South Valley University
Faculty of Arts
Department of English

Criticism

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مقرر الفرقة الأولى قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلية التربية

تربية أساسى

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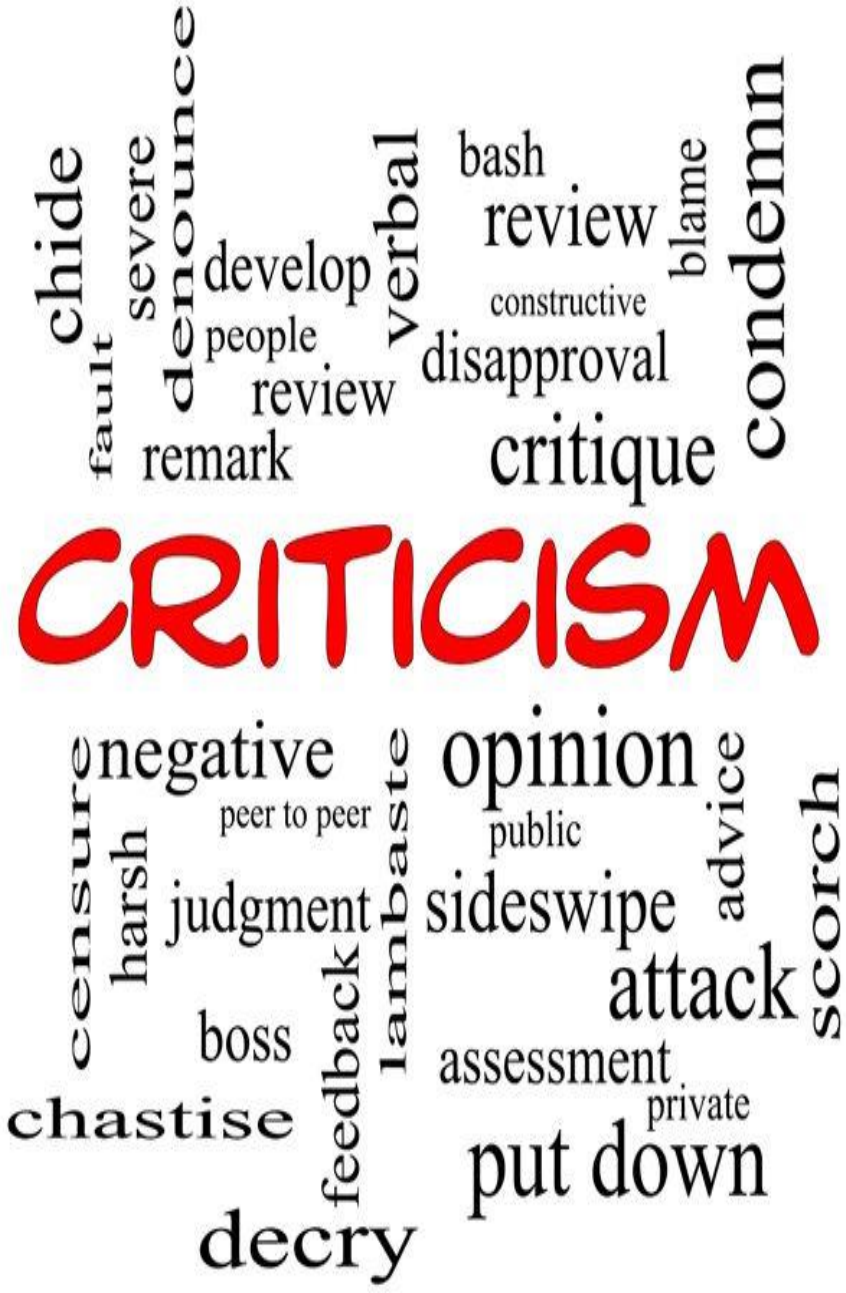
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Introduction

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

Sir Richard Steele, Irish essayist and politician

Reading and writing seem to be inseparable acts, rather like two sides of the same coin. It all sounds so easy and natural. When we encounter a book that touches our emotions or disturbs our assumptions, for example, we want to share our reactions with someone else. We may call a friend to talk about it, or if there is nobody to listen, we may turn to writing to explain what we think and feel about what we have read.

In school, where reading and writing are assigned, the problem can be more serious. Students sometimes struggle not only with expressing their opinions but also with finding them. When reading works that someone else has chosen for them, students may have trouble identifying something to write about. In the worst case scenario, they may not even understand very well what they've read.

Academic survival depends on developing skills that will allow you to explore the meaning, aesthetics, or craft of a text and then write about the insights you've discovered.

They are the skills of a literary critic, a person who examines how a piece of writing works, what it has to say about the culture or author that produced it or about human nature in general, why it was written, in what ways it is similar to other works, and how it ranks in comparison with them. In short, to be a successful critic, you need to be a resourceful reader, one who can utilize the principles of more than a single school of literary analysis and who can write with insight and understanding, as well as clarity and grace.

Regardless of the assignment you are given, practicing literary criticism requires more than a single effort or skill. Even answering a question in class requires that you think about your response before speaking. Written criticism requires still more care. Whether you are dealing with a long research paper or an essay question on an exam that has a time limit, the job calls on you to carry out several complex tasks, and the process can be overwhelming if you try to think about the various steps all at once. As a result, the hard part for many people is getting started, as where to begin isn’t always obvious.

To gain some control over the process, you can use several fairly simple techniques to help make your initial approach. They take little time but can pay big dividends later. The techniques suggested as starting points here involve connecting reading and writing so that you can discover what you have to say. They include making marginal notations, keeping a reading log, and using prewriting strategies. It is likely that some techniques for engaging the text will work better for you than others. For example, some readers find that making entries in a log disrupts their enjoyment of a text, whereas others make it a regular part of their reading process. You will have to be the judge of which strategies are most effective for you and which you find to be unproductive.

Every piece of literature conveys meaning, but understanding its message can be a complicated process. In many cases, unless stated otherwise by the author, the message can be subjective. This means each of us might interpret the same text in a slightly different way. This is why scholars have devised ways to understand how people interpret a text. These ways have since become known as literary theories.


LITERARY CRITICISM

Concepts and Schools of Literary Criticism

Literary Criticism

When reading, the reader typically forms an interpretation of the work. A person's interpretation of a work is often based on life experience, culture, and influences. Some readers and critics take these interpretations and write a literary criticism. The definition of literary criticism is the analysis, comparison, evaluation, and interpretation of a work of literature. Often engaging in debates with other critics to help prove their points and make value judgments, literary critics hope to provide a reader with meaningful connections. While most written literary criticism dates from the twentieth century, questions about the social value of literature date back to the time of Plato and Aristotle. In his Poetics, Aristotle stressed the importance of literary art. He was able to provide universal insights for an audience that critics today have adapted when writing literary criticism.

Literary criticism is essentially an opinion, supported by evidence, relating to theme, style, setting or historical or political context. It usually includes discussion of the work’s content and integrates your ideas with other insights gained

from research. Literary criticism may have a positive or a negative bias and may be a study of an individual piece of literature or an author's body of work.

Literary criticism is NOT a plot summary, a biography of the author, or simply finding fault with the literature. Researching, reading, and writing works of literary criticism will help you to make better sense of the work, form judgments about literature, study ideas from different points of view, and determine on an individual level whether a literary work is worth reading.

Some critics consider literary criticism as the application of theories to analyze literary works. It helps to clarify the relationship between authors, readers, and literary texts. It helps readers to enjoy reading and studying literature.

Types of Literary Criticism

There are many types of literary criticism. All literary criticism is an opinion that is based on evidence that relates to history or culture. All literary criticism discusses the work and connects the work to insights based on a literary theory.

Literary criticism is the method used to interpret any given work of literature. The different schools of literary

criticism provide us with lenses which ultimately reveal important aspects of the literary work.

Literary criticism is concerned with how the literary text is analyzed. The literary critic is more concerned the point of view of the writer or with the symbols used by the writer or any other technical elements used by the writer. These different approaches dealing with a literary text refer to different branches in literary criticism. Some of these approaches are formalistic criticism (New Criticism), biographical criticism, historical criticism etc. These branches can be briefly discussed:

Formalist criticism (New Criticism)

Formalist criticism or new criticism is mainly interested in elements of the form in the literary work. It is mainly interested in the style, structure, tone and images in the literary texts. The critic searches for the value of these aspects and how they achieve the content of the literary text. A formalist critic reads literature as an independent work of art rather than as a reflection of the author's state of mind or as a representation of a moment in history. Such things as biography, history, politics, and economics, for example, are considered far less important than the writing's

form. This school of criticism focuses on the form of the text, which means on how it is written.

Biographical Criticism

A biographical approach considers the author's life. It is at odds with New Criticism, so a work takes on a different meaning when viewed through the lens of an author's life. Biographical Criticism is based on the knowledge of an author's life. This can help readers understand author's work more fully. Events in a work might follow actual events in a writer's life just as characters might be based on knowledge of the author's life. This school does not focus on the form of the text but on the writers' life and its reflection on the literary work.

Historical Criticism

Historical criticism does not focus on the facts of an author's personal life or on the form of the text. This school focuses on a literary text in the context of its time, and sometimes makes connections with other literary texts that may have influenced the author. The main aim of this school is to explain the historical background of the literary text and makes interpretation in the light of the time of the work. In the encyclopedia Britannica historical criticism is defined as

“literary criticism in the light of historical evidence or based on the context in which a work was written, including facts about the author’s life and the historical and social circumstances of the time. This is in contrast to other types of criticism, such as textual and formal, in which emphasis is placed on examining the text itself while outside influences on the text are disregarded.”

Social Criticism (Marxist Criticism)

This school is based on Marxist theory of sociopolitical ideas. Most of these ideas are based on Marx philosophy. The main principles of this approach are economic and political conflicts. It mainly focuses on class differences. This school of criticism focuses on social interaction among the different classes in a community. The approach highlights radical social reform, which starts in 1930 and focuses on literature as a means of social and economic solutions. The social critic focuses on social contents of a literary text such as culture, race, class etc. So it focuses on themes more than form. It aims at correcting social injustice. Some Marxist critics have used literature to describe socioeconomic issues that too often advance capitalist money and power rather than socialist morality and justice.

Feminist Criticism

A Feminist critical lens evaluates and interprets a work through the perspective of feminism. Some Feminist criticism analyzes the gender of an author in order to understand how a piece of literature is written. Other feminist critics analyze the portrayal of females in works and how they might reinforce stereotypes. Still, other Feminist criticism looks at the gender of the reader and their response to a work.

Literary Criticism vs. Literary Theory

While some may use these terms synonymously, and although they are related, there is a difference between literary criticism and literary theory. Literary criticism, the study of a literary text, can begin with a particular literary theory. Literary theory is the idea that guides literary criticism. Theory helps to differentiate literary texts from the others; it works to classify literary texts into categories and schools of thought. One way to think of literary theory is that it acts as a critical lens, or a way to view a particular work. A critical lens allows a critic to analyze a text within a specific theory. Using a critical lens, the critic evaluates the literary

text based on assumptions within a specific literary theory and then develops a literary criticism.

A literary theory

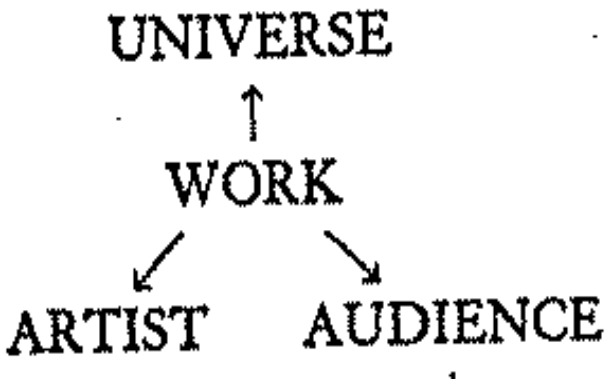
Literary theory depends on the ideas that critics use to analyze and explain literary texts. Critics and writers use specific ideas based on some theoretical assumptions. Those critics decide which aspects are important in the literary work depending on theoretical assumptions such as social, psychological, or cultural etc. A Literary theory refers to a particular form of literary criticism in which particular academic, scientific, or philosophical approaches are followed in a systematic manner to analyze literary texts. For example, a psychological theory offers an interpretation or reading of a text that focuses on the psychological ideas. Literary theory introduces systematic approaches to literary texts. For example, psychoanalytic literary criticism uses the theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung to reach a critical understanding of a literary text.

Four Critical Theories from the view point of M H Abrams

Meyer (Mike) Howard Abrams (born July 23, 1912) is an American literary critic, known for works on Romanticism, in particular his book The Mirror and the Lamp. Contribution of him in the postmodern literary criticism cannot be avoided. Abrams stands unique because of his four oriental critical theories which cover up entire history of English literary theories and criticism. In literature nothing is existed out of universe, text, artist, and audience. As Abrams demonstrates in the "Orientation of Critical Theories" chapter of his book The Mirror and the Lamp. From Plato until the late 18th century the artist was thought to play a back-seat role in the creation of art. He was regarded as no more than "a mirror," reflecting nature either as it exists or as it is perfected or enhanced through the mirror. This artist-as-mirror conception remained dominant until the advent of the Romantic era (Abrams sets the date around 1800), when the artist began to make his transformation from “mirror” to “lamp”—- a lamp that actively participates in the object it illuminates.

To work on M. H. Abrams is most influential studies in the field of criticism and theory. Till today, the chief

tendency of modern criticism is to consider the aesthetic quality in terms of relation of art to the artist. M.H. Abrams in his essay “Orientation of critical Theories” tries to the growth of criticism in relation of art, artist, and audience. Considering a whole work of art, there are four elements which are well distinguished and made important in almost all the theories, first, there is the work, the artistic product itself. Since this is a human product, the next common element is the artist. The work is directly or indirectly related to the universe inclusive of man, material things, events and ideas. The audiences come as the final element. On this frame work of artist, work, universe and audience, M.H. Abrams has spread out various theories for comparison. To make matters easier he has arranged the four elements in a convenient triangular pattern with the work of art, the thing to be explained in the center.



According to this frame work, M. H. Abrams gives four critical theories i.e. Mimetic, Pragmatic, Expressive, and Objective theories.

1) **Mimetic theory** - The first category of mimetic theories forms the oldest and is, according to Abrams, the “most primitive” of the four categories. According to this theory, the artist is an imitator of aspects of the observable universe. This theory focuses on the relationship between text and universe (by "universe" he means all things of the world apart from audience, text and author).

2) **Pragmatic theory**- The second type of theories are pragmatic theories, which are concerned with the relation between text and audience. According to Abrams, these theories have constituted the dominant mode of analysis from Horace to the early 19th century, and much of its terminology is borrowed from ancient rhetoric.

3) **Expressive theory**- which is concerned with the text-author relationship. By 1800, we begin to see “the displacement of mimetic and pragmatic by the expressive view of art,” a phenomenon due in part to the writings of Bacon, Wordsworth, and, later, the

radical Romantics of the 1830s. With this new “expressive view” of art, the primary duty of the artist was no longer to serve as a mirror reflecting outer things, but instead to externalize the internal, and make one's “inner life” the primary subject of art. It is around this time in the early 19th century that the “mirror,” which had hitherto been the conventional symbol for the artist, becomes the “lamp.

To give an overview of the evolution of Western aesthetics up to this point, Abrams provides the following rough timeline. In the age of Plato and Aristotle, poets were mimetic poets, and their personal roles and intrusions were kept to a minimum. In the Hellenistic and Roman eras, poets were pragmatic, and they sought to satisfy the public, abide by the rules of decorum, and apply techniques borrowed from rhetoric. From 1800 to 1900, poets, specifically those of England and Germany, were self-affirming figures whose task was to express to the world their inner genius.

4) **Objective theory** - the most recent classification, which focus on analysis of the text in isolation. Though extremely rare in pre-20th-century history, this fourth alternative— to view the text in isolation— has been the

dominant mode for criticism for at least half of the 20th century. Proponents of this theory trace its origins to the central section of Aristotle's Poetics, where tragedy is regarded as an object in itself, and where the work's internal elements (plot, character, thought, diction, melody and spectacle, in order of importance) are described as working together in perfect unison to produce in the audience a "catharsis" of pity and fear.

As Abrams stated above that nothing exists other than universe, text, author and audience, any form of theory must fit into one of these four categories. Let's see these four critical into details. Abrams clearly identifies himself as a critical theorist, not a philosopher, not a psychologist, not a scientist. From his perspective, the purpose and function of critical theory is not to discover some "verifiable truth" but to "establish principles enabling us to justify, order, and clarify our interpretation and appraisal of the aesthetic.

A literary critic

A literary critic does not only evaluate the importance or quality of a piece of literature but also argues for an interpretation or understanding of literary texts. The task of a literary critic is to explain and attempt to reach a critical

understanding of what literary texts mean in terms of their aesthetic, as well as social, political, and cultural statements and suggestions. A literary critic does more than simply discuss or evaluate the importance of a literary text. He seeks to reach a logical and reasonable understanding of not only what a text's author intends for it to mean but also what different cultures and ideologies render it means. The critic should have technical skills in literature. He should not be prejudiced and be able to understand human psychology.


Elements of a
Short Story

Short Story Analysis

A short story is a short work of fiction. Fiction, as you know, is prose writing about imagined events and characters. Prose writing differs from poetry in that it does not depend on verses, meters or rhymes for its organization and presentation.

Novels are another example of fictional prose and are much longer than short stories. Some short stories, however, can be quite long. If a short story is a long one, say fifty to one hundred pages, we call it a novella.

American literature contains some of the world's best examples of the short story. Readers around the world enjoy the finely crafted stories of American writers such as O. Henry, Stephen Crane, Jack London, Mark Twain and Edgar Allen Poe.

What makes these authors such remarkable short story writers? They are true masters at combining the key elements that go into every great short story. The following guide and questions may help you:

➔ ***Theme***

The theme is the main idea, lesson, or message in the short story. It may be an abstract idea about the human condition, society, or life. The theme in a piece of fiction is its controlling idea or its central insight. It is the author's underlying meaning or main idea that he is trying to convey. The theme may be the author's thoughts about a topic or view of human nature.

Theme is a hidden element, but incredibly important: in essence, theme is what your story is REALLY about. The title of the short story usually points to what the writer is saying. Ask yourself:

- How is the theme expressed?
- Are any elements repeated and therefore suggest a theme?
- Is there more than one theme?

Theme: What is the universal meaning that the story provides you? How do you explain the fact that you have gotten the message in the story? A theme is usually the universal message or idea that is identified by the reader or audience. In stating the theme of a story, you should be

able to express how much meaning and impact that the story had on you. A story may have as many themes as possible; however, you should choose one theme that you can fully discuss, using evidence from the story.

A theme is not the plot of the story. It is the underlying truth that is being conveyed in the story. Themes can be universal, meaning they are understood by readers no matter what culture or country the readers are in. Common themes include coming of age, circle of life, prejudice, greed, good vs. evil, beating the odds, etc. Some simple examples of common themes from literature, TV, and film are:

- things are not always as they appear to be

- Love is blind

- Don't judge a book by its cover

➔ ***Characterization***

There are two meanings for the word character:

1) The person in a work of fiction.

Persons in a work of fiction - Antagonist and Protagonist Short stories use few characters. One character is clearly

central to the story with all major events having some importance to this character - he/she is the PROTAGONIST. The oppose of the main character is called the ANTAGONIST.

2) The characteristics of a person.

In order for a story to seem real to the reader its characters must seem real. Characterization is the information the author gives the reader about the characters themselves. The author may reveal a character in several ways:

a) his/her physical appearance
b) what he/she says, thinks, feels and dreams
c) what he/she does or does not do
d) what others say about him/her and how others react to him/her

Characterization: The characters in the story are the people or animals that author uses to represent various events and actions. When discussing the characters, please, identify their physical traits and personality attributes and explain how each of them interrelates amongst one another in the story. List all the characters in the story; but discuss in full

only two main characters-usually the protagonist, and one antagonist. Please, make sure that when you point out their characters, you must substantiate them with evidence from the story.

When discussing stories with other readers and writers or when writing an analysis of a story, fictional characters can be described as static or developing. Static, also called flat, means the character stays the same throughout the story. They do not change. Developing, also called dynamic, means the character changes. The change may impact the character's beliefs, attitudes, or actions. The change may be small or large. This change occurs because the character experiences an epiphany, an insight about life. Flat characters do not play important roles in the stories. They often have only one or two traits with little description about them. On the other hand, the round characters play an important role, often the lead roles in stories. They are complex, dimensional, and well-developed. The stories are about them; therefore, pages of writing will be about them. They often change by going through a life-changing experience as the story unfolds.

Characterization deals with how the characters in the story are described. In short stories there are usually fewer characters compared to a novel. Characters (both major and minor) are what bring life to a story. Writers use them to transcend important messages throughout the plotline. They usually focus on one central character or protagonist. Ask yourself the following:

- Who is the main character?
- Are the main character and other characters described through dialogue – by the way they speak (dialect or slang for instance)?
- Has the author described the characters by physical appearance, thoughts and feelings, and interaction (the way they act towards others)?
- Are they static/flat characters who do not change?
- Are they dynamic/round characters who DO change?
- What type of characters are they? What qualities stand out? Are they stereotypes?

➔ ***Setting***

Setting is a description of where and when the story takes place. In a short story there are fewer settings compared to

a novel. The time is more limited. Ask yourself the following questions:

- How is the setting created? Consider geography, weather, time of day, social conditions, etc.
- What role does setting play in the story? Is it an important part of the plot or theme? Or is it just a backdrop against which the action takes place?

Study the time period, which is also part of the setting, and ask yourself the following:

- When was the story written?
- Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?
- How does the time period affect the language, atmosphere or social circumstances of the short story?

Setting: The setting of a story is usually represented by its depiction of time and place. While the author may state the original settings in the story, it is important that readers know that there could be various settings in the story as well. The expressions of events and actions do change from place to place and time to time. Discuss the time when the story was written or the time period, and explain where the story took place. You will use a lot of inferences to help you

determine some of them. Please, always support your claim with evidence from the story.

Setting is where and when the story takes place. It includes the following:

- The immediate surroundings of the characters such as props in a scene: trees, furniture, food, inside of a house or car, etc.
- The time of day such as morning, afternoon, or night.
- The weather such as cloudy, sunny, windy, snow, or rain, etc.
- The time of year, particularly the seasons: fall, winter, summer, spring.
- The historical period such as what century or decade the story takes place.
- The geographical location including the city, state, country, and possibly even the universe, if the writer is writing science fiction.

Setting can function as a main force that the characters encounter, such as a tornado or flood, or a setting can play a minor role such as setting the mood. Often times, the setting can reveal something about the main character as he/she functions in that place and time period.

Setting impacts characters through showing:

- The skills they've developed to survive
- The tools they'll have (weapons, money, clothing, transportation)
- The cultural norms for communication (speech, body language, and relative rules for communication between genders, classes, and more)
- The presuppositions your character brings into the story (religion, psychology, philosophy, educational assumptions, all of which have a lot to do with the way your characters respond to stimuli)

There are several aspects of a story's setting to consider when examining how setting contributes to a story (some, or all, may be present in a story):

a) **place** - geographical location. Where is the action of the story taking place?

b) **time** - When is the story taking place? (historical period, time of day, year, etc.)

c) **weather conditions** - Is it rainy, sunny, stormy, etc.?

d) **social conditions** - What is the daily life of the characters like? Does the story contain local color (writing that focuses on the speech, dress, , customs, etc. of a

particular place)?

e) **mood or atmosphere** - What feeling is created at the beginning of the story? Is it bright and cheerful or dark and frightening?

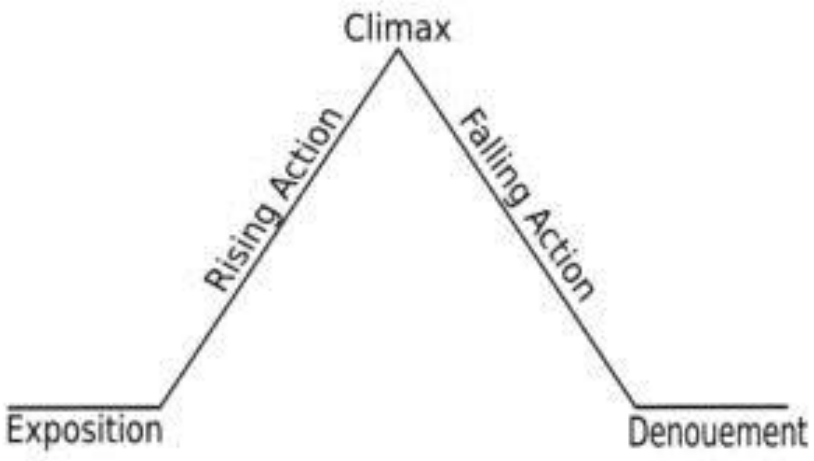
➔ ***Plot***

The plot is the main sequence of events that make up the story. In short stories the plot is usually centered around one experience or significant moment. Consider the following questions:

- What is the most important event?
- How is the plot structured? Is it linear, chronological or does it move around?
- Is the plot believable?

Plot summary: The plot is a brief but thorough summary of the story. You should exhibit knowledge of the five stages of the plot in your summary (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution). While I do not want you to specifically indicate each of them as you write your analysis, I want to be able to tell that you have incorporated them all. Please, cut out unnecessary detail when you summarize.

Plot is the order of events in the story. The plot usually follows a particular structure called Freytag's Pyramid. Gustav Freytag, a German playwright who lived during the 1800s, identified this structure. Freytag's Pyramid has five parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement, also known as resolution.



Exposition is an introduction to the characters, time, and the problem. At the point where exposition moves into rising action a problem, sometimes called an inciting incident, occurs for the main character to handle or solve. This creates the beginning of the story.

Rising action includes the events that the main character encounters. Each event, developed in separate scenes, makes the problem more complex.

Climax is the turning point in the story. Usually, it is a single event with the greatest intensity and uncertainty. The main character must contend with the problem at this point.

Falling action includes the events that unfold after the climax. This usually creates an emotional response from the reader.

Denouement or resolution provides closure to the story. It ties up loose ends in the story.

The plot is how the author arranges events to develop his basic idea; it is the sequence of events in a story or play. The plot is a planned, logical series of events having a beginning, middle, and end. The short story usually has one plot so it can be read in one sitting. There are five essential parts of plot:

a) **Introduction** - The beginning of the story where the characters and the setting is revealed.

b) **Rising Action** - This is where the events in the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed (events between the introduction and climax).

c) **Climax** - This is the highest point of interest and the turning point of the story. The reader wonders what will happen next; will the conflict be resolved or not?

d) **Falling action** - The events and complications begin to resolve themselves. The reader knows what has happened next and if the conflict was resolved or not (events between climax and denouement).

e) **Denouement** - This is the final outcome or untangling of events in the story.

➔ ***Climax***

The climax is the point of greatest tension or intensity in the short story. It can also be the point where events take a major turn as the story races towards its conclusion. Ask yourself:

- Is there a turning point in the story?
- When does the climax take place?

It is helpful to consider climax as a three-fold phenomenon:

1) the main character receives new information

2) accepts this information (realizes it but does not necessarily agree with it)

3) acts on this information (makes a choice that will determine whether or not he/she gains his objective).

➔ ***Conflict***

Conflict is essential to plot. Without conflict there is no plot. It is the opposition of forces which ties one incident to another and makes the plot move. Conflict is not merely limited to open arguments, rather it is any form of opposition that faces the main character. Within a short story there may be only one central struggle, or there may be one dominant struggle with many minor ones. Conflict or tension is usually the heart of the short story and is related to the main character. In a short story there is usually one main struggle.

- How would you describe the main conflict?
- Is it an internal conflict within the character?
- Is it an external conflict caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds himself/herself in?

The conflicts that occur in a literary work are usually expressed as internal or external. Please, make sure that you identify the internal and external conflicts in your story analysis; and make sure that you use references from the story to support your points.

The two *types* of conflict are:

1) **External** - A struggle with a force outside one's self.

2) **Internal** - A struggle within one's self; a person must make some decision, overcome pain, quiet their temper, resist an urge, etc.

Conflict is the struggle between two entities. In story writing the main character, also known as the protagonist, encounters a conflict with the antagonist, which is an adversary. The conflict may be one of the following kinds:

- Character vs. character
- Character vs. nature or natural forces
- Character vs. society, culture, ideas, practices, or customs of other people
- Character vs. the circumstances of life facing him/her.
- Character vs. himself or herself (psychological)

➔ ***Style***

The author's style has to do with the his or her vocabulary, use of imagery, tone, or the feeling of the story. It has to do with the author's attitude toward the subject. In some short stories the tone can be ironic,

humorous, cold, or dramatic. The author may use various figures of speech to emphasize his theme, such as: symbol, allusion, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, or irony.

- Is the author's language full of figurative language?
- What images are used?
- Does the author use a lot of symbolism? Metaphors (comparisons that do not use "as" or "like") or similes (comparisons that use "as" or "like")?

Style: The manner in which an author expresses himself or herself in writing.

The language that the authors use to convey their thoughts. What kinds of words are used? Do you find them too lofty and difficult to understand? Do you find them easy to read? How are the words arranged?

What are *the structure* and organization of writing? Is it in letter form, does it have paragraphs separating main ideas? Are there lots of dialogues or just one long straight narrative? What does the title of the story tell you about what to expect? What Kind of grammar is used? What punctuation style do the authors use?

Figurative language. Are there lots of imagery? Are there flashbacks and foreshadowing used? Are there lots of literary devices used?

Various literary devices help convey meaning or create a mood. Look for these in a story to identify key points and their contribution to the author's overall meaning. The following are a few common literary devices.

Allusion. An indirect reference to another artistic work or person, event, or place (real or fictitious). The author makes the allusion with the intention that the well-known object will create an association with the new object in the reader's mind.

Foreshadowing. The use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in a literary work. For example, in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Juliet tells her nurse to find Romeo's name: "Go ask his name. If he be married, my grave is like to be my wedding-bed." This foreshadows the danger of Romeo's name being Montague and of Juliet's death because of their marriage.

Irony. An implied discrepancy between what is said and what is meant. Irony is used to suggest the difference

between appearance and reality and between expectation and fulfillment. There are three kinds of irony:

verbal irony is when an author says one thing and means something else. what is said is actually the opposite of what is meant/intended. Verbal irony occurs when a narrator or character says one thing and means something else.

dramatic irony is when an audience perceives something that the characters don't know. It is also the contrast between what a character or narrator says and what a reader knows to be true.

situational irony is a discrepancy between the expected result and the actual result or between appearance and reality, or between expectation and fulfillment, or between what is and what would seem appropriate.

Symbolism. The use of an object or action to mean something more than its literal meaning. Authors use symbolism to convey messages poetically or indirectly, through their stories, making them more interesting and complex pieces. Symbolism is depicted using a physical object or even a person to be an abstract idea. For example, a dove represents love and peace and a storm represents hostility and turmoil. Symbolism can also be

used as a metaphor in the narrative, such as life is a roller coaster which portrays life to have its ups and downs. Similarly, in short story novels, authors symbolize certain conflicts and important issues by using a metaphor or a simile in their story.

➔ ***Narrator and Point of view***

The narrator is the person telling the story. Consider this question: Are the narrator and the main character the same? By point of view we mean from whose eyes the story is being told. Short stories tend to be told through one character's point of view. The following are important questions to consider:

- Who is the narrator or speaker in the story?
- Does the author speak through the main character?
- Is the story written in the first person "I" point of view?
- Is the story written in a detached third person "he/she" point of view?
- Is there an "all-knowing" third person who can reveal what all the characters are thinking and doing at all times and in all places?

Point of view: The point of view of a story is usually the angle from which the author tells his or her story. It is usually expressed in either the first person, second person, or third person. In the **first** person point of view, the author or narrator tells his or her story; it is mostly used in autobiographical or eyewitness reports. The **second** person point of view is rarely used in narratives.

The **third** person point of view can be expressed in either third person limited or omniscient. In the *third person limited*, the narrator is usually not included as a character in the story. He or she is detached from the story; however, he or she is able to narrate the story based on what can be determined from one character in the story.

In the *third person omniscient*, the character is fully involved in the story. He or she is able to see everything that is going on in the minds of the characters and is able to tell the movement of the characters as they progress from stage to stage.

Stories are generally told in one of two points of views:

- First-person point of view
- Third-person point of view

First-person point of view means that one of the characters in the story will narrate–give an account–of the story. The narrator may be the protagonist, the main character. Writing in first-person point of view brings the readers closer to the story. They can read it as if they are the character because personal pronouns like I, me, my, we, us, and our are used.

Third-person point of view means that the narrator is not in the story. The third-person narrator is not a character. Third-person point of view can be done two ways:

- Third-person limited
- Third-person omniscient

Third-person limited means that the narrator limits him/herself by being able to be in one character's thoughts. Whereas, *third-person omniscient* means the narrator has unlimited ability to be in various character's thoughts. Writing in third-person point of view removes

readers from the story because of the pronouns *he, she, it, him, her, his, hers, they, them*, and *theirs*.

Point of view, or p.o.v., is defined as the angle from which the story is told.

Innocent Eye The story is told through the eyes of a child (his/her judgment being different from that of an adult).

Stream of Consciousness - The story is told so that the reader feels as if they are inside the head of one character and knows all their thoughts and reactions.

First Person - The story is told by the protagonist or one of the characters who interacts closely with the protagonist or other characters (using pronouns I, me, we, etc). The reader sees the story through this person's eyes as he/she experiences it and only knows what he/she knows or feels.

Omniscient- The author can narrate the story using the omniscient point of view. He can move from character to character, event to event, having free access to the thoughts, feelings and motivations of his characters and he introduces information where and when he chooses. There are two main types of omniscient point of view:

a) ***Omniscient Limited*** - The author tells the story in third person (using pronouns they, she, he, it, etc). We know only what the character knows and what the author allows him/her to tell us. We can see the thoughts and feelings of characters if the author chooses to reveal them to us.

b) ***Omniscient Objective*** – The author tells the story in the third person. It appears as though a camera is following the characters, going anywhere, and recording only what is seen and heard. There is no comment on the characters or their thoughts. No interpretations are offered. The reader is placed in the position of spectator without the author there to explain. The reader has to interpret events on his own.

How to Analyze a Short Story Step-by-Step

Now that we know the major elements that are involved in crafting an exceptional story analysis, let's take a look at five tips for how to analyze a short story step-by-step.

➔ ***Read and summarize***

As you prepare to analyze the short story assigned to you, it is recommended to read and re-read it multiple times. Since it is a short story, you'll have plenty of time to understand all the details included within the story and the context of the plot.

To analyze the book, divide the narrative into sections. Read each of these sections and write down key points and essential details that are related to these portions of the story. As you do that, summarize your interpretation of the plot into a more understandable and easy piece.

➔ ***Brainstorm and take notes***

While reading the text, if you come across an interesting subplot, a challenging character arc, or even a major theme

that isn't showcased through the text, make it a point of writing them down.

These notes will be your crutch as you begin analyzing your short story for your class assignment. Taking notes brings organization to your thoughts and ideas, as well as gives you proper knowledge about every detail you find in the short story.

Brainstorm multiple ideas and write down the concepts that you find fascinating while reading the book. Always pay close attention to the details to understand the purpose of the text, as well as the author's point of view on multiple important situations or events.

➔ ***Identify crucial concepts***

Identifying important concepts in the short story, such as the main conflict that helps with creating the primary argument for the thesis statement, the characters' personalities, their defining traits, the choices they make, and also the point of view of the narrator.

The point of view is an essential aspect of the storyline as it creates a lens for the reader to understand and analyze themes, details, characters, and important events in the story.

While examining these concepts, you will realize the intention of the author, how the story was significant to them, and why they made certain choices while writing the short story.

Similarly, exploring the literary devices of the short story, such as the setting, mood, tone, and style of the text, will help further in analyzing the plotline in a more notable way.

➔ ***Include examples and evidence***

When you state an argument in your story analysis, it is always better to back it up with credible sources and accurate evidence. For example, you can paraphrase or directly quote a sentence from your assigned story to claim your point.

However, quotations cannot become evidence unless it is explained how it proves the claims that are being made.

Having good sources for your story analysis gives you a higher level of authority over the book that you are writing about and also makes it easier for the reader to understand the author's perspective.

➔ ***Craft the thesis statement***

It is important to make sure that all the points that have been made for the analysis tie together and ultimately support your thesis.

Keep in mind that the thesis for your short story should not just summarize the plot, and neither should it be a review of the book. Your thesis statement should be an interpretation of the text or an argument that is based on the storyline.

➔ ***Conclusion***

Writing a quality analysis for short stories requires a solid thought process, an organized structure, and the ability to deep-dive into the literary meaning of a text.

Here, you understand and think through the author's perspective of the book and why they have chosen to write their thoughts and ideas through this narrative.

Short Stories

" THE STORY OF AN HOUR"

Kate Chopin (1894)

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines bespoke repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a

glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will--as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under the breath: "free, free, free!" The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands

folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him--sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the key hold, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door--you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door."

"Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Someone was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease--of the joy that kills.

HILARY'S AUNT

– by Cyril Hare

Hilary Smith belonged to a good family, and his father never hesitated to mention this fact. The actual age of the family was doubtful, but Mr. Smith behaved like a man of the past. His ideas and manners were those of the Victorian age.

Unfortunately Hilary himself had some unimportant trouble with the bank about a few cheques. It seemed a very slight matter to the young man, but not so to his father. Hilary was sent off to Australia without delay. Mr. Smith knew little about that place , but he understood one thing. It was a convenient country for those who did not like the customs of old England.

Hilary did not like Australia, and Australia did not like Hilary. He therefore took the earliest opportunity of returning to England. He could not , of course, earn enough money to buy a ticket. So he had to wait until his father and his brother died. They fortunately did this at the same time. After that he received all the money which belonged to the good old family .

There was not a great deal of money, and Hilary soon spent it. (The old family had not been able to get much in recent years).When all the money had been spent, Hilary could do one of two things . He could die or work. The thought of neither of these gave him any pleasure. Then he remembered that he was not alone in the world. He possessed an aunt.

She was his father's only sister, and he knew little about her. His father's ancient ideas were responsible for this unfortunate fact. When her name was mentioned , he never looked very pleased. " Your aunt Mary brought no honour to the family" , he said.

Hilary, of course, tried to discover what she had done. It seemed that she had failed to marry a nobleman.

Instead, she had chosen a husband who was connected with "trade". No old family could bear that sort of thing, of course.

As soon as she became "Mrs. Prothero" , her brother considered her dead. Later on , her husband died and left her a lot of money; but that did not bring her back to life in her brother's opinion.

Hilary discovered his aunt's address by talking to the family lawyer. Fortunately she had remained faithful to him even after she fell. So Hilary's sun shone again, and the old lady seemed to like him. When he was feeling honest, he could talk attractively. He frequently visited his aunt's house; and soon he was living comfortably in the building which the profits of trade had provided.

Hilary was very relieved when he was able to move into the house. He felt like a sailor who had just reached harbour. He had only about sixpence in his pocket.

One thing was immediately clear: his aunt was seriously ill. She acted bravely, but she was slowly dying. He had a private talk with her doctor which alarmed him greatly. The doctor told him that nothing could cure the old woman. She might perhaps live for some time, but the end was certain.

"Her condition may become worse at any moment", the doctor said. "When it has passed a certain stage, she won't want to live . No kind person will want her to live either."

Hilary was very annoyed. Fate had found a home for him, and was now going to throw him out of it. Once again he would have to live in the hard world alone. There was only one thing that he could do. He chose an evening when his

aunt was feeling better than usual. Then, very gently , he asked for details of her will.

When she heard the word “will” , his aunt laughed loudly. “Have I made a will?” she said. “Yes, of course I have. I left all my money to – now , what was it ? To whom did I leave it ? Some religious people in China, I think. Or were they in Polynesia ? I can’t remember . The lawyer, will tell you about it. He still has the will, I suppose. I was very religious when I was a girl.”

“Did you make this will when you were a girl, Aunt Mary?” “Yes, when I was twenty-one. Your grandfather told me to make a will. He believed that everyone ought to do that. I had no money then, of course, and so my will wasn’t very useful.”

Hilary had been filled with sorrow when he heard the first details; but now his eyes were happier again. “Didn’t you make another will when you were married?” His aunt shook her head “No, there was no need. I had nothing and John had everything. Then, after John died, I had a lot of money but no relations. What could I do with the money? Perhaps I ought to talk to my lawyer again.”

She looked at Hilary with steady eyes Hilary said that there was no need to hurry. Then he changed the subject.

On the next day he went to the public library and examined a certain book. It told him what he already believed. When a woman marries, an earlier will loses its value . a new will must be made. If no new will is made, the money goes to the nearest relation. Hilary knew that he was his aunt's only relation. His future was safe.

After a few months had passed, Hilary's problems became serious. The change in his aunt's condition showed that the doctor had been right. She went to bed and stayed there. It seemed certain that she would never get up again. At the same time Hilary badly needed money. He had expensive tastes, and owed a lot of money to shopkeepers. They trusted him because his aunt was rich; but their bills were terrible.

Unfortunately his aunt was now so ill that he could not easily talk to her. She did not want to discuss money matters at all. She was in great pain and could hardly sleep; so she became angry when money was mentioned. In the end they had a quarrel about the small amount of ten pounds. She accused him of trying to get her money.

Hilary was not very angry. He understood that Aunt Mary was a sick woman. She was behaving strangely because she was ill. He remembered the doctor's words , and began to wonder about a new problem. Was it kind to want his aunt to live any longer ? Was it not better for her to die now? He thought about this for a long time. When he went to bed, he was still thinking.

His aunt gave him some news in the morning. She told him that she was going to send for Mr. Blenkinsop. So she was going to make a new will ! Hilary was not sure that a new will would help him. She might leave all her money to someone else. What could he do then? He reached a clear decision. He must do a great kindness to the poor old woman.

Every night she took some medicine to make her sleep. Hilary decided to double the amount. He did not need to say anything to her about it. He could just put her to sleep forever.

He found that it was a very easy thing to do. His aunt even seemed to help his plans. An old servant had been nursing her, and she told this woman to go out. So the servant went off to attend to her own affairs. She was told to prepare the

medicine before she went out . Then Hilary could give it to his aunt at the proper time.

It was easy for Hilary. He had only to put some more medicine into the glass. If anything awkward happened, he could easily explain. He could say that he had not understood the plan. He had not known that the servant had put the medicine in. So he had put the proper amount into the glass. It was unfortunate, of course. The total amount was too great. But who would suspect dear Hilary?

His aunt took the glass from his hand with a grateful look. “Thank you, I want, more than anything , to sleep, and never to wake up again. That is my greatest wish” She looked at him steadily. “ Is that what you wish , Hilary ? I have given you your chance . Forgive me if I am suspecting you wrongly. Sick people get these ideas, you know. If I am alive tomorrow, I shall do better for you. My lawyer is coming here, and I shall make a will in your favour. If I die tonight, you ‘ll get nothing. Some people in China will get all the money. I ought , perhaps, to explain.

John Prothero never married me. He already had a wife and couldn’t marry me again. That made your foolish father very angry with me … No, Hilary , don’t try to take the glass

away. If you do that , I shall know; and I don’t want to know. Good-night, Hilary.”

Then, very carefully, she raised the glass to her lips and drank.

THE NECKLACE

Guy de Maupassant

She was one of those pretty and charming girls born, as if by an error of fate, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no means of becoming known, understood, loved or wedded by a man of wealth and distinction; and so she let herself be married to a minor official at the Ministry of Education.

She dressed plainly because she had never been able to afford anything better, but she was as unhappy as if she had once been wealthy. Women don't belong to a caste or class; their beauty, grace, and natural charm take the place of birth and family. Natural delicacy, instinctive elegance and a quick wit determine their place in society, and make the daughters of commoners the equals of the very finest ladies.

She suffered endlessly, feeling she was entitled to all the delicacies and luxuries of life. She suffered because of the poorness of her house as she looked at the dirty walls, the worn-out chairs and the ugly curtains. All these things that another woman of her class would not even have noticed,

tormented her and made her resentful. The sight of the little Brenton girl who did her housework filled her with terrible regrets and hopeless fantasies. She dreamed of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestries, lit from above by torches in bronze holders, while two tall footmen in knee-length breeches napped in huge armchairs, sleepy from the stove's oppressive warmth. She dreamed of vast living rooms furnished in rare old silks, elegant furniture loaded with priceless ornaments, and inviting smaller rooms, perfumed, made for afternoon chats with close friends - famous, sought after men, who all women envy and desire.

When she sat down to dinner at a round table covered with a three-day-old cloth opposite her husband who, lifting the lid off the soup, shouted excitedly, "Ah! Beef stew! What could be better," she dreamed of fine dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestries which peopled the walls with figures from another time and strange birds in fairy forests; she dreamed of delicious dishes served on wonderful plates, of whispered gallantries listened to with an inscrutable smile as one ate the pink flesh of a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no dresses, no jewels, nothing; and these were the only things she loved. She felt she was made for them

alone. She wanted so much to charm, to be envied, to be desired and sought after.

She had a rich friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, whom she no longer wanted to visit because she suffered so much when she came home. For whole days afterwards she would weep with sorrow, regret, despair and misery.

One evening her husband came home with an air of triumph, holding a large envelope in his hand.

"Look," he said, "here's something for you."

She tore open the paper and drew out a card, on which was printed the words:

"The Minister of Education and Mme. Georges Rampouneau request the pleasure of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the Ministry, on the evening of Monday January 18th."

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation on the table resentfully, and muttered:

"What do you want me to do with that?"

"But, my dear, I thought you would be pleased. You never go out, and it will be such a lovely occasion! I had awful trouble getting it. Everyone wants to go; it is very exclusive, and they're not giving many invitations to clerks. The whole ministry will be there."

She stared at him angrily, and said, impatiently:

"And what do you expect me to wear if I go?"

He hadn't thought of that. He stammered:

"Why, the dress you go to the theatre in. It seems very nice to me ..."

He stopped, stunned, distressed to see his wife crying. Two large tears ran slowly from the corners of her eyes towards the corners of her mouth. He stuttered:

"What's the matter? What's the matter?"

With great effort she overcame her grief and replied in a calm voice, as she wiped her wet cheeks:

"Nothing. Only I have no dress and so I can't go to this party. Give your invitation to a friend whose wife has better clothes than I do."

He was distraught, but tried again:

"Let's see, Mathilde. How much would a suitable dress cost, one which you could use again on other occasions, something very simple?"

She thought for a moment, computing the cost, and also wondering what amount she could ask for without an immediate refusal and an alarmed exclamation from the thrifty clerk.

At last she answered hesitantly:

"I don't know exactly, but I think I could do it with four hundred francs."

He turned a little pale, because he had been saving that exact amount to buy a gun and treat himself to a hunting trip the following summer, in the country near Nanterre, with a few friends who went lark-shooting there on Sundays.

However, he said:

"Very well, I can give you four hundred francs. But try and get a really beautiful dress."

The day of the party drew near, and Madame Loisel seemed sad, restless, anxious. Her dress was ready, however. One evening her husband said to her:

"What's the matter? You've been acting strange these last three days."

She replied: "I'm upset that I have no jewels, not a single stone to wear. I will look cheap. I would almost rather not go to the party."

"You could wear flowers, " he said, "They are very fashionable at this time of year. For ten francs you could get two or three magnificent roses."

She was not convinced.

"No; there is nothing more humiliating than looking poor in the middle of a lot of rich women."

"How stupid you are!" her husband cried. "Go and see your friend Madame Forestier and ask her to lend you some jewels. You know her well enough for that."

She uttered a cry of joy.

"Of course. I had not thought of that."

The next day she went to her friend's house and told her of her distress.

Madame Forestier went to her mirrored wardrobe, took out a large box, brought it back, opened it, and said to Madame Loisel:

"Choose, my dear."

First she saw some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a gold Venetian cross set with precious stones, of exquisite craftsmanship. She tried on the jewelry in the mirror, hesitated, could not bear to part with them, to give them back. She kept asking:

"You have nothing else?"

"Why, yes. But I don't know what you like."

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart began to beat with uncontrolled desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it around her neck, over her high-necked dress, and stood lost in ecstasy as she looked at herself.

Then she asked anxiously, hesitating:

"Would you lend me this, just this?"

"Why, yes, of course."

She threw her arms around her friend's neck, embraced her rapturously, then fled with her treasure.

The day of the party arrived. Madame Loisel was a success. She was prettier than all the other women, elegant, gracious, smiling, and full of joy. All the men stared at her, asked her name, tried to be introduced. All the cabinet officials wanted to waltz with her. The minister noticed her.

She danced wildly, with passion, drunk on pleasure, forgetting everything in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness, made up of all this respect, all this admiration, all these awakened desires, of that sense of triumph that is so sweet to a woman's heart.

She left at about four o'clock in the morning. Her husband had been doing since midnight in a little deserted anteroom with three other gentlemen whose wives were having a good time.

He threw over her shoulders the clothes he had brought for her to go outside in, the modest clothes of an ordinary life, whose poverty contrasted sharply with the elegance of the ball dress. She felt this and wanted to run away, so she wouldn't be noticed by the other women who were wrapping themselves in expensive furs.

Loisel held her back.

"Wait a moment, you'll catch a cold outside. I'll go and find a cab."

But she would not listen to him, and ran down the stairs. When they were finally in the street, they could not find a

cab, and began to look for one, shouting at the cabmen they saw passing in the distance.

They walked down toward the Seine in despair, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quay one of those old night cabs that one sees in Paris only after dark, as if they were ashamed to show their shabbiness during the day.

They were dropped off at their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly walked up the steps to their apartment. It was all over, for her. And he was remembering that he had to be back at his office at ten o'clock.

In front of the mirror, she took off the clothes around her shoulders, taking a final look at herself in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She no longer had the necklace round her neck!

"What is the matter?" asked her husband, already half undressed.

She turned towards him, panic-stricken.

"I have ... I have ... I no longer have Madame Forestier's necklace."

He stood up, distraught.

"What! ... how! ... That's impossible!"

They looked in the folds of her dress, in the folds of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere. But they could not find it.

"Are you sure you still had it on when you left the ball?" he asked.

"Yes. I touched it in the hall at the Ministry."

"But if you had lost it in the street we would have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"Yes. That's probably it. Did you take his number?"

"No. And you, didn't you notice it?"

"No."

They stared at each other, stunned. At last Loisel put his clothes on again.

"I'm going back," he said, "over the whole route we walked, see if I can find it."

He left. She remained in her ball dress all evening, without the strength to go to bed, sitting on a chair, with no fire, her mind blank.

Her husband returned at about seven o'clock. He had found nothing.

He went to the police, to the newspapers to offer a reward, to the cab companies, everywhere the tiniest glimmer of hope led him.

She waited all day, in the same state of blank despair from before this frightful disaster.

Loisel returned in the evening, a hollow, pale figure; he had found nothing.

"You must write to your friend," he said, "tell her you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. It will give us time to look some more."

She wrote as he dictated.

At the end of one week they had lost all hope. And Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

"We must consider how to replace the jewel."

The next day they took the box which had held it, and went to the jeweler whose name they found inside. He consulted his books.

"It was not I, madame, who sold the necklace; I must simply have supplied the case."

And so they went from jeweler to jeweler, looking for an necklace like the other one, consulting their memories, both sick with grief and anguish.

In a shop at the Palais Royal, they found a string of diamonds which seemed to be exactly what they were looking for. It was worth forty thousand francs. They could have it for thirty-six thousand.

So they begged the jeweler not to sell it for three days. And they made an arrangement that he would take it back for thirty-four thousand francs if the other necklace was found before the end of February.

Loisel had eighteen thousand francs which his father had left him. He would borrow the rest.

And he did borrow, asking for a thousand francs from one man, five hundred from another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, made ruinous agreements, dealt with usurers, with every type of money-lender. He compromised the rest of his life, risked signing notes without knowing if he could ever honor them, and, terrified by the anguish still to come, by the black misery about to fall on him, by the prospect of every physical privation and every moral torture he was about to suffer, he went to get the new

necklace, and laid down on the jeweler's counter thirty-six thousand francs.

When Madame Loisel took the necklace back, Madame Forestier said coldly:

"You should have returned it sooner, I might have needed it."

To the relief of her friend, she did not open the case. If she had detected the substitution, what would she have thought? What would she have said? Would she have taken her friend for a thief?

From then on, Madame Loisel knew the horrible life of the very poor. But she played her part heroically. The dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their maid; they changed their lodgings; they rented a garret under the roof.

She came to know the drudgery of housework, the odious labors of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, staining her rosy nails on greasy pots and the bottoms of pans. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts and the dishcloths, which she hung to dry on a line; she carried the garbage down to the street every morning, and carried up

the water, stopping at each landing to catch her breath. And, dressed like a commoner, she went to the fruiterer's, the grocer's, the butcher's, her basket on her arm, bargaining, insulted, fighting over every miserable sou.

Each month they had to pay some notes, renew others, get more time.

Her husband worked every evening, doing accounts for a tradesman, and often, late into the night, he sat copying a manuscript at five sous a page.

And this life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years they had paid off everything, everything, at usurer's rates and with the accumulations of compound interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become strong, hard and rough like all women of impoverished households. With hair half combed, with skirts awry, and reddened hands, she talked loudly as she washed the floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window and thought of that evening at the ball so long ago, when she had been so beautiful and so admired.

What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows, who knows? How strange life is, how fickle! How little is needed for one to be ruined or saved!

One Sunday, as she was walking in the Champs Élysées to refresh herself after the week's work, suddenly she saw a woman walking with a child. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still charming.

Madame Loisel felt emotional. Should she speak to her? Yes, of course. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all. Why not?

She went up to her.

"Good morning, Jeanne."

The other, astonished to be addressed so familiarly by this common woman, did not recognize her. She stammered:

"But - madame - I don't know. You must have made a mistake."

"No, I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry.

"Oh! ... my poor Mathilde, how you've changed! ..."

"Yes, I have had some hard times since I last saw you, and many miseries ... and all because of you! ..."

"Me? How can that be?"

"You remember that diamond necklace that you lent me to wear to the Ministry party?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, I lost it."

"What do you mean? You brought it back."

"I brought you back another exactly like it. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it. It wasn't easy for us, we had very little. But at last it is over, and I am very glad."

Madame Forestier was stunned.

"You say that you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?"

"Yes; you didn't notice then? They were very similar."

And she smiled with proud and innocent pleasure.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took both her hands.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! Mine was an imitation! It was worth five hundred francs at most! ..."

IT HAPPENED NEAR A LAKE

John Collier

In this story Mr. Beaseley is a shopkeeper who has never made much money or done anything unusual or interesting. His wife treats him badly, and he tries to escape from his dull life by reading about the wonders of science. One day he receives a large number of dollars and decides to travel to interesting places. The first place he chooses is Yucatan. (Yucatan is mostly in Mexico; its famous ruins are chiefly those of splendid buildings put up by men of an ancient civilization.) His wife wants to have a flat in New York and a house in Miami; but she does not want him to escape from her, and so she travels with him (angrily). She behaves unpleasantly everywhere. When they go up the River Amazon in search of a terrible creature in a lake, she at last loses all patience. She declares that she will leave for Para. (This is a port at the mouth of the Amazon; its full name is Belem do Para.) In fact, she never leaves the lake, and the story explains why.

MR. BEASELEY was fifty. He was shaving and he was looking at his face in the glass. It showed him that he was

very like a mouse. "I'm older," he thought. "But what do I care? I don't care, except for Maria. And how old she's getting, too!" He finished his dressing and hurried down the stairs. He thought anxiously that he was probably late for breakfast. Immediately after breakfast, he had to open his shop; and that always kept him busy until ten o'clock at night. He never made much money although he worked so long. Sometimes during the day Maria came into the shop and showed him his mistakes. She did this even when there were people there.

He found a little comfort every morning when he opened the newspaper. When he read it, he could escape from his dull life. For a short time he could forget it. On Fridays he enjoyed himself more than on other days. On Fridays he received his copy of the other paper, Wonders of Science. This paper showed him one way out of his terrible and hopeless life. With Wonders of Science he escaped from the dull house into a splendid country. On this particular morning, splendid news kindly came to Mr. Beaseley in his own home. It came on fine paper in a long envelope from a lawyer. "Believe it or not, my dear," Mr. Beaseley said to his wife. "Someone has died. I've been left four hundred thousand dollars." "What?" she said. "Where? Let me see!

Don't keep the letter to yourself like that! Give it to me!" "Go on!" said he. "Read it! Push your nose into it! Do you think it will help you?" "Oh!" she cried. "The money has made you rude already!" "Yes," he said thoughtfully. "I've been left four hundred thousand dollars. Four hundred thousand!" "We'll be able to have a flat in New York," she said, "or a little house in Miami." "You may have half the money," said Mr. Beaseley. "You may do as you like with it. I myself intend to travel." Mrs. Beaseley heard this remark without pleasure. He belonged to her. She never liked losing anything that belonged to her. She always wanted to keep everything, even old and useless things, "So you want to leave me!" she cried. "I want to see other places, unusual places, different places. In Wonders of Science it says that some people have very long necks. I want to see them. And I want to see the very little people, and some of the strange birds. I want to go to Yucatan. I have offered you half the money because you like city life. You like high society, but I prefer to travel. If you want to come with me, come."

She did not hesitate much. "I will," she said. "And don't forget I'm doing it for your sake. I have to keep you on the right path. When you're tired of wandering about with your mouth open, we'll buy a house. We'll have a flat in New

York and a house in Miami." So Mrs. Beaseley went angrily with him. She hated it; but she was ready to bear anything that took away some happiness from her husband. Their journeys took them into deep forests. Their bedroom walls and floors were often made of bare wood; but outside the window there was a beautiful scene like a painting. The colours of the flowers and the straightness of the trees looked fine in the bright light. In the high Andes their window was a square of burning blue. Sometimes a small white cloud appeared in a lower corner of the square. On islands in the sun they took huts by the sea. There the tide brought offerings to their door in the mornings. They found shells on the sand or creatures of the sea. Mr. Beaseley was glad, but his wife preferred bottles of wine to shells. She dreamed every day of a flat in New York; or she thought of a little house in Miami. She tried endlessly to punish the man because he kept them from her. When a beautiful bird settled on a branch over her husband's head, she gave a terrible cry. Then the bird flew away before Mr. Beaseley had the time to examine it. He wanted to see birds like that, but she tried to prevent him. They planned a trip to some old buildings in Yucatan; but she told him the wrong time for the start of the journey. When he tried to watch an interesting

animal, she pretended to have something in her eye. So he had to look into it and get the thing out. Usually he found nothing. She was determined to stay in Buenos Aires for a long time. Her hair had to be arranged; she needed a permanent wave. She also needed some better clothes, and she wanted to go to the races. Mr. Beaseley agreed because he wanted to be just. They took rooms in a comfortable hotel. One day, when his wife was at the races,

Mr. Beaseley met a little Portuguese doctor. Soon they were talking happily together. They discussed some of the strange creatures which lived in South America. "I have recently returned from the River Amazon," said the doctor. "The lakes are terrible. In one of them there is a very strange creature. Science knows nothing about it, but the Indians have seen it. It is immensely big. It lives in the water and has a very long neck. Its teeth are like swords." Mr. Beaseley was delighted. "What a monster!" he cried happily. "Yes, yes," said the Portuguese doctor. "It is certainly interesting." "I must go there!" cried Mr. Beaseley. "I must talk to those Indians. If there's a monster in the lake, I must see it. Will you show me the way? Are you free just now? Can you come with me?" The doctor agreed, and everything was arranged without delay. Mrs. Beaseley returned from

the races and learnt of the new plan without much joy. She was told that they were going to start almost immediately. The two men explained that they would live near the unknown lake. They would spend their time among the Indians.

She was not pleased, and she insulted the little doctor. He only gave a polite reply to her hard words. He had no need to worry. He was going to be paid highly for his help. Mrs. Beaseley complained loudly all the way up the river. She told her husband that there was no monster in the lake. She mentioned that the doctor was not an honest man. Although her husband often suffered from this kind of remark, he was hurt. He felt ashamed in front of the Portuguese. His wife's voice, too, was loud and sharp. One result was that every animal hurried away from them. Mr. Beaseley saw nothing of the animals except their back legs. They all left the great river and the terrible voice at high speed. They hid themselves in the dark forest behind the biggest trees. The little party reached the lake after many days on the river. "How do we know that this is the right place?" Mrs. Beaseley said to her husband. She was watching the doctor, who was talking to some Indians. "It is probably any lake. It's not a special one. What are those Indians saying to

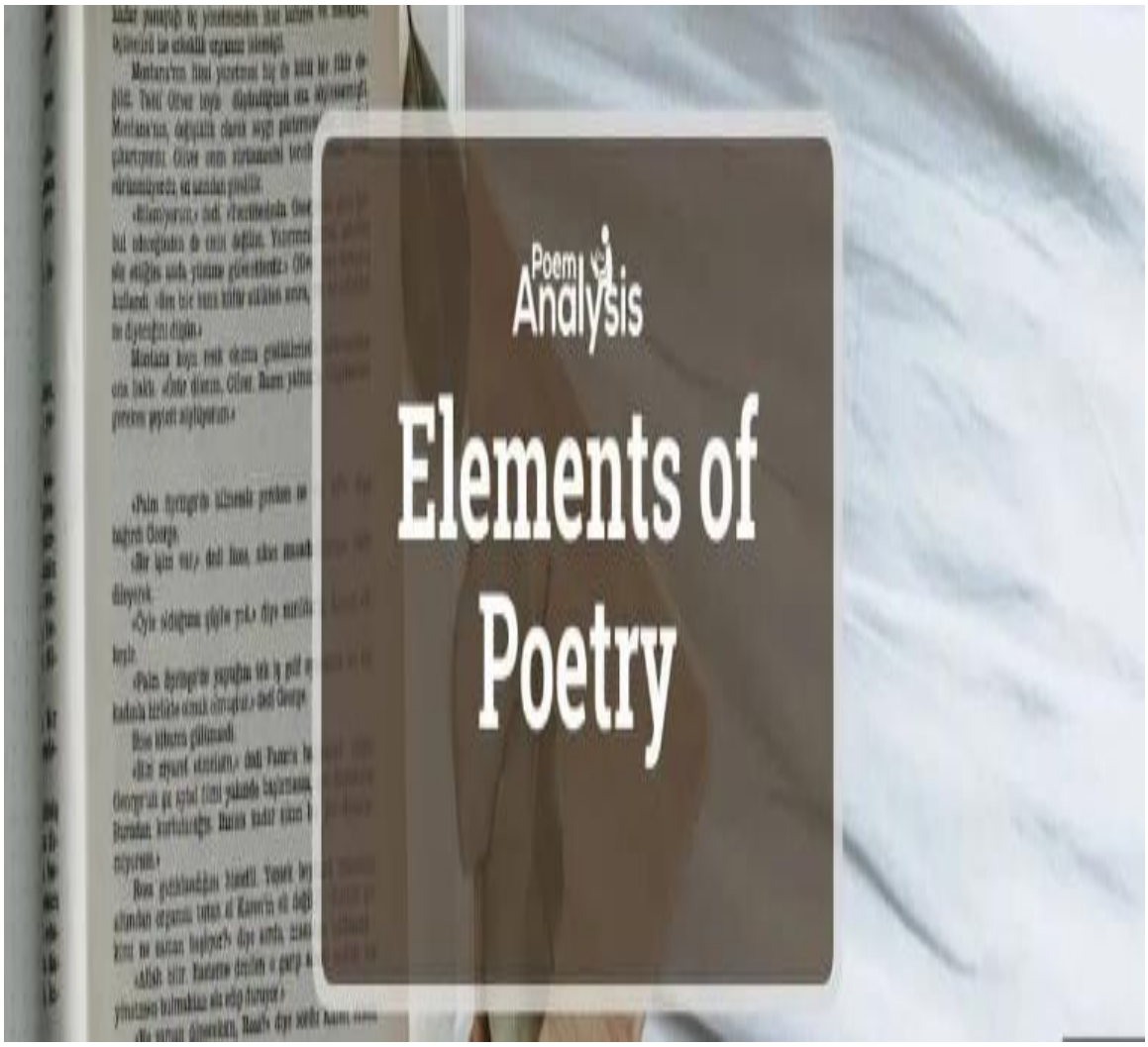
him? You can't understand a word. You're ready to believe anything, aren't you? You'll never see the monster. Only a fool would believe that story." Mr. Beaseley gave no reply. The doctor continued his conversation with the Indians, and they gave him some useful news. They told him about a hut which was made of grass. It was near the lake and no one was using it. The little party found this hut after great efforts, and they stayed in it for several days. Mr. Beaseley watched the lake every day, but never saw the monster. In fact, he saw nothing at all. Mrs. Beaseley was very satisfied with this result of their long journey, but she always looked angry. One day she spoke severely to her husband. "I will bear this kind of life no longer," she said. "I've allowed you to drag me from one place to another. I've tried to watch you and take care of you all the time. I've travelled hundreds of miles in an open boat with Indians. Now you're wasting your money on a man who only wants to trick you. We shall leave for Para in the morning." "You may go if you wish," said he. "I'll write you a cheque for two hundred thousand dollars. Perhaps you can persuade an Indian to take you down the river in a boat. But I will not come with you." "We shall see," she said. She had no wish to leave her husband alone. She was afraid that he might enjoy himself. He wrote out the

cheque and gave it to her. She still threatened to leave him, but she stayed. She got up early the next morning and went outside the hut. She decided to have breakfast alone, and walked angrily towards some trees. It was her intention to get some fruit from the trees; but she had not gone far when she noticed a mark on the sand. It was the mark of an immense foot nearly a yard wide. The toes seemed to have sharp nails, and the next footprint was ten feet away. Mrs. Beaseley looked without interest at the marks which the monster had left. No very strong feelings reached her mind. She was only angry at the thought of her husband's success. She was angry because the Portuguese had been telling the truth. She neither cried out in wonder, nor called to the sleeping men. She only gave a kind of bitter laugh. Then she picked up a small branch which was lying on the ground. The monster's footprints had never been seen before by a European, but she rubbed it out with the branch. When this had been done thoroughly, she smiled bitterly. There was now no sign of the mark, and so she looked for the next one. She wiped that mark off the sand too. Further on she saw another, and then one more. She rubbed both out. Then she saw another, moved towards it, and rubbed it out. She continued in this way, holding the branch with both

hands. In a short time she had rubbed out every mark down to the edge of the lake. The last footprint was partly in the water. The monster had clearly gone back to the lake.

Mrs. Beaseley rubbed out the last mark with pleasure, and then stood up straight. She looked back sourly towards the hut. She said some words to her husband, who was asleep up there. "I will tell you about this," she said, "when we are far away. We shall be living at Miami, and you will be an old man. You will never have seen the footprint or the monster. You'll be too old to do anything then." At that moment there was a sound in the water behind her. She was seized by a set of teeth. The Portuguese doctor had described these teeth very well: they were exactly like swords. He had mentioned various other details, but she had no time to prove their correctness. After she had given one short cry, she was pulled under the water. Her cry was not heard by either of the men. It was given in a weak voice. She had used her voice too much during the past weeks, and it was tired. A short time later Mr. Beaseley awoke. He saw that his wife was absent. He went to talk to the doctor, and mentioned the fact; but the doctor knew nothing and went to sleep again. Mr. Beaseley went outside and looked round for his wife; but he could see nothing. He returned to his

friend. "I think my wife has run away," he explained. "I've found her footprints. They lead down to the lake. I suppose she saw an Indian in his boat. Perhaps he has taken her away from here. She was threatening to leave yesterday. She wants to take a small house in Miami." "That is not a bad place," the doctor replied; "but probably Buenos Aires is a better one. This monster is a great disappointment, my dear friend. Let us go back to Buenos Aires. I will show you some things there that will surprise you. They are very different from anything here, of course." "You're a very good companion," said Mr. Beaseley. "You make even life in a city seem attractive." "If you get tired of it," the Portuguese said, "we can always move on. I know some wonderful islands, and they have splendid people in them. We can visit them after we leave the cities."


Poem Analysis
Elements of Poetry

Poetry Analysis with SMILE

In many cases, students do not know how to analyze a poem. When this is the case, simple mnemonic devices like SMILE can help them get started, and makes analyzing a poem easy and fun. **SMILE** is an acronym that helps students remember important aspects of a poem to interpret. Each letter stands for a separate poetic element as outlined below.

S	Structure
M	Meaning
I	Imagery
L	Language
E	Effect

Structure

The structure refers to the physical and grammatical composition of the poem. Does the poem literally have some kind of shape? Is it in free verse or set in a traditional meter? What kind of rhyming pattern and punctuation (if any) does it use? Is there any repetition? How long are the lines, and what are the line breaks?

For this element, students should consider the following for their poetry analysis:

- number of verses/stanzas
- length of verses/stanzas (regular or irregular)
- line length
- rhyme scheme
- repetition, including refrains
- enjambment
- sentence structure and grammar
- punctuation or lack thereof

Meaning

In identifying the meaning, students should be able to articulate the basic subject of a poem along with its deeper significance. To truly capture meaning, a reader must also be able to accurately identify a poem's message or **theme**.

Often this requires working out a poem's figurative meaning. In Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken", for example, the basic subject conveys a man walking in the woods who has difficulty deciding which path to take. To fully understand the poem, however, readers must recognize that the forest paths represent the journey of life, and the poem's message reminds us that each choice in life has irrevocable consequences. It is often useful to establish a poem's basic meaning and then revisit step M for a poem's deeper significance following further analysis of other elements .

Imagery

Imagery refers to language that appeals to one of the five senses - touch, taste, smell, sound, and sight. Imagery helps strengthen a writer's description by providing physical details that enable the reader to better imagine the scene or understand the speaker's feelings. Imagery can contain figurative language, but does not have to, as in the examples below, taken from "City Autumn" by Joseph Moncure March.

No figurative language: A thin wind beats/ Old dust and papers down gray streets

Figurative language: A snowflake falls like an errant feather

Both examples of imagery in “City Autumn” give us a visual picture of the autumn weather. One does so with a literal description and the other with an effective simile.

By adding imagery to a particular object, person, or scene, the writer heightens the importance of that detail and helps add negative or positive value to it.

Language

Language refers to a writer's diction, or word choice. Use of figurative language should be noted here and interpreted, along with sound devices, repetition, the speaker' dialect, and particularly significant words. Students may find the questions below useful when analyzing poetic language.

- Does the poem contain metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole or other figurative language?
- Does the poem play with sound using alliteration, assonance, repetition, or rhyme?
- Are there any words that are particularly sophisticated or especially basic? Does the rhyme, for example, depend on words like “hog” and “dog” ?

- Does the poem contain formal or informal dialect? Does the speaker seem to come from a particular region, country, or cultural background?

Effect

In determining a poem's effect, readers can include their initial reactions. How do they feel after reading it? What is the **mood** of the poem? The readers should also review this element after studying the other four (SMIL). In this way, students can consider the effect of the poem's structure, imagery, language, and message as they work together.

Poetry Analysis – Smile Method

S – Structure	How many stanzas? How does the poem develop across each one? Narrative perspective – 1st or 3rd person? What is the rhyme and rhythm in the poem?
M – Meaning	Describe in detail the subject of the poem. What is it about? How do you know?
I – Imagery	Use of Simile, Metaphor and Personification. Also what other images are suggested to you?
L – Language	What examples of literary devices can you find? (repetition, emotive language, alliteration, word class analysis – (noun, adjective, adverb, verbs), directives, connotations of words or colours, sibilance, assonance.
Emotion	What emotions is the poet giving you? What tone or mood is there in each verse? Does it change? What does the mood tell you about how the poet felt?

A step-by-step guide for using SMILE

The SMILE that stands for five different yet integral aspects of a poem, gives a reader a few specific instructions before writing an analysis. The following steps will be of great help if one follows them with little tweaks.

Step 1: Close Reading

Firstly, a reader has to go through the bare text without coloring the vision with the excess of information. One cannot understand a poem at one go. Therefore, having a dictionary on one side, and the text, on the other hand, will be of great help. Reading till the text starts to speak to oneself directly, is the essence of reading poetry closely.

Step 2: Identifying the Structure

Then one has to be technical with the structure of the poem. First of all, one has to look for the rhyme scheme. If there is not any, one can look for the usage of repetitions that create internal rhythm. If the rhythm is missing, then it comes under the genre of blank verse. Thereafter comes the role of scansion, using which one can metrically scan a poem. Lastly, one has to understand the form and identify whether it is a sonnet, lyric, or something else.

Step 3: Grasping the Meaning

If one has followed the first step well, then the meaning would be clear. This step is purely subjective. The simple way to grasp the meaning of a poem is to understand the poet's argument or statement. This process seems hard at first. After reading a few poems, one starts to develop the mindset of looking at a poem as it is.

Step 4: Imagining the Imagery

Imagination comes into action in step 4. For those who can read a line and quickly visualize the image present there, this process seems easy. Whereas if one struggles with this process, one can set out for images that can be easily searchable. Like, in some poems, one can find the image of the moon, sea, rose, river, or sky easily. While in some poems, poets use critical imagery. In that case, sufficient time should be given to that section.

Step 5: Understanding the Literary Devices

Literary devices deal with comparison, contrast, association, or wordplay. Acquaintance with the general rhetorical devices such as simile, metaphor, metonymy, epigram, anaphora, alliteration, anticlimax, climax, etc. will help a

reader in this process. So before moving into this section, one's familiarity with the literary glossary is a must.

Step 6: Impression on Mind

Last but not least, comes step number 6, "Impression on Mind." In this step, a reader has to ask the question, "What is the poet conveying to me, and how does the message influence my mind?" The answer can be subjective but one should not be hesitant to express the feelings clearly. This step is the most interesting one as it deals only with the speaker's subjective understanding of a poem. There is no need to read any technical terms for this step.

Pros and Cons of SMILE

The following difference chart shows what are the pros and cons of the SMILE approach.

Pros

- The SMILE technique helps one to structure an analysis efficiently.
- This is a simple mnemonic to retain in mind. There is no need to grasp ideas in the examination hall. If one simply calls up "SMILE", the ideas keep rolling.
- SMILE technique welcomes a reader's subjective understanding of a poem open-heartedly.

- By practicing this approach, one can build a great grasp over figurative devices, structure, main idea, imagery, and an impressionistic overview of a literary work.

Cons

- Some other approaches are also there that are also effective to structure a poem more easily and appreciate the text without leaving the summary, the meaning of lines, historical context, comparative analysis, etc. untouched.
- This approach restricts a reader in a specific manner. Moreover, if a student wants to analyze a poem differently in the examination hall, he or she has to practice it beforehand. Only relying on the SMILE won't work in that case.
- While subjective understanding is of great importance while analyzing a poem. The historical context behind a poem is also not of lesser significance than the former one.
- The SMILE limits one to the respective elements of a poem. If a question asks one to identify the use of symbolism, then one has to struggle for finding the answer.


LET'S
READ
A
POEM
Chimes Radio
Originals

William Shakespeare (1564- 1616)

was an English poet, playwright and actor of the Renaissance era. Shakespeare is widely recognized as the greatest English poet the world has ever known. Not only were his plays mainly written in verse, but he also penned 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems and a few other minor poems. Today he has become a symbol of poetry and writing internationally.

Shakespeare succeeded as a poet as much as in the theatre. His plays are wonderfully and poetically written, often in blank verse. Shakespeare's sonnets were composed between 1593 and 1601, though not published until 1609. That edition, *The Sonnets of Shakespeare*, consists of 154 sonnets, all written in the form of Shakespearean sonnet. The sonnets fall into two groups: sonnets 1-126, addressed to a "fair youth", a handsome and noble young man, and sonnets 127-152, to a malignant but fascinating "Dark Lady," who the poet loves in spite of himself.

Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

"Sonnet 18" is a sonnet written by English poet and playwright William Shakespeare. Like many of Shakespeare's sonnets, the poem is about the nature of beauty and with the capacity of poetry to represent that beauty. The poet is praising an anonymous person (usually believed to be a young man) through the poem.

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

SONNET 18	PARAPHRASE
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?	Shall I compare you to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:	You are more lovely and more constant:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,	Rough winds shake the beloved buds of May
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:	And summer is far too short:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,	At times the sun is too hot,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;	Or often goes behind the clouds;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,	And everything beautiful sometime will lose its beauty,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;	By misfortune or by nature's planned out course.
But thy eternal summer shall not fade	But your youth shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;	Nor will you lose the beauty that you possess;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,	Nor will death claim you for his own,
When in eternal lines to time	Because in my eternal verse

thou grow'st;	you will live forever.
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,	So long as there are people on this earth,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.	So long will this poem live on, making you immortal.

Summary

The speaker opens the poem with a question addressed to the beloved: “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” The next eleven lines are devoted to such a comparison. In line 2, the speaker prescribes what mainly differentiates the young man from the summer’s day: he is “more lovely and more temperate.” Summer’s days tend toward extremes: they are shaken by “rough winds”; in them, the sun (“the eye of heaven”) often shines “too hot,” or too dim. And summer is fleeting: its date is too short, and it leads to the withering of autumn, as “every fair from fair sometime declines.” The final quatrain of the sonnet tells how the beloved differs from the summer in that respect: his beauty will last forever (“Thy eternal summer shall not fade...”) and never die. In the couplet, the speaker explains how the beloved’s beauty will accomplish this feat, and not die because it is preserved in the poem, which will last forever; it will live “as long as men can breathe or eyes can see.”

Commentary

This sonnet is certainly the most famous in the sequence of Shakespeare's sonnets; it may be the most famous lyric poem in English. On the surface, the poem is simply a statement of praise about the beauty of the beloved; summer tends to unpleasant extremes of windiness and heat, but the beloved is always mild and temperate. Summer is incidentally personified as the "eye of heaven" with its "gold complexion"; the imagery throughout is simple and unaffected, with the "darling buds of May" giving way to the "eternal summer", which the speaker promises the beloved.

Sonnet 18 is the first "rhyme"—the speaker's first attempt to preserve the young man's beauty for all time. An important theme of the sonnet is the power of the speaker's poem to defy time and last forever, carrying the beauty of the beloved down to future generations. The beloved's "eternal summer" shall not fade precisely because it is embodied in the sonnet: "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see," the speaker writes in the couplet, "So long lives this, and this gives life to thee."

Analysis

The speaker initially tries to find an appropriate metaphor to describe his beloved (traditionally believed to be a young man)—suggesting that he might be compared to a summer's day, the sun, or "the darling buds of May." Yet as the speaker searches for a metaphor that will adequately reflect his beloved's beauty, he realizes that none will work because all imply inevitable decline and death. Where the first eight lines of the poem document the failure of poetry's traditional resources to capture the young man's beauty, the final six lines argue that the young man's eternal beauty is best compared to the poem itself.

The poem begins with the speaker suggesting a series of similes to describe the young man. In each case, he quickly lists reasons why the simile is inappropriate. For instance, if he compares the young man to a "summer's day," he has to admit that the metaphor fails to capture the young man's full beauty: he's more "lovely" and more "temperate." As the poem proceeds, though, the speaker's objections begin to shift. Instead of arguing that the young man's beauty exceeds whatever he's compared to, the speaker notes a dark underside to his own similes: they

suggest impermanence and decay. To compare the young man to the summer implies that fall is coming. To compare him to the sun implies that night will arrive—and soon.

However, as the speaker notes in line 9, “thy eternal summer shall not fade.” The young man’s beauty is not subject to decay or change. Clichéd, natural metaphors fail to capture the permanence of the young man’s beauty. To praise him, the poet needs to compare him to something that is itself eternal. For the speaker, that something is art. Like the young man’s “eternal summer,” the speaker’s lines (i.e., the lines of his poem) are similarly “eternal.” Unlike the summer or the sun, they will not change as time progresses. The speaker's lines are thus similar to the young man in a key respect: the poem itself manages to capture the everlasting quality of his beauty, something that the poem’s previous similes had failed to express. The poem itself will give eternal life to the young man: “So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.”

The speaker thus thinks that poems are eternal objects—that they do not change or alter as they encounter new readers or new historical contexts. He also thinks that poetry possesses a set of special, almost magical powers. It

not only describes, it preserves. The poem is thus not simply a way of cataloguing the young man's beauty, it propagates it for future generations. The poem, then, ultimately asks its audience to reflect on the powers of poetry itself: the ways that it does and does not protect the young man against death, and the ways in which it preserves and creates beauty unmatched by the rest of the mortal world.

The Sun

In Renaissance love poetry, the sun is often used as a symbol for physical or personal beauty. Because the sun is the source of all light—and life—comparing someone or something to the sun suggests that they are unusually, even exceptionally beautiful.

In "Sonnet 18," the speaker considers comparing the young man to the sun, but rejects the comparison, noting that the sun's beauty is often dimmed by clouds. To reject this metaphor is to say that the young man is more beautiful than the sun because his beauty is more eternal.

Form

"Sonnet 18" is a Shakespearean sonnet, meaning it has 14 lines written in iambic pentameter and that follow a regular rhyme scheme. This rhyme scheme can be divided into three quatrains followed by a couplet. The sonnet has the regular rhyme scheme ABAB CDCD EFEF GG. All of the end-of-line rhymes are full with the exception of temperate/date.

William Wordsworth (1770- 1850)

Wordsworth was born in the Lake District of northern England. Much of his poetry was inspired by the dramatic landscapes of the Lake District. Both Wordsworth's parents died before he was 15, and he and his four siblings were left in the care of different relatives. To deal with the great deal of grief and depression Wordsworth experienced, he indulged in writing poetry. He moved on in 1787 to St. John's College, Cambridge.

The most important thing he did in his college years was to devote his summer vacation in 1790 to a long walking tour through revolutionary France. He became an enthusiast for the ideals of the French Revolution. Upon taking his Cambridge degree—an undistinguished "pass"—he returned in 1791 to France. In December 1792, Wordsworth had to return to England and was cut off there by the outbreak of war between England and France.

The years that followed his return to England were the darkest of Wordsworth's life. Unprepared for any profession, rootless, virtually penniless, bitterly hostile to his own country's opposition to the French, he lived in London and learned to feel a profound sympathy for the abandoned

mothers, beggars, children, and victims of England’s wars. This experience brought about Wordsworth's interest and sympathy for the life, troubles, and speech of the "common man." These issues proved to be of the utmost importance to Wordsworth's work.

This dark period ended in 1795 when Wordsworth received a legacy from a close relative and he and his sister Dorothy went to live together without separation. Two years later they moved again, to live near the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was an admirer of Wordsworth's work. They collaborated on 'Lyrical Ballads', published in 1798. This collection of poems, mostly by Wordsworth but with Coleridge contributing 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', is generally taken to mark the beginning of the Romantic movement in English poetry.

William Wordsworth was an innovative writer who marked the start of the Romantic Period in literature. He was a pioneer of Romanticism and the Poet laureate of England from 1843 till his death in 1850.

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

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

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed–and gazed–but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,

They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" is one of the most famous and best-loved poems written in the English literature by William Wordsworth. It was written as a lyric poem to capture the bewitching beauty of the wildflowers and express a deeper feeling and emotions of the poet. It has become an eternal classic for describing the nature and its scenic beauty.

The poem is based on one of Wordsworth's own walks in the countryside of England's Lake District. During this walk, he encountered a long strip of daffodils. In the poem, these daffodils have a long-lasting effect on the speaker, firstly in the immediate impression they make and secondly in the way that the image of them comes back to the speaker's mind later on. "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" is a quintessentially Romantic poem, bringing together key ideas about imagination, humanity and the natural world.

Paraphrase

The poet explains about his one day occasional aimless wandering. The term “wandered” means walking free of their own accord. The poet is referring to himself as the ‘cloud’ in a metaphorical sense of the word. Although the clouds mostly travel in groups, this cloud prefers singular hovering. However, he clearly mentions his passing through valleys and hills on a routine walk, simplifying the narrative.

The poet comes across a bunch of daffodils fluttering in the air. He’s dumbfounded by the beauty of those golden daffodils. Although, yellow would be more suitable for daffodils the poet intends to signify its beauty by using golden color. The daffodils are termed as hosts/ crowd since they are together in a collective bunch. The daffodils are a source of immense beauty for the poet.

The daffodils are firmly perched beside a lake, beneath some trees. It’s a windy day overall and the flowers dance and flutter as the wind blows. Let’s take a step back for a brief moment to locate the premises of the poet’s inspiration. The poet resided in the infamous Lake District, a region rich in scenic locations entailing hills, valleys and

lakes. As a result, the location is realistic in its entirety. The poet refers to daffodils dancing, a trait relatable to humans.

The above allegory is a clear and direct referral to our native galaxy Milky Way. The space continuum holds great mystery for our Romantic Era poet as he envisions the daffodils to be in a constant state of wonder as are the stars beyond the reach of humans.

Comparing the daffodils to stars in the sky, the speaker notes how the flowers seem to go on without ending, alongside a bay. The speaker guesses there are ten thousand or so daffodils, all of their heads moving as if they were dancing.

The poet makes an allusion to Milky Way, our galaxy filled with its own planetary solar systems stretched beyond infinity. The lake supposedly has a large area since the daffodils are dispersed along the shoreline. Along the Milky Way's premises lie countless stars which the poet alludes to daffodils fluttering beside the lake.

By ten thousand, he meant a collection of daffodils were fluttering in the air, spellbinding the poet at the beauty of the scene. It's just a wild estimation at best as he supposes ten thousand daffodils at a glance. The term sprightly comes

from sprite which is primarily dandy little spirits people deemed existed in such times. They are akin to fairies.

Near the daffodils, the waves are glinting on the bay. But the daffodils seem more joyful to the speaker than the waves. A poet couldn't help being cheerful, says the speaker, in the cheerful company of the daffodils. The speaker stares at the daffodils slowly, without yet realizing the full extent of the positive effects of encountering them.

After the experience with the daffodils, the speaker often lies on the couch, either absent-minded or thoughtful. It is then that the daffodils come back to the speaker's imaginative memory—access to which is a gift of solitude—and fills the speaker with joy as his mind dances with the daffodils.

Commentary

Considered one of the most significant examples of Romantic poetry, “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” explores the relationship between nature and humanity. In doing so, it makes two key points. Firstly, it argues that humanity is not separate from nature, but rather part of it. And secondly, it suggests that the natural world—and a strong bond with it—is essential to human happiness. Though the reader

might be fooled by the suggestion of solitude in the title, this is an optimistic poem with a positive outlook on the world. This happiness is drawn from the speaker's interaction with nature, in turn encouraging the reader to appreciate the natural majesty that is all around them.

The poem introduces the idea of loneliness in the first line, but the speaker is not really alone at all. The speaker is in the presence of "a host of golden daffodils," whose delicate "dancing" in the wind has a long-lasting effect on the speaker's mind. This set-up introduces a sense of togetherness between humanity (represented by the speaker) and nature (represented by the daffodils). And though this togetherness is partly rendered by the personification of the daffodils that runs throughout the poem—they are "dancing" in every stanza—the speaker pre-emptively flips this personification on its head in the very first line. Here, the speaker compares himself to a natural element: a cloud. So, the human component of the poem is like nature, and the natural component is like humanity. They are, in a word, together.

The poem suggests that this togetherness is something instinctive. It's clear that the beauty of the daffodils had an instant impact on the speaker—which is why the speaker

“gazed and gazed”—but it was only later, when the experience “flashed” again in the speaker's mind, that the speaker realized its full significance. In this quiet moment, the speaker draws on the experience of the daffodils as an avenue to happiness. That is, everything that the daffodils represent—joy, playfulness, survival, beauty—"fills” the speaker with “bliss” and “pleasure.” In the speaker’s mind, the speaker is again dancing “with the daffodils.” The poem, then, is arguing that communion with nature is not just a momentary joy, but something deeper and long-lasting. The reader is left with the distinct impression that, without these types of experiences with nature, the speaker would be returned to a genuine loneliness only hinted at by the title.

Stanzas 2 and 3 also make it clear to the reader that the togetherness described above is, of course, not solely about daffodils, but rather about nature more generally. “The stars” and “the sparkling waves” are both mentioned, suggesting a series of links between the smaller, less noticeable elements of the natural world (like the daffodils), humankind (like the speaker), and the wider universe (the stars). All are presented as a part of nature; though they are different, they are all in communion with one another. However, people have to make an effort to notice this and to

engage with the natural world like the speaker does. The poem, then, is an argument for active engagement with nature—a message perhaps even more important now than it was at the time, given humanity's wide-ranging effects on the planet it inhabits.

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" is a Poem of Nature. As this poem is about the captivating beauty of nature, it has been written from the subjective point of view. It details the poet's encounters with the majestic daffodils in the field beside the lake. The expression of wonder can be felt throughout the poem. The feeling of enjoying the beauty of nature and its impacts on the human mind can leave the reader desiring to spend more time with nature.

Throughout the poem, Wordsworth engages with themes of nature, memory, and spirituality. These three are tied together as the speaker, Wordsworth himself, moves through a beautiful landscape. He takes pleasure in the sight of the daffodils and revives his spirit in nature. At the same time, Wordsworth explores the theme of memory. The flowers are there to comfort him in real-time but also as a memory from the past.

Robert Frost (1874–1963)

Robert Frost was an American poet who won four Pulitzer Prizes for his work. His poem, "The Road Not Taken," is often read at graduation ceremonies across the United States. As a special guest at President John F. Kennedy's inauguration, Frost became a poetic force and the unofficial "poet laureate" of the United States.

The Road Not Taken

Written in 1915 in England, "The Road Not Taken" is one of Robert Frost's—and the world's—most well-known poems. The poem actually contains multiple different meanings. With this poem, Frost has given the world a piece of writing that every individual can relate to, especially when it comes to the concept of choices and opportunities in life.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

"The Road Not Taken" consists of four stanzas of five lines. The rhyme scheme is ABAAB; with the last line being exception to the rule. Each line consists of four strained syllables. Robert Frost has penned the poem in the first-person style. It depicts the poet/ individual looking in

retrospect and contemplating upon past decisions. The Road Not Taken has been subjective, catering to multiple interpretations. According to Robert Frost himself, the poem 'is tricky, quite tricky'.

Stanza 1

In this first stanza, it is easy to notice that Frost is using an ABAAB rhyme scheme for this poem. A Road Not Taken opens with strong imagery, because of the diction used to depict two physical roads separating from each other in a "yellow wood" (which observably refers to the colors of autumn). Line two is hasty to display the theme of regret, by revealing that the individual is "sorry" before he even decides which road to take. We basically find ourselves observing a very important moment, where he has to make a decision that is evidently difficult for him. Lines three through five, express that the individual is trying to see as far as he can down each road, to help him decide which one he should choose to take.

This stanza introduces the dilemma that every human face, not once, but multiple times in his or her life; the dilemma of choice. We as people go through many circumstances and experiences in our lives, and one of them

is choosing between two (or more) paths. Frost is emphasizing that we all try our best to guess what lays ahead for us in every opportunity that we are presented in an attempt to find some control and later comfort over our final decisions. We like to take our time in order to make informed decisions so we can justify our choices when the regret of missing out on the other “roads” starts to haunt us.

Stanza 2

In this second stanza, lines six through eight: the individual in The Road Not Taken finally makes a decision and chooses a road that he thinks he believes is better, because it looked like not many people had walked on it before. However, in lines nine and ten, he is quick to add that the other road looked equally used in comparison to the one he chose, so it really wasn’t as less traveled as he was telling himself.

This stanza is important because it clarifies the common misunderstanding that one road was less traveled than the other since the character clearly states that both roads were “really about the same”. The diction in this stanza portrays the uncertainty of the character as he tries to justify to himself that his decision is the right one for him. The

important idea to note in this stanza is that the character claimed the road he chose was better because it “wanted wear” meaning, that it was tempting him. He felt that the road he chose “wanted” to be walked on by him.

Stanza 3

In this third stanza, Robert Frost mentions in lines eleven and twelve that at the moment that this individual was making his decision, both paths were nearly identical. No one had stepped through to disturb the leaves on both roads. Line thirteen is an important point in The Road Not Taken as this is when the individual finalizes his decision of leaving the other road, for perhaps another time. Lines fourteen and fifteen give us a glimpse of his doubts as he confesses to himself that it’s highly unlikely he will come back to travel this other road.

This stanza shows us that this character is truly being honest with himself, as he makes the crucial decision of which road to take. He notices that both choices lay equally in front of him and none of these choices have been “trodden black”. Sometimes in life your quick decisions are based on what you learned from other people’s experiences. These experiences then leave marks in the choices that we have,

these marks then form our bias towards or against that path. When we encounter choices in our lives where find that the leaves are not “trodden black” by what we learned from the people around us, it becomes harder to make a decision between them, just like the situation of the character in The Road Not Taken. After making his decision, he exclaims that he will leave the first choice for another day, and then he honestly tells himself that if he lets this road go now, there is no coming back. There are many defining decisions in a person’s life that shape their futures and sometimes when we select an option in these moments, they change the course of our life and there’s no turning back. That is where the regret of not exploring our other options disturbs us.

Stanza 4

In this last stanza, lines sixteen and seventeen, the individual predicts that one day far into the future, he knows will tell the story of this decision that he is now making. Lines eighteen and nineteen expose that he intends to lie, and claim he took the road that was less traveled (in reality both were equally traveled). Finally, the last line expresses that the individual is also planning to claim that his choice to take

this less traveled road made all the difference, in where he will be standing at the time.

The Road Not Taken Themes

In "The Road Not Taken," the speaker describes him or herself as facing a choice between which of two roads to take. The speaker's choice functions as an extended metaphor for all the choices that the speaker—and all people—must make in life. Through the speaker's experience, the poem explores the nature of choices, and what it means to be a person forced to choose.

The poem begins with the speaker recounting the experience of facing the choice of which road to take. The speaker's first emotion is "sorrow," as he or she regrets the reality that makes it impossible to "travel both" roads, or to experience both things. The poem makes clear that every choice involves the loss of opportunity and that choices are painful because they must be made with incomplete information. The speaker tries to gather as much information as possible by looking "down one [road] as far as I could," but there is a limit to what the speaker can see, as the road is "bent," meaning that it curves, leaving the rest of it out of sight. So the speaker, like anyone faced with a

choice, must make a choice, but can't know enough to be sure which choice is the right one. The speaker, as a result, is paralyzed: "long I stood" contemplating which road to choose.

The speaker does eventually choose a road based on which one appears to have been less traveled, but the poem shows that making that choice doesn't actually solve the speaker's problem. Immediately after choosing a road, the speaker admits that the two roads were "worn... really about the same" and that both roads "equally lay" without any leaves "trodden black" by passersby. So the speaker has tried to choose the road that seemed less traveled, but couldn't tell which road was actually less traveled. By making a choice, the speaker will now never get the chance to experience the other road and can never know which was less traveled. The speaker hides from this psychic pain by announcing that he or she is just saving "the first [road] for another day!" But, again, reality sets in: "I doubted if I should ever come back." Every choice may be a beginning, but it is also an ending.

The Road Not Taken Symbols

The entirety of "The Road Not Taken" is an extended metaphor in which the two roads that diverge symbolize life's many choices. In much the same way that people are generally unable to see what the future holds, the speaker is unable to see what lies ahead on each path. Furthermore, what little the speaker thinks he or she understands about each path at the moment of decision later turns out to have been less clear cut, underscoring the impossibility of predicting where one's life choices will lead. The speaker acknowledges that he can only travel one road, and will not be granted the chance to "come back" and try another route. In these ways, the diverging roads in the poem symbolize all of life's choices—the confusion of having to make choices in the moment, the painful impossibility of foreseeing their consequences, and the sense, when looking back, that those choices defined your life, even when you can't know in what way, or even whether they did at all.

Edward Thomas (1878–1917)

In 1913 he met the American poet Robert Frost, who encouraged him to write poetry. Two years later Thomas enlisted in the British army. He was killed during World War I, and most of his poems were published posthumously. *Thomas' Collected Poems* appeared in 1920.

When Robert Frost wrote his famous poem *The Road Not Taken* in 1915, the poem was being interpreted more seriously by many readers, as an encouragement to be masters of their destiny. And among those it may have influenced in this way, to fatal effect, was Frost's best friend, fellow poet Edward Thomas.

Their story was told in a fine book of a few years ago, *All Roads Lead to France*, by Matthew Hollis, which describes the events that led, first, to Thomas first discovering his voice as a writer, and then to volunteering for the Great War, in which he died. Frost was central to both events.

Thomas was a well-known critic but with the encouragement of Frost Thomas was composing poetry of a high order. In the meantime, they had also become walking companions – the nature-loving Thomas often leading Frost through the countryside along paths of the kind mentioned

in *The Road Not Taken*. Thomas sometimes regretted afterwards that they had gone the wrong way.

In the spring of 1915, Frost sent an envelope to Edward Thomas that contained only one item: a draft of “The Road Not Taken,” under the title “Two Roads.” Frost had been inspired to write the poem by Thomas’s habit of regretting whatever path the pair took during their long walks in the countryside. Frost believed that his friend “would take the poem as a gentle joke and would protest, ‘Stop teasing me.’ Thus, in the poem’s words, may have made all the difference. This, Frost believed, was the moment that set him on a path to war. Being in his late 30s and married with children, Thomas didn’t have to fight. Nor, apparently, was he compelled by any patriotism. In July 1915, the Englishman enlisted in the Artists Rifles. He was eventually sent to France in time to take part in the Battle of Arras and died on April 9th, 1917, shot through the chest. *The Road Not Taken* did not send Thomas to war, but it was the last moment in a sequence of events that had brought him to an irreversible decision.

The Owl

Downhill I came, hungry, and yet not starved;
Cold, yet had heat within me that was proof
Against the North wind; tired, yet so that rest
Had seemed the sweetest thing under a roof.

Then at the inn I had food, fire, and rest,
Knowing how hungry, cold, and tired was I.
All of the night was quite barred out except
An owl's cry, a most melancholy cry

Shaken out long and clear upon the hill,
No merry note, nor cause of merriment,
But one telling me plain what I escaped
And others could not, that night, as in I went.

And salted was my food, and my repose,
Salted and sobered, too, by the bird's voice
Speaking for all who lay under the stars,
Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice.

The Owl is one of the most celebrated poems writing about the First World War. It is not directly about the trenches but the war features in a more indirect way. The poem draws on Thomas's experience of the front line. It is also a poem about the emotions of empathy and guilt.

Stanza One

In the first stanza of 'The Owl' the speaker begins by describing his own actions. He was traveling downhill and was feeling hungry. He makes sure to add that although hungry, he was "not starved". This is followed up by another description of a similar nature. He was cold, "yet had heat within [him]." This heat was a kind of internal protection against the "North wind."

While these lines do not tell the reader anything specific about the setting, one is able to assume that the speaker has been somewhere where there isn't much, or any, food. Nor was there anywhere warm to stay, or anywhere that he could rest. He is lucky to have made it inside. The last lines speak on rest as being the "sweetest thing under a roof." It seems as though his exhaustion is the most important thing to him at this time.

Stanza Two

In the second stanza, he makes it to the “inn.” There, he is able to get all the things that he was lacking in the first stanza. There is “food, fire and rest.” These three features of the inn are set against the three parts the speaker has shared about himself. That he was “hungry, cold and tired.” Now, an interesting contrast is presented between the outside world and that which the speaker is able to partake in inside the inn.

Outside, one is cold and hungry, but inside one is warm and fed. The less than desirable elements of the night were “barred out” by the walls of the inn and the supplies inside. But, there was one thing which penetrated, “An owl’s cry.”

The sound of the owl is described as being “melancholy.” This fits with the overall tone of the poem so far. The speaker has been reserved in his descriptions and focused on getting inside. There is a calmness to the scene, but also a darkness.

Stanza Three

The third stanza continues the dark tone of the piece. The speaker hears the fall of the owl and it lasts “long and

clear.” It is coming, he thinks from “upon the hill.” He also adds that the “note” was not “merry,” nor did it cause “merriment.” The reflected repletion in this line is interesting as it creates a feeling of unity between the speaker and the owl. They are reflecting one another.

The fact that the speaker made it inside the inn is becoming increasingly important. He describes the sound of the bird as “telling [him] plain” what it was he escaped when he made it inside. The mournful sound is intimately connected with the night and the fate of many others left outdoors.

The speaker notes this fact— that there are “others” who “could not” come inside in the last line of this stanza. He feels truly lucky to have escaped the cold.

Stanza Four

In the last stanza, the speaker goes over the different things he has that separate him from the owl and the night’s cold it is representing. The haunting sounds made him feel “sobered.” His food was “salted” and his repose too. The “voice” of the bird spoiled his physical pleasure at these comforts.

This doesn’t seem to be something he is upset about though. The speaker seems saddened by the state of the rest of the world outside, those he refers to as the “Soldiers and poor.” They are unable to “rejoice” as he is, warm and inside.

Commentary

The Owl is a poem consisting of sixteen lines, divided into four stanzas of four lines each. A naturalistic theme is immediately present in this poem, as the very first word "downhill" takes us to the countryside of the poet’s homeland. The visual imagery in the line “the night quite barred out" tell us that it is tranquil in the inn, and the auditory imagery of the owls cry gives the poem a dark and doleful tone.

The owl and its cry is interpreted to be symbolic of the poet’s conscience waking up, as he thinks about what has happened during the war. The last two lines of the third stanza reiterate this point, “But one telling me plain what I escaped, And others could not, that night, as in I went”. Here in the poem, the poet is grateful to be safe and warm in the inn, but his heart longs for those that were not able to escape the war.

And as the poem reaches its end, the last stanza repeats the word “salted” twice. The way in which “salted” is repeated is important because it represents the flavors of the poet’s food as well as his sad and guilty demeanor in regards to the suffering he has escaped, ”salted was my food, and my repose”. And the use of the word “salted” represents the awakened state of the poet’s mind because of the owl’s cry, “Salted and sobered, too, by the bird’s voice”. These descriptions show us that the poet at the inn is aware of his privileged position over others less fortunate. And in these final lines, the poet reflects on the ultimate price of war as the owl cries out, “Speaking for all who lay under the stars, Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice”.

Almost in every country the Owl’s cry bears some special significance. Just as a cuckoo’s note creates a sense of pleasure in our mind as a cuckoo visits us during spring time; so an owl’s cry creates in our mind a sense of impending calamity and suffering. This suffering gives its cry a special melancholy tone. Nightingale, Cuckoo, Blackbird and Robin are all merry-birds, but the Owl is a gloomy bird.

Stephen Crane (1871 – 1900)

Stephen Crane was an American poet and novelist. His poems convey themes relating to death, loss, war, religion and love. He is recognized by modern critics as one of the most innovative writers of his generation.

Crane was considered an important figure in American literature. Crane's writing is characterized by vivid intensity, distinctive dialects, and irony. Common themes involve fear, spiritual crises and social isolation. Crane's poetry was unusual for his time, due to the use of free verse without rhyme or meter, and he often would not even put titles for his poems. His poems have also been unique for his logical prose and narrative content.

War Is Kind

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,

Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them,
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom --
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

In this five stanza excerpt from ‘War is Kind’ by Stephen Crane, the poet does not use any pattern of rhyme or rhythm. In fact, the whole poem is written in free verse. But that doesn’t mean that there are moments of rhyme or techniques used to create rhythm. For example, the endings of lines one and five of stanza one rhyme with the words “kind” and “kind”. So do lines three and six of stanza two with “die” and “lie.” These same endings are used again in the fourth stanza of the excerpt.

Repetition is also an important part of the poem. It is a technique used within all forms of poetry, but within free verse writing can help to unify the lines. In the case of ‘War is Kind’ Crane uses and reuses the phrase “War is kind” five times in this excerpt alone. The statement is always preluded by another three line phrase, “Do not weep”. These are two directions both aimed at the “maiden” referenced in the first line.

Stanza One

In the first stanza of ‘War is Kind’ the speaker begins by making use of the refrain. He tells a “maiden,” or unmarried woman, that she should not weep. “War,” he states, is “kind”. This is obviously a very unusual and likely ironic,

thing to say. He goes on to tell the woman that her “lover threw” his hands in the air when he was confronted with war. When this happened, his “steed,” or horse ran alone. It was “affrighted,” a complicated way to say frightened. It is unclear what exactly happened to make the lover throw his hands in the air. Maybe it was in surrender, or perhaps something darker happened and he was injured or even killed.

The last two lines of this stanza are a reiteration of part of the first line, and the two statements which make up the refrain. These two lines bookend the stanza, as they do with stanzas three and five.

Stanza Two

In the second stanza of ‘War is Kind’ the speaker plays with the previous reference to a “steed” and uses the word “Hoarse”. This time though he is referring to the drums played by the regiment of soldiers. They sound “hoarse,” as if they are sick or in need of something to drink. In the next two lines the speaker says the soldiers are “Little souls” and are thirsting not for water, but “for fight”.

The phrase little souls is interesting, it contrast with the next lines which seem to suggest the men do not have souls. The speaker goes on to say that these men were born for nothing else other than to fight. They were born to “drill” as in train and practice, and then die. They are mechanical in their actions and in their purpose.

In the fourth line the speaker references “unexplained glory”. There is no clear definitive answer to what this glory is, but it could refer to the ephemeral nature of glory itself. It is something which spectators and outsiders from war imbue upon those who were in war. Glory is not something that actively seeks out soldiers on the battlefield.

In the last lines of the section the speaker mentions a battle god. What the speaker is doing here is setting out a scene, which is ruled differently than other kingdom. This particular kingdom is nothing more than a field where “a thousand corpses lie”. It’s a dark and terrible place, which is ruled over by a powerful force.

Stanza Three

In the third stanza the speaker begins by asking a “babe” not to weep. He has moved on from addressing a

woman to speaking to a young child. He tells the child that there is no reason to weep, and then provides them with a very good reason to do so. The child's father, who was in a battle of some kind died in "the yellow trenches". He had rage in his breast and in the simplest way, "gulped and died". The "rage" refers to his own thirst for war, and to the injury which killed him. The bullet entered his body, driven by another's rage. The refrain is again repeated. It is starting to become even more haunting as its deep irony is made clear.

Stanza Four

The flag of the regiment is mentioned in the fourth stanza of 'War is Kind'. It is "blazing" and pattered with a "crest of red and gold" and an eagle. There is another moment of repetition in which the line "These men were born to drill and die" is used again. It is a reminder, and its reuse helps create a rhythm to the poem. Along with the refrain "Do not weep. / War is kind" the poem starts to sound song-like.

In lines four through six of this stanza the speaker goes through some terrible images. He speaks to the flag, and tells it to make sure the men know that there is "virtue" in

slaughtering one's enemies and that there is "excellence" in killing. The stanza ends with the repetition of the line "And a field where a thousand corpses lie."

Stanza Five

The fifth stanza of 'War is Kind' is directed toward a mother who was faced with the loss of her son. With the alliterative phrase "heart hung humble" the speaker describes the way she stood before his coffin. Her heart was on the "shroud" of her son, as simple as a button. Crane describes the heart as completing the action, a technique known as metonymy. The excerpt ends with the speaker again telling someone not to cry, and that war is kind.

Style

"War is Kind" is Crane's free verse meditation on war and loss. The poet utilizes concrete imagery and irony to compose a portrait of the cosmic futility of war. Concrete imagery describes the world in terms of the senses, what we experience with our sight, taste, touch, smell, and hearing. By appealing to our senses, Crane can more effectively show the horrors of war directly. The tone of his

descriptions is ironic, that is, he does not mean that war is kind, but that it is cruel and unjust. Another example of irony occurs in the second stanza when the speaker says “Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom …” It is also ironic that war’s “kindness” means that the soldiers’ deaths bring them release from their suffering.

The poem employs two levels of diction, or word choice. The language of the first, third, and fifths stanzas is plain and closer to everyday speech, while the language of the indented second and fourth stanzas is embellished and inflated, and uses more formal verse conventions such as end rhyme. The contrast between these two styles adds to the poem’s complexity, and furthers the author’s intention to deflate the idea of romantic heroism in all of its guises.

Historical Context

Although Crane never served in the United States military, as a journalist he covered a number of conflicts for various newspapers and news.


Glossary
of Terms
A-Z

Glossary of Literary Terms

Allegory: an allegory is a narrative in which the characters often stand for abstract concepts. An allegory generally teaches a lesson by means of an interesting story.

Alliteration: the repetition at close intervals of consonant sounds for a purpose. For example: wailing in the winter wind.

Allusion: a reference to something in literature, history, mythology, religious texts, etc., considered common knowledge. A direct or indirect reference to a person, place, thing, event, or idea in history or literature. Allusions imply reading and cultural experiences shared by the writer and the reader, functioning as a kind of shorthand whereby the recalling of something outside the text supplies an emotional or intellectual context. Use the verb form, allude.

Ambiguity: Double or even multiple meaning.

Analogy: a point by point comparison between two dissimilar things for the purpose of clarifying the less familiar of the two things.

Antagonist: the character or force that opposes the protagonist. (It can be a character, an animal, a force, or a weakness of the character.)

Antithesis – a balanced statement; a figure of speech in which words and phrases with opposite meanings are balanced against each other.

- "To err is human, to forgive, divine"
  (Pope, "An Essay On Criticism").
- "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."
  (Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities,)

Apostrophe: the device, usually in poetry, of calling out to an imaginary, dead, or absent person, or to a place, thing, or personified abstraction either to begin a poem or to make a dramatic break in thought somewhere within the poem. It is used to address a specific group, person, or thing including those that are absent, dead, or imaginary. Often, the address is preceded by O or Oh.

Assonance: the repetition at close intervals of vowel sounds for a purpose. For example: mad as a hatter.

The repetition of vowel sounds in stressed syllables. Assonance differs from rhyme in that rhyme is a similarity of

vowel and consonant: "lake" and "fake" demonstrate rhyme, "lake" and "fate" demonstrate assonance.

Autobiography: The written account of a person own life.

Ballad: a narrative poem that was originally meant to be sung. Ballads are generally about ordinary people who have unusual adventures, with a single tragic incident as the central focus. They contain dialogue and repetition, and imply more than they actually tell. Example: “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Biography: The written account of someone else's life.

Blank Verse: Iambic pentameter without rhyme. The verse form closest to the natural rhythms of English speech.

- Example: Most of the content of Shakespeare’s plays; Milton’s “Paradise Lost”

Cacophony: Harsh, clashing, or dissonant sounds, often produced by combinations of words that require a clipped, explosive delivery, or words that contain a number of plosive consonants such as b, d, g, k, p, and t; the opposite of EUPHONY.

Caricature: A way of drawing or writing which makes the special features of a person or group stronger, so that they are ridiculous.

Catalog: a long list of anything; an inventory used to emphasize quantity or inclusiveness.

Caesura : A pause occurring in a line of poetry, either due to sense or to natural speech rhythm. A caesura is usually accompanied by some form of punctuation. It is conventional to notate a caesura with the “double pipe” sign: ||

- Example: “How do I love thee? || Let me count the ways” (Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “How Do I Love Thee?,” Sonnet 43)

Character: the vehicle (person, animal, creation) that moves the story forward. A character may be main or minor, depending on his or her role in the work of literature. While some characters are two-dimensional, with one or two dominant traits, a fully developed character has a unique complex of traits. A) dynamic characters often change as the plot unfolds. B) static characters remain the same.

Characterization: refers to the techniques employed by writers to develop characters. 1) The writer may use physical

description. 2) Dialogue spoken by the character and by other characters reveals character traits. 3) A character's action may be a means of characterization. 4) The reactions of another character may also be revealing. 5) A character's thoughts arid feelings are also a means of characterization.

Chorus: In Greek drama the chorus watched the action of the play and told the story. The modern meaning can be simply a group of people other than the hero or heroine.

Chronicle: A history of events year by year – e.g. the Angelo-Saxon Chronicle in old English.

Classic:

a) A work that is recognized as a great work: e.g. Dickens novels are some of the classics of English literature.

b) Ancient Greek or Latin literature: e.g. we studied classics at university. c) Writing influenced by ancient Greek and Latin literature: e.g. Eighteenth century poets preferred classical forms. (adjective: classical)

Cliché :An expression that has lost its freshness or appeal due to overuse.

- Examples: the writing is on the wall, as easy as pie, what goes around comes around, or turn over a new leaf

Climax: the point at which the conflict of the story begins to reach a turning point and begins to be resolved. A moment of greatest intensity or emotional tension as a narrative's conflict is reached, usually marks a turning point in the plot.

Comedy: Something that is funny. A comedy usually means a play with a light happy story (adjective: comic)

Conceit: an elaborate figure of speech comparing two very dissimilar things. a figure of speech (such as an analogy, metaphor, hyperbole, or oxymoron) which sets up an unusual, exaggerated, or elaborate parallel between two different things (for example, comparing one's beloved to a ship or planet. The comparison may be brief or may extend throughout an entire poem.

Conflict: the struggle between two opposing forces that is the basis of the plot. 1) internal conflict character struggling with him/herself, 2) external conflicts – character struggling

with forces outside of him/herself. For example. Nature, god, society, another person, technology, etc.

Connotation: the associations, images, or impressions carried by a word, as opposed to the word's literal meaning.

Consonance: the close repetition of identical consonant sounds before and after differing vowel sounds.

Convention: In general, an accepted way of doing things.

Couplet: Two lines of verse that rhyme.

Crisis: The most important part of a play, when the action takes an important turn and the feelings of the audience are strongest**.**

Dairy: A written record of daily events. The most famous dairy in English was written by Samuel Pepys.

Denotation: the precise, literal meaning of a word, without emotional associations or overtones.

Denouement: the final unraveling or outcome of the plot in drama or fiction during which the complications and conflicts of the plot are resolved.

Dialogue: A conversation between two or more people in a book, a play, etc.

Diction: A writer's specific choice of words, phrases, sentence structures, and figurative language, which combine to create meaning. Discussions about diction consider why the writer uses this word rather than any other word that might have the same literal meaning.

Drama: A literary genre usually in the form of a story or play that focuses on and resolves some universal problem or situation.

a) Any kind of work written to be performed on the stage, including comedies, tragedies, etc.

b) Something exciting or important that happens. (adjective: dramatic)

Echo: the repetition of key words, sounds, syllables, lines or ideas for effect.

Edition: The printing of a book, often with changes made in second edition.

Elegy: A formal poem lamenting about the dead. A poem of mourning for someone who is dead.

Elision: Leaving out a vowel or a syllable, or running two vowels together, to make the correct metre in a line of verse.

Ellipsis: leaving out words which give the full sense: e.g. 'In wit [he was] a man: [in] simplicity [he was] a child.' (Pope)

Enjambment: when a sentence ‘steps over’ a line break into the next line without pause.

- Example:

I have lived long enough. My way of live
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf (Macbeth)

- Shakespeare’s Sonnet 130. The first line is end-stopped; the last two are enjambed.

My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.
…….end-stopped
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
…….
As any she belied with false compare.
……...enjambment

Epic: A long narrative poem about the deeds of a hero, often set in a past that is depicted as greater than the present and praising heroic adventures.

Epigram: any witty, pointed saying. Originally an epigram meant an inscription, or epitaph usually in verse, on a tomb. Later it came to mean a short poem that compressed meaning and expression in the manner of an inscription. A short, funny, sharp poem or remark. Oscar Wilde was famous for his witty epigrams.

Epigraph: a motto or quotation that appears at the beginning of a book, play, chapter, or poem. Occasionally, an epigraph shows the source for the title of a work. Because the epigraph usually relates to the theme of a piece of literature, it can give the reader insight into the work.

Epilogue

An ending or an extra part after the end of a book or a play. Some of Shakespeare's plays have an epilogue addressed to the audience.

Epitaph: the inscription on a tombstone or monument in memory of the person or people buried there. Epitaph also refers to a brief literary piece that sums up the life of a dead person.

Essay: A short prose work that is not fiction, often showing the writer's own ideas on a subject.

Euphemism: Mild or indirect words replacing harsher or more direct words. Example: “he passed away” instead of “he died.”

Euphony: A succession of sweetly melodious sounds; the opposite of CACOPHONY. The term is applied to smoothly flowing POETRY or PROSE.

Exposition: background information at the beginning of the story, such as setting, characters and conflicts. In a short story the exposition appears in the opening paragraphs; in a novel the exposition is usually part of the first chapter.

Fable: a brief tale told to illustrate a moral. A legend; a story which trays to teach something.

Fairy tale - fairy story: A popular story usually told to children. These are imaginary stories, often with unreal character.
Cinderella, Snow white, Mother Goose, etc. are well- known fairy tales.

Falling Action: events that lead to a resolution after the climax.

Fantasy: An imaginative work that might have no basis in the real world; something imagined or dreamed.

Farce : A comedy, often with a ridiculous plot which could not possibly be true. (adjective: farcical)

Fiction: A work invented by the winter, with characters and events that are imaginary. Novels, short stories, etc. are all works of fiction. (adjective: fictional, fictitious). Non-fiction: refers to writing about factual subject.

Figurative Language: also called Figures of Speech – describe something as one thing when it is another, it is the opposite of literal language.

- Example: Shakespeare's phrase "My love is a fever" (Sonnet 147) is figurative because love is not a high body temperature. The phrase, rather, might describe the speaker's emotion in an alternative way to express the degree of feeling.
- Figurative language can be found in: allegory, apostrophe, conceit, hyperbole, irony, litotes, metonymy (and synecdoche), oxymoron, paradox, personification, simile, and symbolism.

Flashback: a scene, or an incident that happened before the beginning of a story, or at an earlier point in the narrative.

Foil: a character who provides a striking contrast to another character.

Foot: the basic unit of rhythm in poetry consisting of a group of two or three syllables. There is one stressed syllable, marked \ , and one or more unstressed, marked - .

Types of feet: U (unstressed); / (stressed)

- Iamb: U /
- Trochee: / U
- Anapest: U U /
- Dactyl: / U U
- Spondee: / /
- Pyrrhic: U U

Free verse : A verse which the lines can vary in length, with no strict meter. Flowing lines, usually unrhymed, that vary in length and with no fixed meter.

Foreshadowing: a writer's use of hints or clues to indicate events that will occur later in the narrative.

Genre: A type of literature. Example: Epic or Tragedy

Hero\ heroin:

a) the main character in a book or a play, although not necessarily good.

b) a good and brave man\ woman. (adjective: heroic)

Heroic couplet : A pair of lines in iambic pentameter that rhyme, widely written in the Restoration period.

Hexameter: A line of verse with six metrical feet, used by the ancient Greek and Latin poets but not used in English.

Hyperbole: an exaggeration for emphasis or humorous effect. Example: “Everyone in the world is mad at me today.”

Imagery: words and phrases that create vivid picture for the reader. Using images such as metaphors and similes to produce an effect in the reader's imagination. Descriptive sensory words and specific details that “paint a picture” for readers. Emotions, moods, themes, and tone may be conveyed by images. A whole poem may be organized around a single image. For example, consider this image of the flowers in William Wordsworth’s poem Daffodils:

Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

Irony: Something that has a second meaning intended by the writer, often the opposite, and often with a bitterly humorous tone. A contrast between the intent and the literal meaning of words or action. Irony is not a coincidence; rather, it is a planned and purposeful tool used to emphasize an idea.

In dramatic irony, the audience understands a second meaning that the character doses not himself understand. (adjective: ironic).

Verbal irony: a writer says one thing, but means something entirely different.

Situational irony: occurs when something happens that is entirely different from what is expected.

Dramatic irony: occurs when the reader knows information that the characters do not.

Lyric:

a) a poem, originally one meant to be sung, which expresses the poet's thoughts and feelings. (adjective: lyrical)

b) lyrics is a word now used for the words of a song, especially a pop song.

Metaphor: a figure of speech in which a comparison or analogy is made between two seemingly unlike things, as in the phrase “evening of life.” A way of describing something by saying that it is like something else, without using the words 'like' or 'as': e.g. That man is a snake. Compare simile.

Metonymy: a figure of speech that substitutes the name of a related object, person, or idea for the subject at hand. A figure of speech in which a phrase or word is substituted for one which is closely related to it.

- Example: “The White House made an announcement today.” ‘The White House’ is used when what is literally meant is the president and/or his cabinet members and staff, etc.
- If someone says they are reading Dickens, they mean they are reading something written by the author.

Meter: Formal rhythm in lines of verse. The verse line is divided into feet which contain different rhythms and stresses (see foot). The most common English meter is the iambic pentameter, with five iambs or iambic feet.

Mood: the feeling, or atmosphere, that a writer creates for the reader. Connotative words, sensory images, and figurative language contribute to the mood of a selection, as do the sound and rhythm of the language.

Monologue: A speech by one person. Interior monologue is the name given to a prose style used by James Joyce and others, which gave the reader the stream of thoughts and feelings passing through a character's mind.

Motif: A unifying element in an artistic work, especially any recurrent image, symbol, theme, character type, subject or narrative detail.

Narrative: The telling of a story. Novels, short stories, etc. are narratives.

Narrator: the person from whose point of view events are conveyed.

- **First person**: the narrator is a character in the story, uses the pronoun "I." The first person narrator does not have to be the main character in the story.
- **Third person**: is indicated by the pronouns he, she and they. The third person narrator is not a participant in the

action and thus maintains a certain distance from the characters.

A) In **third person omniscient** point of view, the narrator is all-knowing about the thoughts and feelings of the characters.

B) The **third person limited** point of view deals with a writer presenting events as experienced by only one character. This type of narrator does not have full knowledge of situations, past or future events.

C) In **third person objective** the story conveys only the external details of the characters—never their thoughts or inner motivations.

Novel: A book-length story whose character and events are usually imaginary. A writer of novels is a novelist.

Ode : A poem, originally to be sung, but now a grand lyric poem often in praise of someone or something.

Onomatopoeia. The use of words or passages that imitate sounds. Using the sounds of words, in poetry, to make the sound of what is being described: e.g. the word 'cuckoo' is onomatopoeia, because it is like the sound that the bird

makes. Such as: buzz, or cuckoo, whose meaning is suggested by the sound of the word itself. (boom, click, plop)

Oxymoron: a figure of speech in which two contradictory words or phrases are combined in a single expression, giving the effect of a condensed paradox: “wise fool,” “cruel kindness.”

Paradox: a statement or situation containing obvious contradictions, but is nevertheless true. A statement that seems to be self-contradictory or even absurd, but is used to demonstrate a truth. Example: man is born to die.

Parallelism: the use of similar grammatical form gives items equal weight, as in Lincoln’s line “of the people, by the people, for the people.” Attention to parallelism generally makes both spoken and written expression more concise, clear and powerful.

Parody: an imitation of a serious work of literature for the purpose of criticism or humorous effect or for flattering tribute. Imitating something in such a way as to make the original thing seem ridiculous.

Pastoral: Style of novels and stories, based on the adventures of men who are often wicked but lovable, and usually including many different places and events.

Personification: a figure of speech in which human qualities or characteristics are given to an animal, object, or concept.

Plot: the plan of action or sequence of events of the story.

Point of view: the vantage point, or stance from which a story is told, the eye and mind through which the action is perceived. (See also narrator.)

Prose : Written language in its usual form, not on lines of verse. The ordinary language of speaking or writing, without meter.

Protagonist: the central character in a story; the one upon whom the actions center. The protagonist faces a problem and must undergo some conflict to solve it.

Pun: A form of wit, not necessarily funny, involving a play on a word with two or more meanings.

Realism: Trying to show life as it really is. (adjective: realistic) Representation of objects, actions, or social

conditions as they really are. There is usually an emphasis on the everyday, familiar, and an avoidance of idealization.

Resolution: the final unwinding, or resolving of the conflicts and complications in the plot.

Rhyme: Repetition of the same sound in words or lines. Two or more words with the same sound; e.g. 'Love′ and ′dove′ are rhymes. ′Day′ and ′weigh′ rhyme. ′ Meat′ rhymes with′ street′.

Rhyme scheme: the pattern of end rhyme in a poem.

Rhythm: See meter. Meter is the formal rhythm of verse, but prose also has rhythm. (adjective: rhythmic)

Rising Action: That part of the plot that leads through a series of events of increasing interest and power to the climax or turning point. The rising action begins with an inciting moment, an action or event that sets a conflict of opposing forces into motion.

Romance: A love story or an imaginative story usually with love and adventure. (adjective: romantic)

Romantic : The writers in England between about 1790 and 1830 are known as Romantic poets and authors.

Sarcasm: An unsophisticated or heavy-handed form of verbal irony (see “irony” for further clarification).

Satire: a literary technique in which foolish ideas or customs are ridiculed for the purpose of improving society. The writer of satire is a satirist. (verb: satirize; adjective: satirical)
A type of literary work which uses irony, sarcasm, wit, and ridicule to expose and criticize the follies and vices of a person, custom, or institution. Famous examples in English literature include Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels, and George Orwell’s Animal Farm.

Setting: the time and place in which the action of a story occurs.

Simile: a figure of speech in which two seemingly unlike things are compared. The comparison is made explicit by the use of a word or phrase such as: like, as, than, similar to, resembles, or seems—as in: “my love is like a red, red rose,” (Robert Burns “Red, Red Rose”)

Soliloquy: A dramatic convention in which a character in a play, alone on stage, speaks his or her thoughts aloud. The audience is provided with information about the characters’ motives, plans, and state of mind.

Sonnet : A poem of 14 lines with a fixed form. In the petrarchan sonnet the first eight lines (the octave) have a rhyme scheme of abbaabba and the next six lines (the sestet) rhyme cdecde. The Shakespearean sonnet is in iambic pentametre and ends with a couplet. The rhymes are abab cdcd efef gg or abba cddc effe gg.

Stanza : a unit of structure in a poem, consisting of a group of lines separated by blank space. Stanzas may be thought of as the paragraphs of a poem. A group of verse lines with a rhyme pattern, such as a quatrain (four lines), a sestet (six lines), an octave (eight lines), etc.

Stream of Consciousness: the technique of presenting the flow of thoughts, responses, and sensations of one or more characters is called stream of consciousness.

Structure: The plan of work, especially a novel or a play, including the plot, the design, etc.

Style: the way in which a piece of literature is written. Style refers not to what is said, but how it is said.

Suspense: the tension or excitement felt by the reader as he or she becomes involved in the story.

Symbol : something that has a deeper meaning or that represents something else: e.g. A snake may be a symbol of evil. A person, object, idea or action that stands for something else. In literature, a concrete image can express an emotion or abstract idea because of symbolism; a dove can represent peace, and scales can stand for justice. It is usually something literal that stands for something figurative. (adjective: symbolic)

Synecdoche: a figure of speech in which a part represents the whole or the whole represents a part. Example: "Philadelphia won the baseball game," –
Philadelphia represents the Phillies' baseball team.

Syntax: sentence structure (see handout).

Theme: the central idea in a literary work. The theme is usually an idea about life or about people. Writers sometimes state the story's theme outright, but more often they simply tell the story and let the reader discover the theme. Therefore, theme is an idea revealed by the events of the story; plot is simply what happens in the story; it is not the theme. A theme provides a unifying point around which plot, characters, setting, point of view, symbols and other elements are developed.

Tone: the writer's or speaker's attitude toward a subject. Tone or mood is inferred by elements of the author's style. Just as a tone of voice in a conversation can convey an attitude, a tone in a written work can indicate a mood like seriousness, happiness, anger, nostalgia, etc. Note that the tone doesn't always coincide with its content; a poem about death may have a silly or ironic tone.

Tragedy : Something that is very bad or sad. In drama, a tragedy is a serious play, often with an unhappy ending and often concerned with important events. (adjective: tragic)

Understatement: a type of verbal IRONY in which something is purposely represented as being far less important than it actually is; also called **meiosis**.

Unity: Three unities were important in the classical drama, the unities of time, place and action. This meant that the scenes of a play should all take place close to each other, within 24 hours, and should all be about the main story.

Verse (plural: verses)

a) A general word for all kinds of poetry. (no plural)

b) A single line of poetry. (plural: verses)

c) A group of lines, a stanza, especially in a song.

Versification - Generally, the structural form of a verse, as revealed by scansion. Identification of verse structure includes the name of the metrical type and the name designating number of feet:

- Monometer: 1 foot
- Dimeter: 2 feet
- Trimeter: 3 feet
- Tetrameter: 4 feet
- Pentameter: 5 feet
- Hexameter: 6 feet
- Heptameter: 7 feet
- Octameter: 8 feet
- Nonameter: 9 feet

Wit : Using language in a clever and funny way. A wit is a person who does this. (adjective: witty)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