity**. This is still problematical: not all texts are ambiguous. And most literature used to have a pragmatic function up until the 20th century.

Criticism is composed of two parts: theoretical criticism and practical criticism. Both of these are again subdivided into two parts: both can, again, be either descriptive or prescriptive. On the descriptive side of theoretical criticism we find literary theory, on the prescriptive side something called legislative criticism (*normative Poetik*), which has gone out of fashion, truth be told. Aristotle's *Poetics* would be counted as legislative, as it provides rules and norms for authors. On the descriptive side of practical criticism there is literary analysis, that is, interpretation. On the prescriptive side would be evaluation: how good is this poem, this novel, this play? What are the criteria for judging? And what counts as literature, anyway?

1.2 Some Disciplines within Literary Studies / *Literaturwissenschaften*:

The core or basic disciplines used to be:

Literary theory, theoretical criticism   *allgemeine Literaturtheorie*
Genre poetics, theory of literary kinds   *spezielle Literaturtheorie, Gattungspoetik*

Practical criticism, literary analysis	*Literaturkritik*
Literary history	*Literaturgeschichte*
Textual criticism	*Editionsphilologie*
Hermeneutics	*Hermeneutik*
Aesthetics, philosophy of value	*Ästhetik/Wertphilosophie*

Nowadays there are many more disciplines: film/media studies, gender studies, minority writers, queer studies, eco studies, social studies, cultural studies etc. (see literary theory below).

1.3 Approaches to Literature

It is impossible to read and understand a text without taking a particular stance, viewing and understanding the work – any text – from a particular perspective. The four approaches chosen may seem remote to you, but in one way or another they are still quite alive today.

1.3.1 Mimetic approaches (text – world)

Mimetic criticism considers the "truth" of a work, that is, the way in which it imitates or represents the "real" world. In his *Republic*, Plato famously declared that poets have to leave the ideal state as poetry is concerned with "appearance rather than truth" (Abrams, 9). By contrast, Aristotle defined **mimesis**, the **imitation** or **reflection of reality**, as one major function of literature. Literature does not provide us with actual facts but with general truths about life, or the probable truth of what might have happened instead of what did happen.

1.3.2 Pragmatic Approaches (text – reader)

Pragmatic criticism considers the way in which a text is constructed, its "how": how is it structured, composed, written? How does it affect the reader? How does it effect its purpose (if it has one)? Pragmatic positions are called pragmatic because they are interested in the **effect on the reader** or audience. This is not a modern position only, already the Roman poet Horace (65-8 B.C.) considered the writer's aims to be either to instruct or to please the reader, and ideally to do both at the same time.

A literary work, according to Horace, can have one of three different functions.

- it can be entertaining: literature as fun to read
- it can have a didactic function: Literature as enlightenment (teaching something)
- or a combination of both: an entertaining-and-didactic method of teaching its readers by delighting them.

1.3.3 Expressive Approaches

Expressive criticism is mostly interested in the author's state of mind when writing (his feelings and thoughts), and tends to judge a text by its openness and sincerity to the particular writer's vision. Expressive approaches try to get to the essence of literature by considering the genesis of the literary work as such, that is, the way in which them poem comes into being. The poem pouring out of the poet is supposed to contain his soul, his emotional state of being (or hers, of course, but many Romantic poets considered poetry to be primarily a male art). William Wordsworth wrote in his preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*:

> **[A]ll good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings**: and though this be true, poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply.

1.3.4 Work-centred "Objective" Approaches

Last but not least, Objective Criticism tries to sever the text from all outward ties. It has become famous with the slogan "L'art pour l'art", **art for art's sake**. The most famous disciples of this approach are Edgar Allen Poe (1809-1849) and Oscar Wilde (1854-1900).

> "Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral ... but the simple fact is that ... under the sun there neither exists nor can exist any work more thoroughly dignified – more supremely noble than this very poem – this poem per se – this poem which is a poem and nothing more – this poem written solely for the poem's sake."
> (E.A. Poe, *The Poetic Principle*)

1.4 Literary History

Some people, like the novelist E. M. Forster, think that good literature is timeless and that, in a way, all authors exist at the same time. This does make sense: we can read their works now no matter when they lived, and important texts have certainly shaped – and continue to shape

– our perception of life. To a literary historian, the task of literary history is to provide explanations for the 'pastness' of texts, for the historical facts that are woven into a literary work. A literary historian provides *contexts*. A context is something that accompanies any text without being written down. It is what an author takes for granted: aspects of culture, politics, general knowledge etc. that the author and most of his or her contemporaries share but which is lost to later generations. This historical context has to be painstakingly re-constructed by those who come later. Whenever you read a text that has not been written last year, do keep in mind that there may be numerous factors involved that you do not know about. Most literary histories concentrate on one literary period at a time, as it is almost impossible for any one person to reconstruct the historical context of several centuries in any detail. Besides, Modern English Literature, as you may have noticed, consists of many, many writers who aren't English at all, which is why people tend to speak of "Literatures in English" these days. Thus, even the most comprehensive literary histories have to be highly selective: They have to make a choice between who is worth mentioning and who is not. (That does not mean they always get it right...) See the bibliography below for a choice of literary histories; Michael Meyer cites a few more you may find useful.

1.5 Canon Formation

The Greek word *kanon*, English Canon, is a term that first appeared in bible studies. Church authorities decided which of the many books of the bible are **canonical**, that is authorized, and which are **apocryphal**: not belonging to Holy Scripture. The term was then extended to particular authors: the **Shakespeare canon** is made up of all the works Shakespeare has actually written (as far as we now know), and texts which are falsely attributed to him are called apocryphal. The canon, in this context, is thus a question of *authenticity*. We nowadays consider 39 plays to have been written by Shakespeare. This, however, is by now means an opinion shared by everyone: at least 57 candidates have so far been proposed as the "real" authors of Shakespeare's plays. By contrast, roughly 100 poems accredited to Chaucer have been taken off Chaucer's canon as apocryphal.

More recently, the term **canon** has come to be applied to literary masterpieces and major writers. The **Literary Canon**, as it is called, is made up of the so-called *classics* of (English or World) literature. The canon is what is taught at school and universities. This meaning of 'canon' is thus based on value(s) and quality rather than authenticity.

Canon formation is one of the tasks of the literary scholar. The eighteenth century critic Samuel Johnson considered a span of roughly a hundred years to be the time needed to make sure a writer could really be considered canonical. Time as a judge seems doubtful, however. Many writers considered great by their own age have been forgotten now, though that does

not necessarily mean they have justly been overlooked. Hundreds of early women writers have been rediscovered only during the last decades of the twentieth century. This is one of the reasons why the literary canon has been attacked again and again as being made up of **books written by "dead white male Europeans"** (others say that it was shaped by western ideologies). However, the basic canon has remained remarkably static. Though many authors have joined the canon, especially women writers and writers of other ethnicities than white European, few, if any, have been struck off.

1.6 Textual Criticism

1.6.1 Manuscripts (MSS)

1. **Manuscript** = (lat.) handwritten
     (**Holograph** = handwritten entirely by the author)

2. **Manuscript** = text before publication (typed or handwritten)

1.6.2 Editions

editor (*Herausgeber*) : someone who collects, selects, and prepares an author's text(s) for publication

An **editor** can prepare a volume of scholarly essays for publication or present a choice of texts such as poems or chapters taken from novels in one book (**anthology**). He/She can also edit e.g. a novel from the eighteenth century by collecting and **collating** (comparing) previous editions.

There are three **basic** types of **editions** (*Ausgabe*).
- the **facsimile edition** which is not a similar edition but an exact reproduction of the original (including faults, line endings, etc.). Now you can easily reproduce a text with a scanner and a photo-copier but to reproduce a book like the first Shakespeare Folio (1616) – e.g. by using modern but similarly produced paper and ink – is a very expensive process indeed!
- the **diplomatic edition** is also a reproduction of the original text but it does not reproduce accidental variants or the organisation of lines.
- Most important to us is **the critical edition.** A critical edition does *not* contain criticism but renders a text (novel, poem) which should as much as possible resemble

the version the author would have chosen. A critical edition is the result of an editor's careful *collation* of relevant material, e.g. earlier editions such as all the versions of a novel published during the author's lifetime. There are two versions: old-spelling critical edition (*historisch-kritische Ausgabe*) and modern-spelling critical edition (*modernisierte oder normalisierte Ausgabe*).

Students are recommended to buy **annotated critical editions**. These are critical editions which also contain comments on the historical context of the texts and possible sources used by the author. Besides, they often comment on different interpretations of words, lines, and/ or passages (please note: they do not necessarily contain ready-made interpretations of the text itself! 'Critical' refers to the fact that several versions of the text are **collated**, e.g. critically compared).

1.6.3 Textual Criticism: a practical example.

Jonathan Swift (1677-1745), who figures on the English department's reading lists as the author of *Gulliver's travels*, also wrote verse satires such as this little poem:

A Description of the Morning
Now hardly here and there an Hackney-Coach
Appearing, show'd the Ruddy Morn's Approach.
Now *Betty* from her Master's Bed had flown,
And softly stole to discompose her own.
The slipshod 'Prentice from his Master's Dore, Had
par'd the Street, and sprinkled round the Floor.
Now *Moll* had whirl'd her Mop with dext'rous Airs,
Prepar'd to scrub the Entry and the Stairs.
The Youth with broomy Stumps began to trace
The Kennel Edge, where Wheels had worn the Place.
The Smallcoal-Man was heard with Cadence deep,
Till drown'd in shriller Notes of Chimney-sweep.
Duns at his Lordship's Gate began to meet;
And Brickdust Moll had scream'd through half a Street.
The Turn-key now his Flock returning sees,
Duly let out a'Nights to steal for Fees.
The watchful Bayliffs take their silent Stands;
And School-boys lag with Satchels in their Hands.
            (Jonathan Swift, "A Description of the Morning," In: *The Tatler*, no. 9, April 1709)

The poem, as it is shown here, has not been edited, it is reprinted as given in *The Tatler*, a periodical in which several eminent writers had a hand. Two years later, in 1711, Swift

himself edited a compilation of his own prose and verse writings and reprinted this poem with one important variant in line 6:

- He par'd the **Dirt**, and Sprinkled round the Floor.

This, as it contains a new word which might affect the meaning of the whole, is called a **substantive variant** (as opposed to **accidental variants** which affect merely the spelling of a word).

A **facsimile edition** would reprint the poem as it stood in *The Tatler* without any change at all (as in a photocopy, but if it were no more than that it would simply be called a reproduction). A **diplomatic edition** would also reprint the text, all the text, but may contain small changes to the "outward appearance" of the text: perhaps print it in a different size. A **critical edition**, on the other hand, would note the difference between the two versions named above in the so-called **critical apparatus**.

Now, to understand this poem, you need to know a few things besides. You need a commentary, or annotations, which an **annotated critical edition** would give you. For instance, an annotated edition would tell you that the adverb "hardly" in the first line at the time meant "violently, with a thundering noise". A Hackney Coach was a hired coach, drawn by two horses. Betty is a typical servants' name, and this one has spent the night with her master. Ironically, Betty is thus meant to resemble the Roman goddess of the morning, Aurora, who in some versions of the mythology leaves her lover's bed in the morning to announce the arrival of the sun. (A good **annotated edition** will tell you all about the mythologies and biblical allusions you should know.) 'Kennel Edge' is the gutter's edge here, the youth is looking for old nails which he will then resell, or so an annotated edition tells me. A smallcoal man sold charcoal. An annotated edition, again, would tell you that "chimney sweep" was what chimney sweeps, very young boys most of them, would shout to offer their services. Chimney sweeps, *Schornsteinfeger*, were children who had to crawl up the chimney in order to clean it. Imagine those old, high, narrow chimneys and you will know that this was not a kind of job children should be made to do. (Charles Dickens, among others, wrote about the harsh world of chimney sweeps in the nineteenth century.) Especially for "older" texts you need annotations to understand what they are about in the first place. Merely reading the German translation will not help you here. A good annotated edition would also tell you about the genre, the sources used, any intertextual references (that is, references to other poems/ any other texts made within the poem, for instance quotations taken from the classics), and so on.

Interpretation:

Someone preferring a **mimetic** approach would have to look at the truth value of Swift's poem. We cannot know, of course, how faithfully Swift portrayed a London morning of the early 18th century, but as realists we would presumably agree that he portrayed the morning truthfully rather than fancifully. On the other hand he exaggerated, which makes him less than trustworthy. The **pragmatic** approach would centre on the function of this poem: does it delight, does it instruct? It is a satire, and as such probably counts as instructive: it lashes the vices and the conditions of the time. Whether it also pleases depends on the reader but satires are usually considered highly entertaining. An **expressive** approach focuses on the author's feelings. Romantic poets might have deplored Swifts tendency to hide his feelings – he does not say anything about them. The poem reads like a factual statement. However, why write satire if what you satirize does not concern you? Swift may have written about the vices and the problems of his time in order to vent his anger, to get this misery out of his system. He may also have had a good laugh about the tendency of his age to pretend that things were fine when they clearly weren't. Or is Swift's poem **art for art's sake**? Written without any purpose in mind? If only we knew…

1.7 Bibliographies

- **Bibliography** is, once again, a term with various slightly different meanings. It can either mean a list of books as used by an author in the composition of his or her work, that is a list of the books used or quoted from (usually both) under the heading *Literaturverzeichnis* or *Bibliography* or *Works cited*.

- Another, broader meaning of the term is a list of all the monographs (a long essay or treatise on a single subject is called a monograph), books, and sometimes articles published *either* on a particular subject *or* on a particular author *or* by a particular author.

- Thirdly, the term 'bibliography' can mean the formal study of books. You look at who printed it and how, what paper was used, which kind of bindings etc. Analytical, critical or descriptive bibliographies are terms belonging to the formal study of books.

More important for the **search** of literature are these terms: a **current bibliography** (*laufende Bibliographie*) is one that is continuously edited. New books, articles etc. are always being added to those lists which make them most valuable when doing research. A **retrospective bibliography** (*abgeschlossene Bibliographie*) is one that has been finished and therefore lists

books on, say, Jane Austen, only until the year it was published. In general, these kind of bibliographies are useful to students only when they have been published fairly recently. An **annotated bibliography** not only lists books and articles but also gives an assessment of their contents – they contain reviews of articles and monographs. So if you have found several books on a topic you wish to research and don't know which of them are useful or worth reading, a look into an annotated bibliography may help. See also Michael Meyer, *English and American Literatures*, for a list of bibliographies.

When writing term papers, you will need to look into bibliographies. You can always begin by looking into the OPAC (university library catalogue), but if you do not find much, you had better begin using a bibliography. Do use the MLA (*Modern Language Association*) International Bibliography, to be found via the opac homepage >Datenbanken, >quick search (>MLA). Access is denied to you if you work from home unless you use eduroam (can be installed via the *Rechenzentrum* pages) and log into the university services. If you cannot, use of the university library or any other university-based computer.

2. POETRY

2.1 Analysing Poetry

To get over an early horror of having to analyse poetry is to read poetry without any idea of analysis in mind. The point of "analysing" poetry is not to point out the stylistic means and meter (see below) used in the poem but to find out how to appreciate it. If you do not know the conventions of a sonnet, you won't even notice the poem in front of you *is* a sonnet. Once you know that, however, you might also be aware of the particular background of this kind of sonnet – is it Shakespearean? Does is allude to one of Petrarch's sonnets? Poetry, too, has a history. The best approach to poetry, however, is to find a poem or poet you like. Even song lyrics that touch you are poetical; they are lyric poetry (see below). Read that song, that poem, that poet, and enjoy. The more you read, the more often you re-read a particular poem because you like it, the more you will notice regularities, unfamiliar words, stylistic means without having to abuse the poem by exercising your skills in metrical or stylistic analysis (to do that,

use a poem you don't like overmuch). Writing poetry has always been a serious business to some, yes, but it has also meant a lot of fun to many others, both writers and readers.

What is the poem about? Not all poetry makes sense, and not all poems have a meaning that is there to be found out by shaking the lines until the words fall into their proper places. Try to find a poem that puzzles you. If it merely puts you off, put it aside until later. Many poems may seem obvious at a first glance but then go on to contradict any seemingly easy interpretation. Do form and content clash or harmonize, does the poem fit into a poetical tradition, what does it do with language, meter, rhythm, or you as reader? In order to analyse poetry, you have to know a lot about poetical traditions – that is to say, you have to have read a lot of poetry! You should be aware of poetic genres and their (metrical) conventions as well as of the stylistic means employed. While it may be hard to memorize all these, they are necessary to a solid interpretation. Imagine seeing a painting in a museum: you may enjoy that without knowing anything about the painter or the tradition it belongs to, but a good guide may make you see so much more in it: she would point out details that escaped your notice, describe other paintings that have "contributed" to the making of this one, the school of painting (and thus of perceiving the world) that this painting belongs to, etc.

An Example:

Take, for instance, Phyllis Wheatley's "On Being Brought from Africa to America". Wheatley (c.1752 – 1784) was a black African sold into slavery at the age of 8 and later freed.[7]

'Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
"Their colour is a diabolic die."
Remember, Christians, Negroes, black as Cain,
May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.

Wheatley was unusually well educated, indeed better educated than most women at the time, and very well versed in the classics (she read both Latin and Greek). Many of her poems reflect the ideals and themes of the classical tradition she revered, to the dismay of some of her contemporary readers, who would have preferred her to have written in a more personal style. However, think of the poem: is Wheatley saying that it was a merciful God's decision to sell her into slavery? That only by undergoing slavery was she enabled to find out about

Christianity, literature, and redemption? Does she justify slavery? The last line, too, is open to interpretation: is it a reproach to Christians (the white ones) to abandon their prejudices and thus an ironic twist which gives the lie to the first lines? Or does she simply say that Christians can be 'black', that is, sinful as Cain, too, but that they may yet go to heaven?

Do structure and meter etc. of the poem matter? It's in heroic couplets: rhyming couplets plus iambic pentameter. Does the seeming safety of a stable meter perhaps clash with the theme of the poem, slavery? Does the fact that these couplets are called "heroic" say something about the poet's self-understanding as a former slave, of anyone's being able to bear slavery?

A good summary of possible interpretations can be found on
http://womenshistory.about.com/od/aframerwriters/a/wheatley_poems_2.htm (DoA 4 July 2011) as well as in the *Heath Anthology of American Literature*.

Aspects of Analysis

Many, but by no means all poems rely on specific conventions. It makes sense to know e.g. the formal requirements of a sonnet so as to be able to decide whether the poem in front of you is a sonnet or rather an ode. Much contemporary poetry no longer employs strict rhyme schemes or metrical lines but that does not mean poets are no longer aware of these conventions.

Important aspects in any analysis of poetry **may** be:

- **persona** or **speaker**, in German "lyrisches ich" (n. b. **epic poetry** does not have those but a **narrator**)
- **mood** (atmosphere)
- **tone** (reflecting the poet's attitude and mood etc.)
- **prosody** (formal study of versification)
- **meter, rhythm, sound**
- **motifs**
- **imagery** and **figurative language**

N.B.: it is pointless to try and find all of these in any one poem – use your background knowledge, your awareness of literary forms and your own emotions to explore a poem: play with it, adopt its perspective, puzzle out its meaning, but do not bore your readers, your pupils – or yourself – by counting lines, syllables or rhymes without really knowing why.

2.2. Lyric and Epic Poetry

2.2.1 Lyric Poetry:

A lyric poem is relatively short, it does not tell a story (non-narrative) but a speaker presents, in verse, a thought or an emotion, a state of mind, an impression, a puzzle.... (yes, do think of SONG lyrics!)

Subcategories: elegy, ode, sonnet, dramatic monologue, most occasional poetry (i.e. poetry written for a special occasion such as a wedding).

2.2.1.1 Elegy and ode

An **elegy** is a formal lament, i.e. a poem about somebody's death (an epitaph, a memory, a lament). It can also express a plaintive memory or a mournful thought. The style is elevated, the meter varies. Originally, Greek elegies were written in elegiac couplets.

An **ode** is a highly stylised celebratory poem, or a poem in praise of not just persons but also aspects of life, celebrating e.g. wisdom, immortality, beauty, etc. The ode uses a formal, elevated style; the meter is often but not always iambic tetra- or trimeter.

2.2.1.2 The Sonnet:

Originally, i.e. in the later Middle Ages, the sonnet was a love poem. Though already Shakespeare and his contemporaries introduced other topics, the idea that a sonnet should or might be about love reverberates through later sonnets. The following two versions of the sonnet are most popular in English poetry:

The Petrarchan (Italian) Sonnet
- 14 lines:
- octet (eight lines) rhyming *abba abba* containing a question or problem
- sestet (six lines) rhyming *cde cde* containing a (re)solution

The Shakespearean (English) Sonnet
- 14 lines:
- three quatrains (four lines each) rhyming *abab cdcd efef* (called the exposition)
- one final couplet (two lines) rhyming *gg* (a short turn)

N.B.: There are sonnet variations that have more than 14 lines or very different rhyme schemes / rhythm and meter (e. g. those of Gerard Manley Hopkins). If you are presented with a poem that looks reasonably short, count the lines, it may well be a sonnet.

2.2.2 <u>Narrative (Epic) Poetry</u>

A poem which *narrates*, in verse, a story about various characters; it has a plot and is told by a narrator.

- **epic**: large scale in length and topic: usually about heroes, gods, empires etc.
- e.g. John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667)

subcategories: epic, mock-epic, **ballad**

2.2.2.1 Ballad:

The **ballad** is a song, mostly in a comic or tragic mode, often about lovers. Ballads used to be **sung** in the streets (**street** or **folk ballads**). It has a noticeable meter (often iambic tetra- and trimeter) and an easy rhyme scheme so that singers and their listeners would find it easy to remember the many stanzas. The **literary ballad** is more ambitious with regard to style and content.

2.3 Rhetoric

2.4 Poetic Form: Meter, Rhythm, Rhyme

2.4.1 Meter

If the poem's stressed and unstressed syllables form a (more or less regular) pattern, it has a (more or less) regular meter:

- **iamb** (˘ ') *'Twas **mer**cy **brought** me **from** my **Pa**gan **land*** (Wheatley)
- **trochee** (' ˘) ***Go** and **catch** a **fa**lling **star*** (Donne)
- **dactyl** (' ˘ ˘) ***Coul**dn't put **Hump**ty to**ge**ther a**gain*** (Carroll)
- **anapaest** (˘ ˘ ') *I am **mon**arch of **all** I sur**vey*** (Cowper)
- **spondee** (' ') *When the **blood creeps** and the **nerves prick*** (Tennyson)

          Wake up! (Rage against the Machine)

In English poetry, you often find the "ed" indicating the past tense stressed to make up another syllable: "blesséd" would be read as if it contained two syllables, stressed on the second one.

Foot: "A group of syllables forming a metrical unit" (*Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*)
Pentameter: five feet

Blank verse: five iambic feet (= iambic pentameter), no rhyme (= blank)

Shakespeare is famous for his blank verse, as is Milton.

Hexameter: six feet (**Alexandrine**: six iambic feet)

2.4.2 Rhythm

A poem, like a song, can have a slow or fast rhythm. The speed is affected not only by the meter but also by

- **caesurae** (pauses)
- clusters of consonants
- vowel length
- the length of the words
- elisions
- the length of the lines: e.g. **end-stopped lines** (the line ends with a comma or a full stop so the reader pauses), **run-on lines** or **enjamb(e)ment** (the line ends in print but has to be read on into the next) etc.

2.4.3 Rhyme

Typically we understand by rhyme the rhyme at the end of a line, the so-called **end-rhyme**. But even within a line, there can be **internal rhymes**, usually a word from the middle of the line rhymes with a word at the end (exaggerated use in nursery rhymes or tongue twisters: the cat sat on the mat). Rhymes can be carried over one syllable or several syllables, though rarely more than three are used.

- **masculine rhymes**: sun/fun, .
- **feminine rhymes**: honey/money
- **triple rhymes**: icicles/bicycles. The triple rhyme is often used for a humorous effect.

The repetition of the same word is called an **identical rhyme** (love/ love).

Sometimes only the consonants or the vowel sounds are identical or similar. In such cases one speaks of **half-rhymes**, **slant rhymes** or **pararhymes**: Emily Dickinson often used half-rhymes ("I'm woman now: / It's safer so").

- **consonance**: similar consonants but different vowels: puppet/ pepper
- **assonance**: same vowel sounds, different consonants home (a)lone
- **eye-rhyme**: spelling suggests a rhyme but pronunciation is different home/come

When Shakespeare rhymes loved/moved this is not an eye-rhyme: the pronunciation simply used to be different in his day.

Rhyming lines can be arranged according to different patterns. The same rhymes are marked using small letters of the alphabet:

- **continuous rhyme** *aaaa bbbb ...*
- **rhyming couplets** *aa bb cc ...*
- **alternate rhyme** *abab cdcd ...*

- **embracing rhyme** *abba cddc ...*
- **chain rhyme** *aba bcb cdc ...*
- **tail rhyme** *aab ccb ...*

2.5 Rhetorical Forms: Schemes

2.5.1 Phonological, Morphological, Syntactical Schemes

- **alliteration**: the **s**ame **s**ound is repeated at the beginning of **s**everal **s**tressed **s**yllables or words

- **assonance** and **consonance** also belong here (see above)

- **asyndeton**: the omission of conjunctions (and, or) to link phrases, clauses, or words: *he talked, smoked, waved, tripped, fell*

- **chiasmus**: from the shape of the Greek letter 'chi' (X); two corresponding phrases are arranged in inverted order (a-b, b-a): *he talked and smoked, smoked and talked*

- **climax**: words or phrases are arranged so as to lead up to a summit, e.g. by leaving out commas or repeating sounds: *he tripped, stumbled, caught himself but lost his balance again, twisted, waved his arms as if he tried to catch at straws but fell, fell down, down, down the cliff...*

- **ellipsis**: a word or phrase is omitted but implied by the context: *he smoked* implies that he smoked a cigarette, but the word cigarette is usually omitted

- **homonym**: words have the same pronunciation and /or spelling but different meanings (bank)

- **hyperbaton**: a figure that disrupts the syntax: a phrase or words that belong together are separated: *he smoked, talking all the time about nothing much, a cigar*

- **onomatopoeia**: the sound of the word imitates the thing/sound it denotes ('croak')

- **parallelism**: the repetition of similar syntactic elements (words or phrases): *he told a story, smoked a cigar, read a book, watched a film*

- **polysyndeton,** the use of many conjunctions: *he talked and smoked and waved and tripped and fell*

- **synonym**: use of words with the same or similar meanings
- **tautology**: one idea is repeatedly expressed through additional words, phrases, or sentences, sometimes unintentionally so (*a new innovation, the main protagonist*)
- **zeugma**: one verb is used for two quite dissimilar aspects or phrases: "or stain her honour or her new brocade" (Pope), *he went home in a taxi and a passion*

2.6 Rhetorical Form: Tropes

- **apostrophe**: an address, usually to a person, but also to a personified object or concept: "Death, be not proud" (Donne); "Come, night, " (Shakespeare)
- **euphemism**: using softer or more polite words to hide the sting: "to pass away" instead of "to die"; "you sidestepped the truth" instead of "you lied"
- **hyperbole**: use of exaggeration ("you are my son, my moon, and all my stars", cummings)
- **irony** see below
- **litotes:** denying the opposite ("not bad", "it's not exactly warm in here")
- **metaphor** see below
- **metonymy** see below
- **oxymoron**: joins two incompatible words ("a rich pauper")
- **paradox** see below
- **pun**: wordplay
- periphrasis (or circumlocution): using a long phrase to explain something that could be explained with very few words instead (in Dickens's *Little Dorrit*, the Circumlocution Office is maintaining government bureaucracy)
- personification: you know this one, if not, ask your dictionary.
- **simile** see below
- **synecdoche**: a part is used for the whole or the whole for the part (pars-pro-toto; totum pro parte), see metonymy below
- **understatement**: downplaying an issue, used either for emphasis, to elicit praise, to hide the true extent, or for comic effect. If a proud father says "she's a good violinist" about his daughter, he probably hopes to hear her praised as an excellent player

For **simile, metaphor, metonymy, paradox and irony** see below.

2.6.1 Comparison/ Simile

A comparison or simile employs **imagery** using the words "like" or "as" or a verb like "to compare".

Example: My mistress' eyes are nothing **like** the sun (Shakespeare).

Primum comparandum: eyes (semantic field: face/ body)
Secumdum comparatum: sun (semantic field: nature)
Tertium comparationis: common ground uniting both semantic fields (brightness, shine)

Both similes and metaphors make use of imagery and are thus part of figurative language, both combine different semantic fields. They are thus similar but different in their complexity and thus in the strength of the image employed. Compare the following sentences:

Examples: Simile and Metaphor

1. My lover's eyes are **as** bright **as** the sun.
2. My lover's eyes are **like** the sun.
3. My lover's eyes are the sun.

The third statement is actually a **metaphor**: there is no direct comparison (no "like" or "as").

Is there a difference between these three statements, and if so, is it one of gradation? Is, for instance, the emphasis stronger? The first specifies one aspect, does the second imply that one aspect or more? Does the last still make sense?

To some, there is less difference between the second and third statement that between the first and the second, to them already the second statement uses metaphorical language.

2.6.2 Metaphor

> The greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor.
> It is the one thing that cannot be learned from others;
> it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies
> an eye for resemblance. Aristotle (384-322 B.C)

Metaphors are difficult to explain since there are so many explanations around. If you are asked to define metaphor, stick to the simple explanation: that is, it is stronger and more complex than a simile and does not contain any direct comparisons (i. e. the words "like" or "as"). If asked for a more complex definition, try one of the following:

- "A figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another." (*Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*).

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- In a **metaphor**, a word /phrase <u>from **one semantic field** is displaced/substituted by a word or phrase from another.</u> No comparison is asserted but it may well be implied.

Metaphors, however, need not be straightforward sentences of the form "X is a Y"! They need not even be poetic.

Examples: <u>Time flies.</u>
The <u>ship ploughed </u>through the waves.
<u>You pig</u>!

Metaphors can be dead. A dead metaphor is one we no longer notice, such as "table leg".

More on Metaphor:
One terminology, introduced by the critic I.A. Richards, distinguishes between
 - **tenor** – the meaning of the image
 - **vehicle** – the image which carries the meaning.
Other terminologies distinguish between **idea** and **image** or **target** and **source**.

Max Black denies that metaphors are comparisons; he sees the vehicle – the second image or concept that is used to describe/ replace the first – as the **filter** through which the first is seen.

Paul Ricoeur, on the other hand, argues that "displacement" is only one aspect of metaphor, and that the meaning or 'aliveness' of a metaphor relies on the incongruity of the words chosen to complement each other, and on the whole sentence bearing the brunt of or encompassing this incongruity.

In their groundbreaking book *Metaphors We Live By*, **Lakoff and Johnson** have introduced the idea that our whole way of thinking is based on metaphor. Metaphors are by no means only a beautiful "rhetorical flourish" used in old-fashioned poetry. As an example, take a simple phrase like "Time is Money". Lakoff and Johnson demonstrate how influential such a metaphor is – how it influences the way we speak. We talk of *spending* and *saving* time nowadays – as if time was a commodity, or a valuable resource that must not be wasted. (just think of *Momo* by Michael Ende and the time-thieves: he develops the metaphor to show how we are caught in a vicious circle, believing that time should not be wasted but having no clue

at all what exactly constitutes a waste of time). How *do* we understand time, though? According to Lakoff and Johnson we need metaphors to understand such abstract concepts, and such daily experiences, as time. "Time is an ocean" is another such metaphor, used by Shakespeare in a sonnet: "Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore/ so do our minutes hasten to their end" (Sonnet 60; this is a simile, as it contains a direct comparison!)

2.6.3 Symbol

In everyday language, we tend to speak almost randomly of people or things symbolizing this or that. However, a symbol usually is an object, rarely a person. Moreover, it is an object that has or takes on a particular meaning over and above the literal one. A strawberry may be an ordinary strawberry, but in the language of fiction it could stand for seduction (fruit often does). Symbols can be quite obvious: a ring conventionally symbolises union, or marriage. Rings can also have various other meanings: rings also symbolise loyalty to someone, or remembrance, or even power, as they do, for instance, in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. However, their meaning can also be private and personal. To a poet, a ring could symbolize something quite different, e.g. going mad or thoughts going round in a circle, a private meaning to be discovered only by comparing several of her poems. To differentiate between metaphor and symbol is not always possible. Mostly, though, if there is a concrete object in the text, it is a symbol. If the object is introduced not as a "real" object in the text but by way of comparison, it is a metaphor. (If you talk of the shipwreck of a family that has never moved out of its village, you are using a metaphor. If, in a novel, the 'actual' wreck of an old boat is left to rot in front of the family's house, it may be a symbol of the general decay that has hit this particular family.)

Some suggest that every **sign** is a symbol, so, for instance, the wikipedia article on "symbol" says that the red octagon is a symbol for "stop". That's not a symbol, though, it does not symbolize anything (though perhaps the red colour does, it may symbolize danger/ blood here if you do not stop!). It is merely a sign that we have agreed upon, as are the signs for male and female on loo doors. Symbols are less arbitrary than signs: it is usually possible to discern a connection between the object and the aspect/ attribute/ thing/ idea it symbolizes.

2.6.4 Metonymy

Already in the 1920s critics like Bakhtin and Jakobson pointed out the fundamental difference between metaphor and metonymy, and the influence these two "poles" have on our way of thinking. On the whole, metonymy is by no means easier to explain than metaphor but as a

general rule, the following definition may serve: in **Metonymy**, the thing itself is substituted by an attribute or even a name.

Examples:

'The deep' for 'the sea'
'The stage' (for 'the theatre', strictly speaking a pars-pro-toto)
I enjoy reading Virginia Woolf (instead of: *the works* of VW, similar with brand names.)
The White House has refused to comment.

Metonymy and **Synecdoche** (or **Pars pro Toto,** i.e. a part stands for the whole) are thus closely related. Some people say that synecdoche and pars-pro-toto can be subsumed under the heading of metonymy; others strictly distinguish between metonymy (where an *attribute* of the thing is substituted for the thing) and pars-pro-toto (where an *objective part* of the thing is substituted for the whole).

2.6.5 Irony

Irony is usually defined as a rhetorical figure in which the speaker *means* the contrary of what is actually *said*. Usually, a "dry, teasing, laconic, detached" way of speaking/ writing is involved, too.[8] Irony is not always easy to spot; a particularly clever writer may hide ironies within ironies. One can differentiate between **stable and unstable irony**. An example of the first would be the first sentence of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."[9] No such truth is universally acknowledged, is it? Instead, one might say that, in those days, a single woman in need of a good income was most probably in want of a husband. **Unstable irony** is less easily tangible. Whereas stable irony is said to undercut one meaning (by maintaining the contrary, as does Austen above), unstable irony does not offer another certainty instead. The speaker, or writer, does not mean the contrary – so what does s/he mean?

Dramatic irony is when the reader or, more particularly, the audience in a theatre knows that a character on stage (usually the hero or heroine) is about to make a mistake because they have been given facts in another scene that the character does not have. If the outcome is tragic, this is also called **tragic irony**. The audience, for instance, knows that Juliet is not dead, merely asleep, but Romeo does not and kills himself. (An irony of life is, for instance, when you wish hard for something to come true – and then it does come true, but too late. Or you realise you wished for the wrong thing.)

It is not always possible to distinguish between irony and **sarcasm**. Sarcasm is

sometimes considered to be irony's more aggressive brother. Others maintain that sarcasm is aggressive humour that does not show the subtlety involved in irony.

2.6.6 Paradox

- ■ a statement which combines contradictions to create unexpected meaning, often also revealing an unexpected truth

Oscar Wilde is often called the "Prince of Paradox" because of the many paradoxical statements in his works:

- "Nowadays all the married men live like bachelors and all the bachelors live like married men." (Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*)
- "Life is much too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it." (Wilde, Vera in *The Nihilists*)

3. NARRATIVE

3.1 Analysing Narrative

A **story**, in analysis, is more than simply an account of events, though that, too, is important. To be considered in any analysis is the **what** (what happens? what is told?) and the **how** (how is it told?). Structuralists (see below under theory) have introduced the terms **story** and **discourse** to differentiate between the so-called events of the story – the things that happen – and the way in which these are then told to the reader. In fact we only ever hear about the story by means of discourse: strictly speaking, we can only analyse the discourse, not the 'story' itself. Our understanding of the story is always coloured by the way in which the story is told. It is important in analysis to be aware of this! We as readers are usually manipulated, or persuaded, to accept a certain opinion or stance, and it is important to analyse the discourse in order to find out how. Why to we "identify with", as the modern slang is, or simply like a certain character but not another? Do we accept the moral tendency of the story, do we even understand the cultural assumptions underneath?

Story:
- events (things that either happen to or are actively brought about by a character)

- existents (characters involved)
- setting (place or places where things happen)

Discourse:

- narrative situation (who tells the story?)
- point of view (whose point-of-view is used?)
- narrative modes (methods author uses)
- chronology of events (in chronological order, flashforward, flashback)
- style (particular, recognisable style of author and/ or characters)

For more detailed explanations, see below.

3.1.1 Story and Plot

The distinction between the two levels **story** and **discourse** has not quite superseded the old tradition which differentiates between **story** and **plot**, introduced by the novelist and critic E.M. Forster in his *Aspects of the Novel* (1927). Forster defines **story** as the chronological *sequence of events* and **plot** as the *causal and logical structure* which connects events (not quite the same as story and discourse!). Most novels have at least one if not several subplots, i.e. stories within the main story involving other characters than the protagonists. These subplots usually support or reflect the main plot but they may also be diversions from that.

3.1.2 Space and Setting

The **setting** of a novel (a poem, a play) is usually important because it influences the atmosphere, not only that of the story but also that within the reader. In Gothic novels, ancient castles, dark forests, vaults etc. are used to create a feeling of horror in the reader. Sunny places on the other hand tend to make us feel free, happy, good, even as readers. The setting can of course also contrast with the story: a character's difficulties may be highlighted by the fact that everybody is happy in the sunshine only he or she is not. The setting can also reveal something about the characters: if their houses are described in detail, for instance, the way in

which they live influences our view of them: are they rich but stingy even in their furniture? Do they prefer an open space or a cosy little room? (Note the difference between e.g. "cosy" and "narrow" in such a description.) In 19th-century **local colo(u)r** fiction, the novel is set in a certain region and could not take place anywhere else. The characters use the local dialect and rely on local mores. Earlier novels, by contrast, often featured "wandering" characters such as the *picaro* (see picaresque novel). Nowadays, a lot of metropolitan fiction relies on urban spaces. Space and setting can also be left to the reader's imagination so as to suggest that this could happen anywhere. Recently, critics have begun to focus on the way in which nature is presented, used or abused in fiction (ecocriticism).

3.2 Characters

3.2.1 Characterisation

<u>**Major and minor characters**</u>

Most novels feature one or two **major** (or main) characters and a few (in Victorian literature: a lot of) **minor characters**. As in a play, the main characters are called **protagonists**, no matter whether they are good or bad, **heroes** or **heroines**, anti-heroes or anti-heroines. (If the book is called after the main character, this character is called an **eponymous** hero or heroine, e.g. Harry Potter, Jane Eyre, Silas Marner etc.) **Minor characters** are often functional, that is, they serve as so-called **confidants** or **foils** to the main character(s). A confidant is someone the protagonists relies on and so tells plans and secrets to. A foil, on the other hand, is like a distorting mirror: they serve to highlight the good (or bad) sides of the major character(s). In Emma, Harriet may seem to be a confidant, but in fact Emma tells her very little. Instead, she is a foil: she shows how much more intelligent and attractive Emma is. Minor characters can also be **witnesses** to the story, that is, they tell what happened to the main character from their point-of-view (**I-as-witness-narrator**, see below).

Unlike major characters, minor characters are often mere **types** or **stock characters**: they have only one distinctive feature and often cater to our prejudices and stereotypes.

3.2.2 Character Types, Flat and Round Characters

E.M. Forster, already mentioned above, introduced the terms flat and round characters to distinguish between **stock characters** and more complex characters.[10]

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[10] See E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass (London: Penguin, 1962 [1927]), chapter 4.

Flat character: In its purest version, a flat character, according to Forster, is "constructed round a single idea or quality." "The really flat character," he says, "can be expressed in one sentence such as 'I will never desert Mr. Micawber'." They are called **stock characters** or **flat** or **static** or **mono-dimensional** because they never change and can often be reduced to a **type** or even a caricature (e.g the typical old miser, the wicked stepmother, the beau, the innocent maiden, the spoilt child...). Flat characters are easy to remember, and they need not be boring at all, they can be highly entertaining. "Flat characters are very useful" to the novelist, Forster says, "since they never need reintroducing, never run away, have not to be watched for development, and provide their own atmosphere."

Round character: a complex, contradictory character. A round character develops throughout the story and is not reducible to a type (in modern terms also called "**multi-dimensional**" or "**dynamic**"). Foster's terms have been criticised as too reductive since it is quite possible for a character to be (or to seem) multi-dimensional yet entirely static, as for example Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. Yet as Forster said himself, Dickens, whose characters are almost all flat, "ought to be bad. He is actually one of our big writers, and his immense success with types suggests that there may be more in flatness that the severer critics admit." (p. 76) Forster suggested that "the test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round" (p. 81).

3.2.3. [Direct and Indirect Characterisation](#)

Jane Austen's novels often begin with a **direct characterisation** of her heroine: "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence ... " (*Emma*, ch. 1) We tend to rely on such an **explicit characterisation** coming from an omniscient narrator, **telling** us what a character is like, and then she **showing** us that character in action and conversation. Emma, of course, is also characterised **indirectly** by her actions as well as directly by other characters. Which characterisation is most reliable? And what would she say if she had to characterise herself? **Self-characterisation** is rarely as honest as the speakers make it out to be. Hardly anyone will tell of their own faults. As in a CV, you try to present your best points rather than reveal the worst, using so-called face-saving strategies. It is thus a fairly unreliable from of

characterisation. **Altero-characterisation** (characterisation by another) need not be reliable either. Other characters may be influenced by their social status, personal pique, social pressure or plain dishonesty not to reveal either the best or the worst of another character. They may also be too stupid or too egocentric to know how to characterise somebody else. This is why **figural characterisation** is also unreliable, so we tend to rely on the narrator to give us a fairly just estimation of the characters involved (**narratorial** or **authorial characterisation**).

3.3 Narratology

3.3.1 Narrative Situations according to Franz Stanzel

Stanzel, and Austrian literary scholar, was one of the first to give a persuasive definition of various narrative situations (*Erzählsituationen*):

- **first-person narrative situation/ first person narrator:** the character is present in the story, either as a protagonist or a witness (I-as-protagonist narrator, I-as-witness narrator). She or he can live through the story at the same time (**experiencing I**) or tell a story that happened in the past (**narrating I**).

- **authorial narrative situation/ omniscient narrator:** the story is told by a narrator who does not take part in the story, his or her presence is often hardly noticeable. However, they may intrude (intrusive author), into the story, either to address the reader directly or to give a personal or general opinion. Most authorial narrators are **omniscient**, that is, they know everything about the story and its characters. (Occasionally, though, an omniscient narrator may pretend not to know what happened to a particular character.) To the reader, such a narrator speaks with most authority and usually tends to be seen as the most reliable source of information concerning plot and characters.

- A **figural narrative situation** is the most complicated one. Here, the story is presented as if *experienced by and seen through the eyes of* a particular character, but it is *not told by* that character, so it is not a first-person but a third-person narrative situation. A large part of *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, tells no more than the protagonist, Elizabeth Bennet, can see or know. She is present in almost every scene and we are usually told about the people she meets from her point of view. Only

occasionally is the reader informed of things that Lizzy cannot know (so there is an omniscient narrator in the background, too). Other terms for such characters (not narrators, but characters in narrative situations) are **reflector or filter character**.

3.3.2 Narrative Situations according to Gérard Genette

To complicate matters, new terms have been introduced by **Gérard Genette** in **narratology**, the theory of narration.

Genette differentiates between

- the order of events
- the duration of events and the time it takes to tell incidents
- the frequency or repetition of events
- the mood (narrator's point of view, perspective, distance or proximity to events)
- the narrative voice

This may seem simple but it is not, at least the terminology is not. It does make sense to decide early on which terminology you favour and then to stick to that. However, so as to be able to understand other literary critics, you ought to know both varieties.

Easiest to remember are Genette's **overt narrator** (intrusive author), a narrator with clear opinions who makes these known even if s/he remains outside the story, and the **covert narrator**, one who is, by contrast, hardly noticeable. A narrator who is also a character in the story – either as protagonist or witness – is called a **homodiegetic narrator**, whereas one who remains outside but knows everything about story and characters is called a **heterodiegetic narrator**. If the homodiegetic narrator is also the protagonist of the narrative, it is an **autodiegetic narrator**. Franz Stanzel's first-person narrator and authorial (omniscient) narrator are thus similar to Genette's homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators.

3.3.2 Focalization

Roughly corresponding to the "what?" and the "how?" of a narrative are the questions "who speaks?" and "who sees?" This, as we have seen, need not be the same person (figural narrative situation). To Genette, the latter is better expressed by the term **focalization**. This is meant to include not only the perspective or point of view, but also the selection of information that is presented in the narrative. Genette distinguishes between various focalizers and types of focalization:

- An **external focalizer** is outside of the story, often with a broad view on story and characters, usually the narrator and therefore often also called **narrator-focalizer**. An **internal focalizer**, by contrast, is limited to the perceptions of a character in the story, thus also called **character-focalizer**. This is yet another term for reflector or filter character.

- **fixed focalization:** the story is narrated using a single focalizer.

- **variable focalization:** different parts of the story are reflect by means of different focalizers

- **multiple focalization:** the same part of a story is given repeatedly, each time using a different focalizer

- **collective focalization:** unusual, either focalizing by means of several narrators, not one by one but at a time (we narrative), or a group of characters (collective reflectors).

- **zero focalisation**: the perspective is not focused on anyone in particular (difficult to maintain)

3.4 Style

Much could and should be said about style. However, as many of the aspects discussed above and below contribute to this topic, it seems easiest to summarise just a few aspects of discourse not yet mentioned.

- **indirect discourse**: rendering a character's speech but summarising, explaining and using the narrator's words: "Tom threatened her: he let her know that that had seen her in the old cinema that day."

- **free indirect discourse**: rendering a character's speech but indicating that the words are the character's: "Tom said he saw her in there, in the old cinema."

- **direct discourse**: a direct quotation of a character's speech, but attributing it to its source: "I saw ya', in there, in that darn old cinema," Tom said.

- **free direct discourse**: direct speech, without attribution, thus seemingly minimizing the narrator's involvement: "I saw ya', in there, in that darn old cinema."

3.5 Time

3.5.1. Discourse and story time

Discourse time and **story time** refer to the aspects mentioned above: story time is the time in which the events unfold (e.g. "Story of an Hour"), discourse time is the time it takes to relate the story, including comments by the narrator, thoughts the characters may have etc.

- **scene/ real time**: story time and discourse time are the same (e.g. in dialogue, direct speech)
- **summary/ speed-up**: story time is longer than discourse time (e.g. when a less important part of the story is summarised: "He spent the next two years travelling the world, visiting the strangest places, but in 1987 he was back in town.")
- **stretch/ slow-down**: discourse time is longer than story time (e.g. when a character thinks long and hard about something: "It was a two-minute wait. She lit a cigarette and her thoughts reverted back to her childhood, to that day when...")
- **ellipsis**: discourse time skips part of the story time (nothing much is said about that time: "After two years, they met again ...")
- **pause**: story time stands still while discourse time goes on (e.g. when the narrator intervenes and says something general about one of the characters: "He completely forgot about his date. This was always the problem with our hero, something would come up and he would lose himself in it, forgetting about everything else for days on end.")

3.5.2. Chronology

Most stories follow a roughly **chronological** order. The heroine is born and has an uneventful childhood until one day, bang, she is beautiful and everything happens at once. Then she gets married and either the story ends here or it goes on to reveal what happens until she dies.

However, the way in which the story is told, the discourse, need not stick to that order, the story may be told **anachronologically**. Usually, this happens in **flashbacks** (**analepsis**: an important event that happened in the past is inserted into the story) or, less commonly, in **flashforwards** (**prolepsis:** a future event is told or hinted at). Mysteries sometimes begin with a chapter that is called a "prologue" and in which the murder happens, but then the next

chapter begins to tell the story when the victim is still alive. Other authors include a hint: "if he had known then that all this was to end so soon, he might have been more careful..."

3.5.3 Beginnings and Endings

Not all stories start with the birth of the hero. There are various types of beginnings:

- **Ab ovo** - (at the beginning of story, usually with the birth of the hero/ine)
- **In medias res** - (in the middle of the story, in the middle of the action)
- **In ultimas res** - (at the end of the story, e.g. with the murder in a mystery)

- **Open ending**: nothing is decided, the ending is open to interpretation.
- **Closed ending**: many eighteenth- and nineteenth century novels end with a marriage, only some with a tragedy such as the death of the heroine. A closed ending usually makes readers happy as they know where they are.

3.5.2 Style and time:

Narrative past: most novels and short stories are told in the past tense. However, some writers prefer the **narrative present** as it makes the reader feel more immediately involved in the story. Sometimes, a **tense switch** occurs: the narrator switches from past to present tense or vice versa, usually to achieve a certain emotional effect. A sudden reversion to the past tense may, for instance, indicate that, to the character, the event is now past and forgotten.

3.6 Subgenres

3.6.1. Novel and Romance

The novel is called 'novel' because, towards the end of the 17th or beginning of the 18th century stories told in prose rather than verse not only became more popular, they also turned to more realistic events and characters: there was something new about this sort of story which appealed most to the emerging middle-classes. Not surprisingly, most novelists of the eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries belonged to the middle class and wrote for a middle-class audience. (N.B. class is a very important concept in the understanding of novels of these periods!) Before that, the so-called **romance** told the story of an outstanding hero or incredibly beautiful and powerful heroine (or both), of princes and princesses, sometimes in

disguise, whose rather incredible feats and exploits often involved supernatural elements. A short novel is often called a **novella**.

3.6.2. Subgenres of the novel

In every bookshop novels are sorted according to their genre so that readers immediately know what kind of content to expect: a murder mystery or a love story? A comic, easy-to-read holiday novel or a complicated Booker-prize-winner? Here are a few genres you might be less familiar with:

- The **Bildungsroman** (also called **novel of education** or **novel of formation**) shows the development of the main character from childhood to at least maturity. Conflicts mostly centre on the different demands of self and society, ideally these are overcome so that the protagonists eventually settles down to become a useful member of society. Examples are J.W. Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister*; Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*, Jane Austen, *Emma.*

- In the **epistolary novel** the story is told by means of letters that are exchanged between various characters more or less involved in the unfolding events. The heroine writes to her confidante, the hero to his: this kind of novel was obviously most popular during a time when people still wrote long letters.. Nowadays, letters are replaced by e-mails, and not surprisingly, such epistolary novels are written using e-mails now. The advantage of such an exchange of letters or e-mails is the change in perspective: everyone tells the story from their point of view. A drawback is the fact that many aspects are repeated. Example: Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*.

- The **gothic novel** emerged in the late eighteenth century as part of Romanticism, the counter-movement to the rational enlightenment. Here, horror and mystery, imagination and erotic encounters are prevalent; the setting often involves ancient castles, ruined abbeys, desolate places, huge forests; the characters are persecuted maidens or immovable tyrants. Examples: Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*; Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

- **Fantasy**: stories of alternative worlds which follow their own rules and laws. J.R.R. Tolkien is considered to be the founding father of the genre that became more and more popular throughout the twentieth century. Examples: Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings*.

- The **historical novel** is, as the title suggests, set in history, often but not necessarily involving 'real' historical characters. Major historical events are foregrounded rather than

used as background material and shape the lives of the major characteres. Examples: Walter Scott, *Waverley*; George Eliot, *Romola.*

- The **industrial novel**, also called **social novel** or **Condition of England novel**, became particularly popular between 1830 and 1850, and may be said to counterbalance the Romantic insistence on mystery and imagination as it takes a close look at the actual conditions of life, especially those brought about by industrialisation, crime and poverty. Its emergence is thus associated with nineteenth-century **realism**. Examples: Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*; Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist.*

- The **picaresque novel** tells the story of a rascally, good-humoured hero, also called *picaro*, someone who does not take the laws to seriously but is out to seek adventures. This genre is actually older than the novel as we have come to define it, it is basically and adventure story consisting of various episodes in the life of the hero, often strung together by means of the journey-motif. A good example is Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*.

- **Science fiction** involves aliens, space ships, and the interest in future technological developments and the way in which this may lead to social or ecological changes. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is often considered the first science fiction novel. Many science-fiction novels have a utopian or dystopian cast. Example: Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World.*

- **Utopian** and **dystopian** novels often centre on possible technological advances used (or abused) by totalitarian regimes; the ruin of social order brought about by wars or epidemics, the abuse of nature etc. Examples: George Orwell, *1984*; Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale.*

3.7 Trends and Techniques:

- **Metafiction** reflects on the process of writing a story while telling a story. Usually, the plot is far from straightforward and the narrator is openly involved, commenting on what is happening either to him/herself or to the story and its characters in general. The line between fiction and reality is thin here and the techniques involved question the nature of art, or the art of nature. Examples: Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*; John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

- **Realism**: (see also **industrial/ social novel).** Realism is a nineteenth-century movement (even if realist elements entered fiction long before that) that focused on

style (factual, plain) as well as events: realist writers intended to show life as it is, particularly life as it is for the working classes and the poor. The industrial revolution had brought about major changes in the living conditions of those, and Realist writers hoped to effect changes to their advantage by presenting their plights to a large public.

- **Naturalism:** said to have developed from realism, influenced by science and philosophy, especially social determinism: the pessimistic conviction that nothing much can be changed due to the force of biology (instincts, behaviour) on the one hand and economic power on the other. (Émile Zola, Jack London, Stephen Crane).

- **Magic realism**: exploits the style of realism to tell of fantastic events as if they were everyday occurrences. Thus the narrator of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* functions as a kind of radio: in his head he can hear all those born on the same day.

- **Stream of Consciousness:** the term was coined by the American psychologist William James (a brother of the novelist Henry James) to describe the flow of thoughts, the way in which our minds are aware of various things at a time but on different levels of awareness. In fiction, this is rendered as the flow of thoughts of one character, introducing and dropping associations as they come and go, altogether less structured than e.g. a monologue. Example: Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*

- **Interior Monologue:** a long passage of stream of consciousness, but even less structured and more chaotic. Famously used in James Joyce's, *Ulysses*.

4. DRAMA

In literary analysis, one tends to focus on written texts and to neglect the fact that most plays were and are written to be performed on stage (an exception is the so-called **closet drama**, a kind of play often written in verse to be read to a small audience. A closet is a small private room.) It is important to keep in mind that plays have to be transformed, that the words on a page are meant to come alive, and that much, very much depends on the production. Characters that seem completely stupid on paper, for instance, can still be very much alive and captivating on stage, depending on the actor impersonating them...

4.1 Technical Terms

4.1.1. Basics
- **Act:** major unit (or structural division) of a dramatic text
- **Scene**: action unit within an act
- **Set**: objects and the backdrop making up a stage scenery
- **Props / Properties**: set of moveable objects needed by the actors
- **Primary text:** the speeches of the characters, including prologues and epilogues
  - prologue: an introductory speech
  - epilogue: a concluding speech
- **Secondary text:** the play's title, subtitle, the dramatis personae, stage directions, speech prefixes, any historical notes or comments, etc.
- **dramatis personae** The list (or cast) of characters

- **stage directions** (also **didascaly** (sg.) or **didascalia** (pl.), usually set in *italics*, a passage describing set, scenery, props, costumes, and characters

4.1.2 Speeches and Utterances

- **Speech:** utterance of a single speaker, either within a **dialogue**, a **monologue**, or an **aside**.
- **Monologue:** a single person speaking alone for a few or more lines, though he/ she may have an audience in the other characters on stage
  - In a **soliloquy** a character is alone on stage, speaking to the audience or to himself/herself
- **Dialogue:** Two or more persons are speaking (**polylogue:** more than two).
- **Aside:** a character speaks to another in an undertone while the other characters on stage cannot hear them (often involving comments on those). As this is rather awkward since the other characters have to pretend not to hear, this is rarely used in modern plays
  - **monological aside:** a character comments to himself while the others cannot hear him/her
  - **aside ad spectatores:** a character comments to the audience while the others cannot hear him/her

- **Speech prefix, speech heading:** the (next) speaker's name.
- **Turn allocation**
    - major characters have longer turns than minor ones (i.e. more lines to speak)
- **Stichomythia**
    - the speaker's alternating turns are of one line each, a rapid exchange of words
- **Repartee**
    - quick, witty response to top the remarks of another speaker

4.2 Structure

4.2.1 The three (Classical or Aristotelian) Unities

- **Unity of Action (Plot):** one plot, not several sub-plots
- **Unity of Place**: not more than one location
- **Unity of Time**: ideally, played time and playing time should be the same, in any case played time (story time, see below) should be no more than a day

Verisimilitude is a term used to describe how "real" a play seems: the idea here is that the play in performance should enable the audience to imagine they follow real events. To make this easier, the three unities were introduced by Aristotle in his influential work of literary criticism, *Poetics* (ca 335 BE). In 17th century French drama, the unities were strictly adhered to whereas in England, they were mostly ignored. The second and third unities – time and place – are therefore often regarded as optional, a possibility for the playwright to achieve dramatic effects.

4.2.2 Freytag's Pyramid

Even if they deviate from the three unities prescribed by Aristotle, most plays follow a simple but effective structure analysed at some length by Gustav Freytag, who summarised and visualised the structure in a diagram now called **Freytag's pyramid**.

```
                          climax (act III)
                                 /\
                                /  \
                               /    \
        rising action (act II)/      \falling action (act IV)
                             /        \
                            /          \
                           /            \
                          /              \
                         /                \
        exposition (act I)------------------catastrophe or
                                            dénouement (act V)
```
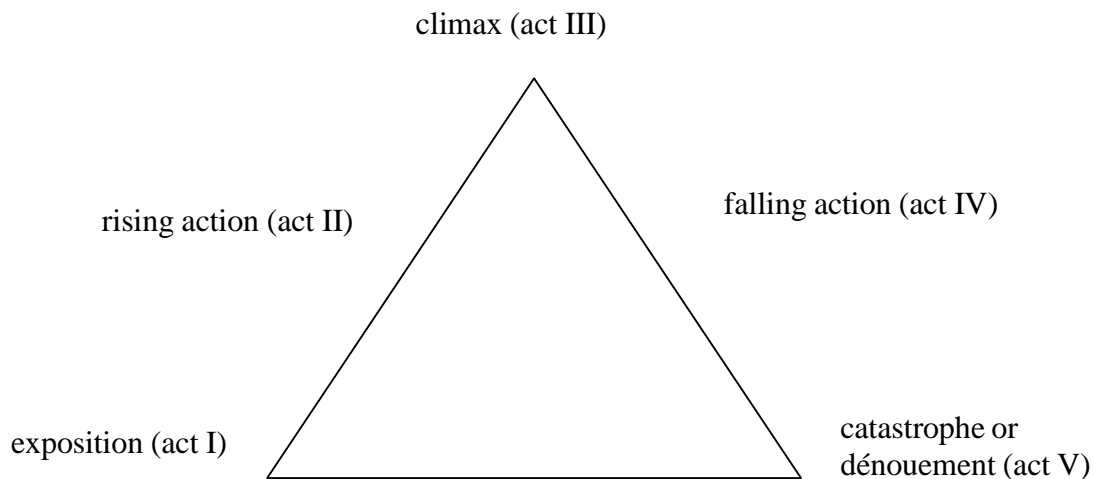
All that the audience needs to know to understand the action – characters, conflicts, etc. – is explained or at least hinted at in act I, the **exposition**. In the next act, the **rising action**, obstacles and secondary conflicts are introduced which complicate the situation for the protagonists. The **climax** occurs already in the third act, not in the last, as this is also a **turning point (peripety)**: from now on, the characters in a comedy will find that their affairs are mending; those in a tragedy will discover that their luck is running out. (peripety) in the plot. The **fourth act** delays the happy ending or catastrophe by introducing new complications. However, these will shortly be solved in the last act: tragedies usually end with death of at least the protagonists (**catastrophe**). Originally, the term *catastrophe* simply referred to a turning point in the affairs of the hero, from good to bad or bad to good. However, as the term is now understood to mean a turn to the worse, comedies are said to end with a so called **dénouement**. The French term *dénouement*, meaning 'un-knotting', is actually misleading as comedies usually end with the knot being tied (that is, with a marriage).

As with the unities, plays need not conform to these rules of structure. Nowadays, plays rarely have five acts, but only one, or three, or none. Nevertheless the idea is basically the same even in novels: action rises and falls, there are turning points and catastrophes or happy endings. The *Theatre of the Absurd*, see below, refuses to accept even that and manages to have a no such changes in tension at all.

4.3 Space and Time

In drama, the setting is most immediately important as the stage is (usually) the first thing the audience gets to see. Stages and theatre houses have changed throughout the ages, a fact which should not be forgotten in any analysis.

- **stage set:** the background visible to the audience, sets the tone of the play, creates an atmosphere
- **stage props**: all the things (properties) used on stage, movable furniture as well as accessories such as swords, flowers...

Instructions for the look of the stage and the number of properties are often but by now means always given in detail in the secondary text, the **stage directions**. However, in older plays, written in times when the actors did not have the means to paint tapestry on canvas and buy furniture for the stage, the scene is merely described in the primary text by the characters (a good actor takes the audience into a storm that s/he sees coming even if nothing is visible on stage). This is called **word scenery**.

Symbolic Space: the setting often corresponds to plot of the play, by means of rooms and their furniture or the arrangement of details much can be implied that the audience will understand without having the meaning spelled out to them. The space on stage can also be a means of implicit or indirect characterisation.

Time in drama is of course similar to time in narrative. Space and time can be equally important to the interpretation of the play: whenever one or the other is made explicit, the meaning is affected in one way or another. The terms story time/ discourse time can be used in drama, too, but more frequent are **played time** and **playing time.** The played time is the time taken by the story – a day, three days, twenty years in Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, where playing time is the time taken to perform the play, usually around two hours but sometimes, as in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, up to five. This of course also depends on the director's intentions and interpretation of the play.

4.4 Characterisation

4.4.1. Direct and indirect characterisation

- **explicit/ direct** characterisation:
    - *authorial*: either in the stage directions or by **telling names** (e.g."Hunter" for a policeman, or "Fainall" for someone who pretends to be what he is not)
    - *figural*: by characters themselves (self-characterisation) or
        - by other characters (altero-characterisation)

- **implicit/ indirect characterisation:**
    - **authorial (influenced by director's decisions)**: setting, scenery, dialect and sociolect (though an actor can also influence these on the figural level), any contrasts within the play, speeches given to characters, indirectly telling names (such as Harry Potter: a name so ordinary that he could be anyone), etc.
    - **figural (influenced by actors):** physical appearance, costume, masks, gestures, mimics, body language, dialect, style, register/ sociolect (whereas the dialect reveals the geographical origins of a character, the register/ sociolect reveals their social status)

4.4.2 Character Constellations and Configurations

Characters in drama often belong to certain groups, such as the Montagues and Capulets in *Romeo and Juliet*. Groups visible in the structure of the play form **constellations** based on sympathies and antipathies, family memberships etc. Most **protagonists** have at least one **antagonist** (*Gegenspieler*). Such constellations can always change, as do sympathies and antipathies – especially in comedies an antagonist is often won over. On stage, the people who belong to a certain group can be allied symbolically or visibly by costumes and stage props, as well as gestures and position: do they stick close to each other? Do they face each other?

Such groups can also be short-lived, visible only within a scene. The term **configuration** denotes the presentation of characters *together on stage*. The configuration thus changes whenever characters exit or enter the stage. This is important when analysing the development within groups and thus any development of the plot. Again, much depends on the director's decision. The secondary text usually directs entrances and exits, but sometimes it is unclear whether a character remains on stage or not. The proximity of characters on stage (who stands how close to whom?) is decided by the director and actors themselves.

N.B.: Constellation and configuration are often confused. This seems to be the generally accepted differentiation, though.

4.5 Awareness and Dramatic Irony

Self-awareness is an aspect of characterisation both in real life and in fiction. Thus, the extent of what characters know about themselves and about others is an important aspect of characterisation. If there is a discrepancy – a difference – between levels of awareness either between characters or characters and audience, one speaks of **discrepant awareness:** Iago knows he is a villain, but Othello does not and trusts him. **Congruent awareness** means all are on the same level. Discrepant awareness can be the result of **superior** or **inferior awareness**. The audience often has a superior awareness once they know all characters' goals and secret plans (cf. **dramatic irony, tragic irony**, explained above). This can be used for comic or tragic effect, e.g. when the audience knows the poor beggar is a duke in disguise. In **analytical drama** (e.g. *The Mousetrap*), the audience is left in the dark and in doubt much as the characters themselves.

4.6 Subgenres

Aristotle's *Poetics*, mentioned above, distinguished two sub-genres of drama: **comedy** and **tragedy**.

4.6.1 Comedy

- **Comedy:**

The basic structure is the same as in tragedy, or a reversal of that, but typically, of course, the audience gets to laugh a lot and is sent home in a good mood. "Comedy" can also be used to defer to any play that is not a tragedy, however, so that it need not involve comic elements.

- **High comedy:** appeals to educated audiences using complicated word plays, repartee, innuendo etc. and often has a hidden purpose (e.g. to criticise society), often involves characters from the upper classes

- **Low comedy:** emphasis is placed on situation comedy, slapstick, burlesque and farce, usually with lower-class characters

- **Burlesque:** parody of a serious play, provokes to laughter. May also appear within another drama, such as the play performed by the mechanics in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the distinction between farce and burlesque is not always clear-cut.

- **Farce:** a farce used to be added to the main play up until the nineteenth century and would be performed even after tragedies so as to release the audience in a good humour. Improbable plots, caricatured characters and exaggerated conflicts, slapstick, satire, word play, etc. may all be part of a farce. Even high comedy can be considered farcical, such as Wilde's *Importance of Being Earnest*. A farce can also appear as a play-within-a-play.

- **Comedy of Manners:** often a satire on social mores (rather than manners), mostly the mores of the upper classes. The language is that of high comedy, the characters are often types, and the plot revolves mostly about love or intrigues. An example is Sheridan's *The Critics*.

- The **Restoration comedies** (1660-1700, Wycherley, Etherege, Congreve) belong to the subgenre comedy of manners. (Restoration: Charles II was restored to the throne of England in 1660 after the Puritan Interregnum, when theatres were closed altogether. From that time on, women were allowed to play on stage, too: before that time, male actors acted all parts).

- **Romantic Comedy:** Romantic comedies, or Romances, are about lovers and their struggles, but as in narrative Romances, the plot involves magic and princes in disguise rather than focussing on "romantic" dates or candle-light dinners. A good example is Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

- **Satiric Comedy:** These comedies are perhaps more serious than others, having a critical purpose, mostly attacking social mores.. Ben Jonson, Shakespeare's friend and rival, wrote several satiric plays ridiculing greed and fashionable 'metaphysical' theories, most popular are *Volpone* and *The Alchemists*.

- **Comedy of Humours:** Ben Jonson also developed the comedy of humours, which is not just humorous but based on an assumption maintained by physicians from antiquity until well into the eighteenth century, i.e. that one's character and temperament are determined by the predominance of one of four humours (= body liquids, *Körperflüssigkeiten*). According to this medical theory, if all four humours are in balance, the person is healthy. However, if one of them dominates, the temperament changes: someone with a surplus of blood is a sanguine (good-humoured) character, courageous but also inclined to be amorous. Someone afflicted by phlegm (= phlegmatic) is hard to rouse, while someone suffering a surplus of yellow bile (= choleric) is, by contrast, quickly offended and bad tempered. Black bile (=

melancholia) causes sleeplessness and irritability. The characters in a comedy of humours are marked by the typical characteristics of the humour he or she suffers from. See Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*.

- **Melodrama:** In the 19th century, comedies were often mixed with musical interludes (an early version of our musicals); sensational and affecting plots would appeal to the audience's emotions and cause much tears and sighing, but as the ending was usually a happy one, melodrama is still considered a type of comedy.

4.6.2 Tragedy

The protagonist of a tragedy as it was first described in Aristotle's *Poetics* is, to begin with at least, a good man, an important figure in society, courageous and morally sound, someone who appeals to the audience. However, his overconfidence in his own abilities (**hubris**), often accompanied by pride or ambition, causes him to commit a grave error, a misjudgement or miscalculation called **hamartia** or **tragic flaw (tragic error)**. This leads to a reversal of his fortunes, from good to bad. The tragedy can also be willed on him by the Gods so that the *hamartia* is strictly speaking theirs, not his. The audience feels pity and also fear for him, and spectators are supposed to go home with their feelings cleansed by a **catharsis** (the exact meaning of the term is still being debated but it is generally understood to be a kind of purging or purifying of the emotions).

- **Senecan Tragedy:** the plays written by the Roman Stoic philosopher and poet Seneca (ca 4 BC – 65 AD) were rediscovered by playwrights in the 16th century and became the model for revenge tragedies during the Renaissance, both in England (Elizabethan tragedy) and on the continent (Neoclassical tragedy). The five-act structure is maintained by a complex plot and an elevated style of dialogue, supernatural elements are also involved. See also Revenge Tragedy.

- **Revenge Tragedy / Tragedy of Blood/ Elizabethan Tragedy:** This type of tragedy was popular during the Elizabethan Age, making good use of certain elements taken over from the **Senecan tragedy** (ghosts, revenge, murder and bloody deeds of all kinds). Examples Kit Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta;* Shakespeare, *Macbeth.* Elizabethan tragedy is mostly written in blankverse (see above), the protagonists are of a high social rank. Characters from the lower orders have minor, often comic roles (providing the **so-called** comic relief) and speak in prose.

- **Domestic** or **Bourgeois Tragedy:** With the rise of the middle classes in the 18th century, tragedies no longer focused on protagonists from the highest social ranks. Now, the hero or heroine came from the lower or middle classes and their tragedies no longer followed Aristotle's prescriptions. Their disasters involve their families and homes ("domestic"); the audience suffers with them, sharing their fate with empathy rather than regarding them with pity and fear. Example: George Lillo, *The London Merchant*.

4.6.3 Tragicomedy

- Already in many of Shakespeare's plays the boundaries between comedy and tragedy are blurred (e.g in his so-called "problem plays"). In tragicomedies, the main conventions are those of tragedy but instead of a catastrophe, a sudden reverse in the fortunes of hero and heroine leads to an unexpected happy ending. Many plays that could be called tragicomedies are nevertheless subsumed under the general heading of comedy.

4.6.4 Epic, absolute drama, metadrama

- **Absolute drama:** plays that conform to the structure outlined above (five acts, unity of action, catastrophe/ dénouement etc.) belong to the so-called **closed form** of drama.

- Many modern plays tend to have an **open form** without such recognisable patterns. **Epic drama** employs so called epic devices such as stage managers, narrator figures or choruses on stage; epic here refers to such narrator figures who communicate the events to the audience and comment on what is happening or about to happen. It makes use of so-called alienation effects (*Verfremdungseffekte*).

- **Metadrama:** To some, Aristotle's notion that art imitates life (mimesis) is less plausible than the idea that life imitates art. Or as Jacques in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* II.7.140 famously puts it: "All the world's a stage / And all the men and women merely players / That have their exits and their entrances". (*theatrum mundi* or world- as-theater **motif**). Metadrama, like metafiction, openly refers to the fact that it is fiction rather than trying to hide its nature. Elements of metadrama or metafiction are already to be found in many early works; postmodern drama is often metafictional, pinpricking their readers/audience whenever they seem willing to suspend their disbelief by getting involved in the story.

5. LITERARY THEORY

5.1 Standard Approach (still widely in use)

Most people, most of us, when analysing a novel or play, consider the following aspects to be important:

- literal and/or figurative meanings
- characterisation
- historical / biographical background
- role of emotions
- folk psychology
- common sense

Modern theories reject several of these as unimportant or misleading. It is important to consider that many twentieth-century theories share a set of assumptions:

5.2 Key Terms and Their Literary Theories

5.3.1 (Russian) Formalist Approach, early 20th

century defamiliarisation: *Verfremdungseffekte*

denotation (Grundbedeutung)
- ▪ literal meaning of a word
- ▪ primary significance/ reference

connotation (Mitbedeutung)
- • potential range of other, minor (or secondary) significances
- • implications

5.3.2 New Criticism

(roughly 1930s to 1960s)
- ▪ intrinsic approach to literature (*werkimmanent*) (i.e. does **not** consider background, historical context, author's biography)
- ▪ **close reading:** very detailed examination of a poem or a short text passage

The term **close reading** is still widely used. Also still well known are the following terms:

- • **intentional fallacy**: "The error of criticizing and judging a work of literature by attempting to assess what the writer's intention was" *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*
- • **affective fallacy**: "The critical error of evaluating a work of art in terms of its effects on the reader" *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*

(**N. B**. By contrast, reader-response criticism is interested in literature's effects on readers.)

5.3.3 Structuralist Approach

Based on Ferdinand de Saussure's *Semiotics* (the study of signs):

1. **langue**: the system of a language
2. **parole**: a single utterance
3. **signifier**: the linguistic sign (sound or graphic)
4. **signified**: the mental concept or image

Structuralists look for

- Parallels
- Echoes
- Reflections/repetitions
- Contrasts
- Patterns

5.3.4 Poststructuralism

Poststructuralists look or:

- Contradictions/ Paradoxes
- Shifts/ Breaks
- Conflicts
- Absences/ Omissions
- Aporia (a "pathless path" or insoluble conflict)

They practise the so called **Deconstruction** of texts, that is, they look for all the things that the text (seemingly) hides.

5.3.5 Marxist Criticism
- sees text in its social and economic contexts
- considers reproduction of ideologies in literature

5.3.6 Psychoanalytical Criticism
- looks for evidence of unconscious or suppressed material resurfacing in text
  - 'unconscious' motives and feelings of either authors or characters
- uses literature as evidence for psychoanalytical models/ assumptions

5.3.7 Feminist Criticism
- exposes patriarchal assumptions about the role of women in society
- promotes discovery and re-evaluation of women writers
- examines social, cultural, and psychosexual contexts of literature

Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature, p. 197

5.3.8 Cultural Studies

- sees texts as multi-layered
    1.   looks at aspects of and inter-relationships between gender and race, the means of production, the media, popular culture
- do not differentiate between 'high' and 'low' culture
- uses "thick description" (detailed description of cultural phenomena)

5.3.9 New Historicism

- juxtaposes non-literary and literary texts of the same period
- rejects idea of history as reconstruction of reality
- sees history as construct based on texts and discourses
- examines power-struggles: who has/ had right to speak?

5.3.10 Postcolonial Criticism

- interested in questions of race and racial politics
- re-reads literary texts from the point-of-view of the colonised
- rediscovers suppressed elements of literary texts

5.3.11 Reader-Response Theory

- texts are realised in the act of reading
- a text is always more than an author could have intended
- the reader fills the **gaps** (*Leerstellen*) in the act of reading and thus *creates* the text
- Tries to answer the question how a text determines its reading

There is so much one could say about Literary Theories – however, I must contend myself with these very, very brief outlines. See the new Moodle course for further details!!

6. PRESENTATIONS AND *HAUSARBEITEN*

6.1 Presentations

Concept
Make sure you know what you are talking about (ask if you don't).
Ask yourself: do you want

- to please
- to instruct
- to please and instruct **your audience**? What do they need to know!

You may think that's not important, but it is. A presentation need not be boring, and it certainly should not be aimed primarily at the lecturer.

Timing

- Practise: how long does it take?
- Prepare more material than you intend to use
- Prepare questions to start a discussion

Handouts

- Keep them short
- Print statements, not just facts
- Don't distract the audience from your presentation by long texts/quotations
- Add list of books you used or cited (= bibliography)

6.2 Term Papers: How to write a *Hausarbeit* – Some Suggestions

Please note that these are suggestions only and may reflect my personal preferences. You may find them helpful, but of course there are many other ways of writing good term papers.

The Institute has a new style sheet (literary studies):

http://www.phil.uni-greifswald.de/philologien/anglistik/studium/hausarbeiten.html

These guidelines will tell you all about the formal aspects of term papers: the number of pages, print size, language matters, quotations and bibliographies. Do not skip reading this or you'll regret it: papers that do not fulfil the formal requirements are usually rejected out of hand. Not everyone is happy with this particular style sheet, though, so ask if there are any specific requirements you should consider over and above those given in the guidelines.

6.2.1 How to start

Start thinking about a general aspect you are interested in and narrow it down to a central idea or argument you wish to pursue. In an essay, your main task is **not** to convey useful information in the form of facts about, say, Shakespeare, though you certainly should have that factual knowledge and include facts and dates and so on. It is your task to **interpret** a text, to position and discuss **arguments**, and if possible to give a new perspective on the text

as well as previous interpretations. Topics suggested by the lecturer may help, but often you may find it more interesting to come up with your own ideas. Please keep in mind that a presentation is much broader in outline than an academic essay! Once you have got a vague outline for your paper in your head, **discuss it with your course instructor** (and if you are unable to find a topic, discuss that, too).

- get a clear idea of your topic
- focus on a central aspect and <u>give your reasons</u> for choosing this aspect in the introduction
- find secondary literature/ other relevant material (see "bibliography" in this script)

Please note:

- **Don't** include biographies or summaries of novels or plays! You do **not** write an article for, say, Wikipedia, in which the goal is to give a broad survey of the life and works of any one particular author. Instead, you should deal with one aspect (perhaps two) of the work(s) you have chosen, and go into detail and depth.

6.2.2 Structure

Introduction and Conclusion (together roughly 1/6 to ¼ of the paper)

The Introduction should hook the reader – that is, you should give a clear idea of what you are doing in this paper and why that is interesting, important, and relevant. (The seminar you have attended should not be mentioned.) A voluntary reader will not go beyond the introduction if that is boring or incoherent. In a short essay, the introduction should give a clear idea of what is to come. That does not necessarily imply introducing every single chapter of you paper, a general outline is enough. Briefly address the question why you chose to restrict yourself to a certain aspect (if that is what you do) or why the central argument is important to any interpretation of the play (or novel, or poem). If you adopt a particular theoretical standpoint, say so. Start with an interesting quotation or anecdote, but not with a general statement about the importance of the author: It is highly unlikely that somebody who has not yet heard of Shakespeare will be induced to read your essay on his comedies! In a longer essay or thesis, you should also give an overview of the research that has already been done in the field that you have chosen, and the possible importance of your contribution.

Similarly, the Conclusion should not just summarize all that you have already said. (Repeating the same five components of your essay in the Introduction, chapter 1 and chapter 2 as well as in the Conclusion will tax the most benevolent reader's patience.) Instead, you may introduce a personal opinion you have not dealt with in the main part of your essay, conclude your argument by stressing which points may lead to new developments/ insights, point out which aspects of your survey/ argument are worth considering over and above those you have already dealt with, or discuss an interesting conclusive opinion/ quotation taken from another book/ author/ critic.

Main Part:

The main part should be divided into subchapters that make sense and build on each other. Historical introductions should come first, not last. **Do not retell the story!** Assume that your reader is familiar with the work you have chosen, but may not immediately recall particular sentences or passages. If these are important to your argument, quote them.

Paragraphs: a paragraph should express an idea. As a very vague rule of thumb, it should contain at least five sentences. Paragraphs are separated by indenting the first line *(=1. Zeile einrücken!)*

Language: formal! However, writing well is a skill any student, particularly a budding philologist, should value and practice.

6.2.3 Criticism:

The use of secondary material is of vital importance to any essay. Of course it is not always easy to find relevant books or articles. Literary sleuthing may be fun, though – don't just use a computer for your research, pay a visit or two to the library. Start with works of a general nature and browse through their bibliographies, something may turn up. If you really cannot find anything, go and see your lecturer about it. Do not rely on internet sources alone. Do not rely on any single work: an important part of academic research is to compare various sources and findings and decide which of them is most likely to be right / relevant / innovative and so on. If you find widely different statements, discuss those in your essay. Be objective: try to understand what has been said before you dismiss it. An interpretation need not be an evaluation: it is a (re-)discovery, an explanation of both the form and the content of an

interesting text. Be part of a debate concerning the topic you've chosen: write as if you had a say, too. (In order to have something to say, though, you'll have to know what has been said before…) Collecting and presenting secondary material will give your paper depth and scope. Reading other critics' opinions will point out to you which important aspects you've missed or even misunderstood. A good interpretation will talk about the literary, political, historical, or scientific context of the novel/play/poem, thus pointing out connections and dissimilarities that one simply cannot know without having read a lot.

Quotations: Every quotation, phrase, idea, even historical facts unless they are common knowledge, anything that you have taken from another source has to be acknowledged (see note on plagiarism). You will soon find out how annoying it is if critics give you a quotation without saying where it is from. Apart from enabling your reader to check out the quotation for herself, you are making sure that anyone questioning the validity of the claim, fact, or idea you have presented is silenced: you had it from good authority. (This is one of the reasons why you should make sure that your authority is in fact good!) Do not merely enumerate quotations in your essay: discuss them, evaluate them, and place them in a context that is relevant to your central idea!

Footnotes: According to the new guidelines, literary references are to be inserted into the text (in brackets). Footnotes should thus go beyond a literary reference by discussing any material, personal opinion, or idea that does not quite fit in the main text, either because it is not all that important or because it would interrupt the flow of thoughts beautifully expressed in a paragraph. For instance, a footnote may contain the opinion of a critic who does not agree with what you say in the main text – if, that is, you consider that opinion to be of minor importance. Additional information should also be inserted as a footnote.

6.2.4 Some typical mistakes:

Pronouns

Be careful with pronouns (he, she) – you need to make sure your readers know who you refer to. The use of the personal pronoun "I" is still not accepted by many academics, especially in Germany. Sometimes, though, it is hard to avoid it. Especially in English, the use of the passive voice ("one can see that" or "it has to be said that") is considered awkward, and an

occasional "I" is surely better than a royal "we" or a wooden repetition of passive constructions.

<u>Tense</u>

A general rule: use the present tense when you discuss the book and its contents, the past when you talk about the author's life. (e.g. "Dickens **did** not believe that criminals **led** adventurous lives. In *Oliver Twist*, the villains **live** in poverty and squalor..."). Critics are usually quoted in the present tense, e.g. "Harold Bloom claims that…" Avoid tense switching within one sentence – and do look up the difference between past tense and present perfect!

<u>Proof reading</u>

Proof read your paper! Don't just use a spell check, though of course you should do that, too. Read your paper with a particular focus on coherence: does every paragraph make sense? Read it again and pay attention to tense switching and then read it at least once more to focus on typos.

More mistakes and how to avoid them:

- The titles of plays and books are usually given in italics (= *kursiv*), those of essays and articles in quotation marks.
- Keep a lookout for full stops after references etc.
- Familiarize yourself with English comma rules (yes, there are some).
- Reconsider your title : does it still fit?
- Add a bibliography (authors in alphabetical order!)
- Proof read your paper more than once!

6.2.5 Plagiarism :

Every idea, thought, phrase, quotation, anything that is taken from another source (book, article, internet, e-mail, or interview) has to be acknowledged – not only in the bibliography but in the text itself! If you take over the sentences from somebody else, you have to put them in quotation marks. If you paraphrase the sentences, you still have to give the source without the quotation marks. However, changing one or two words only and pretending the sentence

is now your own already counts as plagiarism! Give credit where credit is due: if an idea is not your own, don't pretend it is. If you have had an idea before reading that somebody else has had it first, you still have to acknowledge the fact that the idea has already been around – all else is bad scholarship and may result in your being accused of having stolen that idea. Lat but not least, add the Plagiarism Declaration (see homepage) to your paper. Even if you avoid that, however, anyone detected plagiarizing from any source whatsoever will fail. Universities rely on academic honesty and integrity, and will not deal lightly with offenders.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Contains only a very few useful and used works, plus their OPAC numbers).

The structure of this script is partly based on a similar course given by Heike Bast at our institute and by Stefanie Lethbridge and Jarmila Mildorf, "Basics for English Studies," at the University of Freiburg. For their excellent introduction to literary studies, available in pdf, see their homepage: http://www2.anglistik.uni-freiburg.de/intranet/englishbasics/

General:

M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Ford Worth, 1993. **314/HW 1000 A161(6) and 630/HG 101 A161(6)** [a new edition is available]

Studying Literature: A Practical Introduction, ed. Graham Atkin (New York, 1995). **314/HW 1000 A873**

Key Concepts in Literary Theory, eds J. Wolfreys, R. Robbins, and K. Womack (Edinburgh, 2nd ed. 2006). **314/EC 1820 W 861 (2)**

Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory, ed. John A. Cudden (London, 1990). **314/EC 1020 C964 P3(4) oder 630/EC 1020 C964(4)** [a new edition is available]

Sonja Fielitz, *Roman: Text & Kontext*. Berlin, 2001 **314/HW 2111 F463**

Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Kinds and Modes,* Oxford, 1985. **314/EC 6000 F785**

Michael Meyer, *English and American Literatures*. Tübingen und Basel: Francke, 4th ed. 2011 (ca. 16,90 EUR). **630/HG 105 M613(2)**

Helge Nowak, *Literature in Britain and Ireland: A History*. Tübingen und Basel: Francke, 2010. **630/HG 250 N946**

Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002 **630/HD 101 P826(2) oder 590/HD 101 P826(2)**).

Paul Poplawski (ed.), *English Literature in Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. **630/HG 250 P828**

Andrew Sanders. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. **630/HG 250 S215(3)**

Literary Theory

Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: MUP, 2002) **630/EC 1850 B279(2)** (This is the best introduction to literary theory I know)

Jonathan Culler. *Literary theory. A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. **630/HW 1200 C967** (Lecturers love it, students hate it)

Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature, ed. Wilfred Guerin (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) **630/EC 1710 G932** [A revised version (1999) is out but unfortunately not yet available in our UB]

David Lodge (ed.). *Modern Criticism and Theory. A Reader.* London & New York: Longman, 1988 **630/EC 1700 L822** and **314/HW 1200 L822**

Shlomith Rimmon Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*. London and New York: Routledge, 1991. **314/HW 2110 R577**

Other:

Daniel Pool: *What Jane Austen ate and Charles Dickens knew. The Facts of Daily Life in Nineteenth-Century England.* New York: 1994.

E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, ed. Oliver Stallybrass. London: Penguin, 1962 [1927].

This script is neither exhaustive nor faultless: it is just a script. I apologise if I have confused you more than necessary, and would be glad to know that you found it helpful.

M. H.