INTRODUCTION TO ESSAYS, SHORTS STORIES, POEMS, AND PLAYS



Kimberly Limon
Cosumnes River College

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ENGWR 301 Textbook: Introduction to Literature

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This text was compiled on 01/23/2026

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Licensing

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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1.1: Introduction to Reading and Interpreting Literary Texts

Writing is not life, but I think that sometimes it can be a way back to life. — Stephen King, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*



Figure 1.1.1: Magnetic Fridge Poetry. (CC BY 2.0; Steve Johnson, via Flickr)

Learning Outcomes

- Identify the key features of prose
- Identify the key features of poetry
- Identify and describe the major critical approaches to literary interpretation: New Criticism/Formalism, Reader-Response, Feminism, and Marxism

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1.2: A Short History of the Early American Novel

While most historians of the modern novel trace its beginnings to Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605, 1616) and its English-language origins are often located in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the novel did not truly emerge in the United States until the end of the eighteenth century. Critics and historians have offered several reasons for this delay, citing a continuing Puritan distrust of fictional representations, a relative lack of leisure time, and, relatedly, the lack of a large, concentrated group of middle-class readers with substantial enough wealth and time to pursue the genre. Most accounts of the development of the novel, such as Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*, Michael McKeon's *The Origins of the English Novel* (on England), M. M. Bakhtin's various writings, and Georg Lukács's *Theory of the Novel* (focusing more on the European continent), describe the genre as arising with a number of socioeconomic, religious, cultural, and philosophical factors. In particular, they point to the birth of the middle-class, with its emphasis on social fluidity and individual self-determination; the Protestant Reformation and its appeal to individual interpretation of texts; and the development of scientific and philosophical empiricism with its focus on specific sensual details of life as the ultimate source of knowledge.



Figure 1.2.1: Statue of Marko Marulić. (CC BY-SA 2.0; Dennis Jarvis, via Flickr)

From these different factors emerge the novel's distinctive break from earlier long narrative forms such as the epic—its emphasis on everyday people, living their lives in familiar places according to a realistic time frame; its narratives of personal psychological, economic, and social struggle and development; and its close attention to the details of everyday life, including the objects purveyed through the rising commodity culture of which the novel itself was a part. Among other things that set the novel apart from preceding literary forms—perhaps most important, unlike poetry and drama, it was never an oral or performative form—was the fact that from its inception it was a commodity, a work produced for a literary marketplace. In the American context, we can see these connections through Benjamin Franklin's relationship to the novel. While Franklin never wrote a novel and sometimes derided the fine arts, he was the first American printer to publish a novel (Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* in 1742), and he offered one of the most succinct accounts of the novel's attraction in his autobiography in commenting on John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, a Protestant allegory often seen as anticipating many elements of the novel:

> Honest John was the first that I know of who mix'd Narration and Dialogue, a Method of Writing very engaging to the Reader, who in the most interesting Parts finds himself as it were brought into the Company, and present at the Discourse. Defoe in his *Crusoe*, his *Moll Flanders* . . . has imitated it with Success. And Richardson has done the same in his *Pamela*, etc. (24).

While many readers now identify "literature" with the novel (most bookstores' "literature" sections are comprised mainly of novels), most critics in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries viewed the novel as sub-literary, as merely popular dross. This disdain towards the genre lingered longer, perhaps, in the United States than in most of Western Europe. Especially in the first years of the United States, a variety of critics registered significant concerns about the immoral (or, at best, amoral) nature of the novel. These critics were particularly concerned about what Franklin identified as its chief attraction, its ability to draw readers into the fictive world and make them feel like participants in the action. Samuel Miller, for example, in his *Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century*, abjured that he "has no hesitation in saying, that, if it were possible, he would wholly prohibit the reading of novels . . . . For it may, with confidence, be pronounced that no one was ever an extensive and especially an habitual reader of novels, even supposing them to be all well selected, without suffering both intellectual and moral injury" (2:179). During a period

when social and political hierarchies were in transition in the wake of the Revolution, the novel's emphasis on individual happiness, on an individual reader's sentiments, and on an individual reader's identification were seen as endangering the future of the young nation.



Figure 1.2.2 Printing Press, Declaration of Independence, Boston Mass. (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0; dog97209, via Flickr)

In response, many early American novels actively positioned themselves against other, less morally upright novels. For example, William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), a work often taken to be the first American novel, offers a contrast in his preface to those "novels which expose no particular Vice, and which *recommend* no particular Virtue," before moving into its epistolary seduction tale in which the moral characters often comment on the detrimental effects of novel-reading (7). Brown's *Power of Sympathy* exemplifies one of the major trends within the development of the early American novel—the use of seduction plots to elicit readers' sympathy and warn them of the dangers of straying even the least bit from moral propriety. Perhaps the most popular novel of the era was Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791). Although first published in England (when Rowson resided there), the novel was immediately popular in the United States (where Rowson soon moved). Through the text, the reader follows the title character from being ensconced in a girls' school in England to being seduced by a soldier on his way to fight against the American revolutionaries to her pregnancy and death in New York. Republished repeatedly throughout the nineteenth century, *Charlotte Temple* exemplified the appeal the novel made specifically to women readers, an appeal that male critics often attacked or derided.

While sentimental works such as *Charlotte Temple* were perhaps the most popular fare among early American novel-readers, the most prominent novelist of the early period in the critical tradition is Charles Brockden Brown. Brockden Brown produced a series of four gothic novels between 1798 and 1800 (and two more sentimental ones in 1800–1801) before giving up novel-writing altogether. In these works, which would be read avidly by some British romantics and picked up by early-nineteenth-century American critics as a first glimmer of a national literature, Brown explores the dark side of the American nation and the human psyche. In his first novel, *Wieland* (1798), for example, he tells the story of an apparently model family that is destroyed through madness and murder when a stranger employing his ventriloquism skills throws their assumptions about one another and the world into turmoil. Often seen as prefiguring later themes explored by later American writers, Brown's attention to the psychological, political, and economic influence of American society and nature on his characters marked a new development.

Only somewhere around one hundred American novels were published before 1820, but in the decade that followed, nearly that many again would be published, with the 1830s, 40s, and 50s seeing an explosion in the number of American novels. Even as elite critics continued to express concerns about the morality of the novel, readers would make the novel the most popular genre of the antebellum period. In fact, the novel would come not just to dominate but also, in many ways, to define the literary marketplace. The exponential growth in the production of novels paralleled that of the American literary marketplace, and both depended on the same socio-economic factors—increasing literacy rates due to the expansion of public education; improvements in printing technology, including the steam-powered press and the use of stereotype plates; and what has been called the transportation revolution, with roads, canals, and eventually railroads, tying far-flung urban publishing centers to the outskirts of the nation. The 1820s saw the emergence of the United States' first critically and economically successful novelist with James Fenimore Cooper. After writing an Austen-esque novel of manners, Cooper turned to historical fiction, following in the footsteps of Sir Walter Scott, whose *Waverly* novels had become incredibly popular in both Europe and the United States in the 1810s (and whose novels would remain quite popular in the U.S. through the Civil War). After writing *The Spy* (1821), a novel set during the American Revolution, Cooper penned the first of the Leatherstocking Tales, *The Pioneers* (1823), beginning one of the most successful novel series in American literary history and introducing his most famous character, Natty Bumppo. In *The Pioneers* and *The Last of the Mohicans* (along with several other works), Cooper would depict the decline and disappearance of Native Americans from the nation. Often

taking an elegiac tone, these works depicted some Native Americans as noble savages, nearly as role models for the Euro-American characters attempting to make their way in the new world. At the same time, however, they embraced the idea of the Native Americans' inexorable, if regrettable, withdrawal from the nation.

While Cooper's accounts are most famous, the theme of the "vanishing" Native American appeared widely in American literature of the 1820s and 1830s (and later), across numerous genres, from long epic poems (Eastburn and Sands, *Yamoyden* [1820]); drama (Stone, *Metamora* [1829]); and autobiography (*Black Hawk* [1833]). It was the novel that gave the fullest shape to this narrative. In recent years, critics and historians have begun to explore a broader range of texts that develop this theme, including sentimental texts such as Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok* (1824) and Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* (1827) and gothic ones such as John Neal's *Logan* (1822). While these different works offer alternative conceptions of the relationship between gender and race and sometimes more equivocal visions of the future of the U. S., they tend to share the idea that Native Americans have already all but disappeared from the American landscape. The great irony, of course, was that this period saw the election of Andrew Jackson (1828), with his program of Native American removal. While novels portrayed the Native American's disappearance as a *faitaccompli*, Jackson and other politicians worked to make sure it actually happened.



Figure **1.2.3** Native American with rifle. (CC BY 2.0; Rinehart, F. A via Flickr)

The antebellum decades (1830s–1850s) saw not only the immense expansion of the market for novels in the United States but also the further development of specific genres. Critics throughout most of the twentieth century focused on the artistic achievement of a few novelists during this period, especially Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville. Variously read in terms of their interest in the romance (with its greater imaginative range) as opposed to the novel or their darker romanticism (as opposed to the transcendentalist optimism of Emerson and Thoreau), or their deep exploration of human psychology, Hawthorne and Melville seemed to anticipate the modernist emphasis on symbolic layering, linguistic complexity, and ambiguous truths that would dominate critical thought for most of the twentieth century. However, in recent decades, American literary historians have increasingly attended to the vast variety amongst the novels produced during this period. In particular, they have investigated more popular genres, including domestic sentimental literature and sensational gothic and urban fictions. Even more recently, scholars have begun to distinguish the work and popularity of religious novels, reform novels, and regional fictions that deployed sentimental, sensational, and symbolic modes to differing extents. At the time of the Civil War, the novel was still seen by most American critics as inferior to poetry, as a less significant artistic form. Similarly, while concerns about the morally enervating effects of the novel had largely dissipated, even such classic works as Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* were still often judged in terms of their morality (or lack thereof). American novelists still found themselves often disparaged or overlooked in favor of their British counterparts. At the same time, the novel had secured its place within American culture, with authors increasingly offering artistic (and moral and political) defenses of the form in its various guises.

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1.3: Literary Terms- A Guide

Metre

Metre refers to the rhythmic structure of lines of verse. The majority of English verse since Chaucer is in **accentual-syllabic metre**, which consists of alternating stressed and unstressed syllables within a fixed total number of syllables in each line. The metrical rhythm is thus the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in each line. Groups of syllables are known as metrical **feet**; each line of verse is made up of a set number of feet. Thus:

Monometer: one foot per line
Dimeter: two feet per line
Trimeter: three feet per line
Tetrameter: four feet per line
Pentameter: five feet per line
Hexameter: six feet per line
Heptameter: seven feet per line
Octameter: eight feet per line

Each foot usually consists of a single stressed syllable—though there are some important variations—therefore these patterns correspond to the number of stressed syllables in a line; thus tetrameter has four, pentameter five, etc.

There are two types of metrical feet in English accentual-syllabic metre: **duple metre**, consisting of disyllabic (2-syllable) feet, in which stressed syllables (**x**) and unstressed syllables (**o**) alternate in pairs; and **triple metre**, consisting of trisyllabic (3-syllable) feet, in which single stressed syllables are grouped with a pair of unstressed syllables. Duple metre is the metre most commonly found in English verse.

The following metrical feet make up the most common rhythmical patterns:

Duple metre:

Iamb (iambic foot): **o x**
Trochee (trochaic foot): **x o**
Spondee (spondaic foot): **x x**
Pyrrhus / dibrach (pyrrhic foot): **o o**

Triple metre:

Dactyl (dactylic foot): **x o o**
Anapaest (anapaestic foot): **o o x**
Amphibrach: **o x o**
Molossus: **x x x**

Note that the spondee, pyrrhus and molossus do not usually form the basis for whole lines of verse, but are considered forms of **substitution**: that is, when a foot required by the metrical pattern being used is replaced by a different sort of foot. A frequently-found example of substitution is the replacement of the initial iamb in an iambic line by a trochee, e.g. (underlined syllables represent stressed syllables):

In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

—Shakespeare, Sonnet 73

(The first three lines of this quatrain are perfectly iambic; the initial foot of the fourth line is an example of trochaic substitution, also known as **inversion**.)

Other variations in metrical rhythm include **acephalexis**, in which the first syllable of a line that would be expected according to the regular metre of the line, is lacking; and **catalexis**, in which a line lacks the final syllable expected by its metrical pattern. A **masculine ending** is a line that ends on a stressed syllable, while a **feminine ending** is a line that ends on an unstressed syllable.

Freeverse is poetry that does not conform to any regular metre.

Examples of different meters and metrical substitutions:

Iambic pentameter:

> We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.
> For he today that sheds his blood with me
> Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
> This day shall gentle his condition.
> Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
> And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
> That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.
>
> —Shakespeare, *Henry V*, IV.iii

An example of perfect iambic pentameter. Note the feminine ending in l.1 (in iambic metre a feminine ending adds an extra syllable to the line), and how the stresses follow the sense of the lines.

Trochaic tetrameter:

> In what distant deeps or skies
> Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
> On what wings dare he aspire?
> What the hand dare seize the fire?
>
> —Blake, "The Tyger"

The first two lines exhibit masculine endings, and thus are catalectic according to the regular pattern of trochaic metre; that is, they lack their final syllable. Arguably, the second foot in l.4 could be read as a spondaic substitution (if *dare* is stressed).

Spondaic substitution in iambic pentameter (l.3):

> Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
> Em prison her soft hand, and let her rave,
> And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.
>
> —Keats, "Ode on Melancholy"

Pyrrhic substitution in iambic tetrameter (l.2):

> The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
> But I have promises to keep,
> And miles to go before I sleep,
> And miles to go before I sleep.
>
> —Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"

Dactylic dimeter:

> Theirs not to make reply,
> Theirs not to reason why,
> Theirs but to do and die
>
> —Tennyson, "The Charge of the Light Brigade"

Anapaestic metre:

There was an Old Lady of Chertsey,
Who made a remarkable curtsey;
She twirled round and round,
Till she sunk underground,
Which distressed all the people of Chertsey.

—Edward Lear, “There Was an Old Lady of Chertsey”

As is common in limericks, this example includes multiple iambic substitutions, here in the initial syllables of lines 1-3.

Amphibrach:

And now comes an act of enormous enormance!
No former performer’s performed this performance!

—Dr. Seuss, *If I Ran the Circus*

Molossus:

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

—Tennyson, “Break, Break, Break”

The first line is an example of a molossus; it is also an example of epizeuxis (see below).

Stanzas

When a poem is divided into sections, each section is known as a stanza. Stanzas usually share the same structure as the other stanzas within the poem.

Tercet: a unit or stanza of three verse lines
Quatrain: a unit or stanza of four verse lines
Quintain: a stanza of five verse lines
Sestet: a unit or stanza of six verse lines
Septet or **heptastich**: a stanza of seven lines
Octave: a unit or stanza of eight verse lines
Decastich: a stanza or poem of ten lines

Note that many of these terms refer to a unit of this number of lines within a larger stanza or within a poem not divided into stanzas (e.g. a Shakespearean sonnet, which consists of three quatrains followed by a couplet).

Refrain: a line or lines regularly repeated throughout a poem, traditionally at the end of each stanza. Very often found in ballads; it was also used to great effect by Yeats (see for example ‘The Withering of the Boughs’ or ‘The Black Tower’). Usually nowadays printed in *italic* to distinguish it from the main body of the poem.

Enjambment: when the sense of a verse line runs over into the next line with no punctuated pause. The opposite is known as an **end-stopped** line. An example of enjambment in iambic pentameter:

A dungeon horrible, on all sides round

As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames

No light, but rather darkness visible

Served only to discover sights of woe

—Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I

Rhyme

End rhyme: rhyme occurring on stressed syllables at the ends of verse lines. The most common form of rhyme. Couplet: a pair of end-rhyming verse lines, usually of the same length. E.g.:

> Had we but World enough, and Time,
>
> This coyness Lady were no crime.
>
> We would sit down, and think which way
>
> To walk, and pass our long Loves Day.
>
> —Marvell, “To his Coy Mistress”

Internal rhyme: rhyme occurring within a single verse line.

Crossed rhyme: the rhyming of one word in the middle of a verse line with a word in the middle of the following line.

Half rhyme: also known as **slant rhyme**; an incomplete form of rhyme in which final consonants match but vowel sounds do not. E.g.:

> I have heard that hysterical women say
>
> They are sick of the palette and fiddle-bow.
>
> Of poets that are always gay,
>
> For everybody knows or else should know
>
> That if nothing drastic is done
>
> Aeroplane and Zeppelin will come out.
>
> Pitch like King Billy bomb-balls in
>
> Until the town lie beaten flat.
>
> —Yeats, “Lapis Lazuli”

The first quatrain is an example of full end rhyme; the second quatrain an example of half rhyme.

Para-rhyme: a form of half rhymel; when all the consonants of the relevant words match, not just the final consonants. E.g.:

> It seemed that out of battle I escaped
> Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
> Through granites which titanic wars had groined.
> Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
> Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
> Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
> With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
> Lifting distressful hands, as if to bless.
> And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall, –
> By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell.
>
> —Wilfred Owen, “Strange Meeting”

Eye rhyme: a visual-only rhyme; i.e. when spellings match but in pronunciation there is no rhyme, e.g. want/pant, five/give.

Double rhyme: a rhyme on two syllables, the first stressed, the second unstressed. E.g.

> I want a hero: —an uncommon want,
>
> When every year and month sends forth a new one,
>
> Till, after cloying the gazettes with can’t,
>
> The age discovers he is not the true one

—Byron, *Don Juan*, I.i

The second and fourth lines are double rhymes; the first and third lines are examples of half rhyme/eye rhyme.

Assonance: the recurrence of similar vowel sounds in neighbouring words where the consonants do not match. E.g.:

For the r**a**re and r**a**diant m**ai**den whom the **a**ngels n**a**me Lenore—
N**a**meless here for evermore.

—Poe, "The Raven"

Consonance: the recurrence of similar consonants in neighbouring words where the vowel sounds do not match. The most commonly found forms of consonance, other than half rhyme and para-rhyme, are alliteration and sibilance.

Alliteration: the repetition of initial consonants in a sequence of neighbouring words. E.g.:

Hear the loud alarum bells—

Brazen **B**ells!

What a **t**ale of **t**error, now, their **t**urbulency **t**ells!

—Poe, "The Bells"

Sibilance: the repetition of sibilants, i.e. consonants producing a hissing sound. E.g.:

Ships that pa**ss** in the night, and **s**peak each other in pa**ss**ing;

Only a **s**ignal **sh**own and a distant vo**ice** in the darkne**ss**

—Longfellow, *Tales of a Wayside Inn*

Blank verse: metrical verse that does not rhyme. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is an example; the majority of Shakespeare is also in blank verse.

Figurative, rhetorical, and structural devices

Metaphor: when one thing is said to be another thing, or is described in terms normally connected to another thing, in order to suggest a quality shared by both. E.g.:

Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'tis the same,

Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst—

For all are meteors with a different name,

And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

—Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, IV

Simile: when one thing is directly compared with another thing; indicated by use of the words "as" or "like." E.g.:

I wandered lonely as a cloud

—Wordsworth, "Daffodils"

Metonymy: when something is referred to by an aspect or attribute of it, or by something associated with it. E.g.:

Now is the winter of our discontent

Made glorious summer by this son of York . . .

—Shakespeare, *Richard III*, I.i

Here "winter" and "summer" are examples of metaphor; "son of York" is an example of metonymy, being an attribute of Richard's brother, Edward IV, here the person being referred to.

Synecdoche: a form of metonymy in which something is referred to by a specific part of its whole. "All hands on deck" is an example, in which the crew are being referred to by one specific part—their hands. E.g.:

Take thy face hence.

—Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, V.iii

Personification or **prosopopoeia**: when inanimate objects, animals or ideas are referred to as if they were human. Similar terms are anthropomorphism, when human form is ascribed to something not human, e.g., a deity; and the pathetic fallacy, when natural phenomena are described as if they could feel as humans do. Shelley's 'Invocation to Misery' is an example.

Onomatopoeia: a word that imitates the sound to which it refers. E.g. "clang," "crackle," "bang," etc.

Synaesthesia: the application of terms relating to one sense to a different one, e.g., "a warm sound." For example:

Odours there are . . . green as meadow grass

—Baudelaire, "Correspondences"

Oxymoron: the combination of two contradictory terms. E.g.:

Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,

Still-waking sleep that is not what it is!

—Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, I.i

Hendiadys: when a single idea is expressed by two nouns, used in conjunction. E.g. "house and home" or Hamlet's "Angels and ministers of grace" (*Hamlet*, I.iv).

Anaphora: the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginnings of successive lines or clauses. E.g.:

Is **this** the region, **this** the soil, the clime,

Said then the lost archangel, **this** the seat

That we must change for heaven . . .

—Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I

Epistrophe: the repetition of the same word or group of words at the ends of successive lines or clauses. E.g.:

I know **thee**, I have found **thee**, & I will not let **thee** go

—Blake, "America—a Prophecy"

Epizeuxis: the repetition of a word with no intervening words. E.g., Tennyson's "Break, break, break," quoted above.

Polysyndeton: use of more than the required amount of conjunctions. E.g.:

Havoc and spoil and ruin are my gain.

—Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II

The opposite of asyndeton, which refers to the deliberate omission of conjunctions.

Anachronism: when an object, custom or idea is misplaced outside of its proper historical time. A famous example is the clock in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

Apostrophe: an address to an inanimate object, abstraction, or a dead or absent person. E.g.:

Busie old foole, unruly Sunne,

Why dost thou thus,

Through windowes, and through curtaines call on us?

—Donne, "The Sunne Rising"

Hyperbole: extreme exaggeration, not intended literally. E.g.:

Since Hero's time hath half the world been black.

—Marlowe, *Hero and Leander*

Adynaton: a form of hyperbole—a figure of speech that stresses the inexpressibility of something, usually by stating that words cannot describe it. H. P. Lovecraft's short story "The Unnamable" is essentially a riff on this figure of speech, satirizing Lovecraft's own regular use of it in his work.

Meiosis: an intentional understatement in which something is described as less significant than it really is. A well-known example is found in *Romeo and Juliet* when Mercutio describes his death-wound as 'a scratch' (III.iii).

Litotes: a form of meiosis; the affirmation of something by the denial of its opposite, e.g. "not uncommon," "not bad." Erotesis (rhetorical question): asking a question without requiring an answer, in order to assert or deny a statement. E.g.:

> What though the field be lost? All is not lost . . .
>
> —*Paradise Lost*, I

In medias res: the technique of beginning a narrative in the middle of the action, before relating preceding events at a later point. *Paradise Lost* is an example (following the convention of epic poetry).

Leitmotif: a phrase, image or situation frequently repeated throughout a work, supporting a central theme. An example is the **personification** of the mine shaft lift as a devouring creature in Zola's *Germinal*, repeated throughout the novel.

Remember! Simply being able to identify the devices and knowing the terms is not enough. They are only a means to an end. You must always consider: **why** they are being used, what **effect** they have, and how they affect **meaning**(s).

Further reading

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1.4: Literary Criticism

By reading and discussing literature, we expand our imagination, our sense of what is possible, and our ability to empathize with others. Improve your ability to read critically and interpret texts while gaining appreciation for different literary genres and theories of interpretation. Read samples of literary interpretation. Write a critique of a literary work.

Texts that interpret literary works are usually persuasive texts. Literary critics may conduct a close reading of a literary work, critique a literary work from the stance of a particular literary theory, or debate the soundness of other critics' interpretations. The work of literary critics is similar to the work of authors writing evaluative texts. For example, the skills required to critique films, interpret laws, or evaluate artistic trends are similar to those skills required by literary critics.

Academic Writing Tips : How to Write a Literary Analysis Paper



Figure 1.4.1: Video produced by eHow, all rights reserved. It is not openly licensed but freely available to all.

Why Write Literary Criticism?

People have been telling stories and sharing responses to stories since the beginning of time. By reading and discussing literature, we expand our imagination, our sense of what is possible, and our ability to empathize with others. Reading and discussing literature can enhance our ability to write. It can sharpen our critical faculties, enabling us to assess works and better understand why literature can have such a powerful effect on our lives.

"Literary texts" include works of fiction and poetry. In school, English instructors ask students to critique literary texts, or works. Literary criticism refers to a genre of writing whereby an author critiques a literary text, either a work of fiction, a play, or poetry. Alternatively, some works of literary criticism address how a particular theory of interpretation informs a reading of a work or refutes some other critics' reading of a work.

Diverse Rhetorical Situations

The genre of literary interpretation is more specialized than most of the other genres addressed in this section, as suggested by the table below. People may discuss their reactions to literary works informally (at coffee houses, book clubs, or the gym) but the lion's share of literary criticism takes place more formally: in college classrooms, professional journals, academic magazines, and Web sites.

Students interpret literary works for English instructors or for students enrolled in English classes. In their interpretations, students may argue for a particular interpretation or they may dispute other critics' interpretations. Alternatively, students may read a text with a particular literary theory in mind, using the theory to explicate a particular point of view. For example, writers could critique The Story of an Hour by Kate Chopin from a feminist theoretical perspective. Thanks to the Internet, some English classes are now publishing students' interpretations on Web sites. In turn, some students and English faculty publish their work in academic literary criticism journals.

Over the years, literary critics have argued about the best ways to interpret literature. Accordingly, many "schools" or "theories of criticism" have emerged. As you can imagine–given that they were developed by sophisticated specialists–some of these theoretical approaches are quite sophisticated and abstract.

Below is a summary of some of the more popular literary theories. Because it is a summary, the following tends to oversimplify the theories. In any case, unless you are enrolled in a literary criticism course, you won't need to learn the particulars of all of these approaches. Instead, your teacher may ask you to take an eclectic approach, pulling interpretative questions from multiple literary theories.

Note: If you are interested in learning more about these theories, review Skylar Hamilton Burris' A Toolbox for Understanding Literature: Seven Critical Approaches.

Schools of Literary Criticism

- New Criticism: Focuses on "objectively" evaluating the text, identifying its underlying form. May study, for example, a text's use of imagery, metaphor, or symbolism. Isn't concerned with matters outside the text, such as biographical or contextual information. Online Examples: A Formalist Reading of Sandra Cisneros's "Woman Hollering Creek" , Sound in William Shakespeare's The Tempest by Skylar Hamilton Burris
- Reader-Respons: Criticism Focuses on each reader's personal reactions to a text, assuming meaning is created by a reader's or interpretive community's personal interaction with a text. Assumes no single, correct, universal meaning exists because meaning resides in the minds of readers. Online Examples: Theodore Roethke's "My Papa's Waltz": A Reader's Response (PDF)
- Feminism: Criticism Focuses on understanding ways gender roles are reflected or contradicted by texts, how dominance and submission play out in texts, and how gender roles evolve in texts. Online Example: "The Yellow Wall-Paper": A Twist on Conventional Symbols, Subverting the French Androcentric Influence by Jane Le Marquand
- New Historicism Focuses on understanding texts by viewing texts in the context of other texts. Seeks to understand economic, social, and political influences on texts. Tend to broadly define the term "text," so, for example, the Catholic Church could be defined as a "text." May adopt the perspectives of other interpretive communities–particularly reader-response criticism, feminist criticism, and Marxist approaches–to interpret texts. Online Example Monstrous Acts by Jonathan Lethem
- Media Criticism Focuses on writers' use of multimedia and hypertexts. Online Examples The Electronic Labyrinth by Christopher Keep, Tim McLaughlin, and Robin Parmar
- Psychoanalytical Criticism Focuses on psychological dimensions of the work. Online Examples: A Freudian Approach to Erin McGraw's "A Thief" by Skylar Hamilton Burris
- Marxist Criticism Focuses on ways texts reflect, reinforce, or challenge the effects of class, power relations, and social roles. Online Example: A Reading of Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" by Peter Kosenko
- Archetypal Criticism Focuses on identifying the underlying myths in stories and archetypes, which reflect what the psychologist Carl Jung called the "collective unconsciousness." Online Example: A Catalogue of Symbols in The Awakening by Kate Chopin by Skylar Hamilton Burris
- Postcolonial Criticism Focuses on how Western culture's (mis)representation of third-world countries and peoples in stories, myths, and stereotypical images encourages repression and domination.
- Structuralism/Semiotics Focuses on literature as a system of signs where meaning is constructed in a context, where words are inscribed with meaning by being compared to other words and structures.
- Post-Structuralism/Deconstruction Focuses, along with Structuralism, on viewing literature as a system of signs, yet rejects the Structuralist view that a critic can identify the inherent meaning of a text, suggesting, instead that literature has no center, no single interpretation, that literary language is inherently ambiguous.

Powerful works of literature invoke multiple readings. In other words, we can all read the same story or poem (or watch the same movie or listen to the same song) and come up with different, even conflicting, interpretations about what the work means. Who we are reflects how we read texts. Our experiences inspire us to relate to and sympathize with characters and difficult situations. Have we read similar stories? Have we actually faced some of the same challenges the characters in the story face?

In addition, literary theories have unique ways to develop and substantiate arguments. Some theories draw extensively on the work of other critics, while others concentrate on the reader's thoughts and feelings. Some theories analyze a work from an historical

perspective, while others focus solely on a close reading of a text.

Accordingly, as with other genres, the following key features need to be read as points of departure as opposed to a comprehensive blueprint:

Focus

Examine a subject from a rhetorical perspective. Identify the intended audience, purpose, context, media, voice, tone, and persona.Distinguish between summarizing the literary work and presenting your argument. Many students fall into the trap of spending too much time summarizing the literature being analyzed as opposed to critiquing it. As a result, it would be wise to check with your teacher regarding how much plot summary is expected. As you approach this project, remember to keep your eye on the ball: What, exactly (in one sentence) is the gist of your interpretation?

Development

You can develop your ideas by researching the work of other literary critics. How do other critics evaluate an author's work? What literary theories do literary critics use to interpret texts or particular moments in history? Reading sample proposals can help you find and adopt an appropriate voice and persona. By reading samples, you can learn how others have prioritized particular criteria.

Below are some of the questions invoked by popular literary theories. Consider these questions as you read a work, perhaps taking notes on your thoughts as you reread. You may focus on using one theory to "read and interpret" text or, more commonly, you may compare the critical concerns of different theories.

New Criticism/Formalism

- Character: How does the character evolve during the story? What is unique or interesting about a character? Is the character a stereotypical action hero, a patriarchal father figure, or Madonna? How does a character interact with other characters?
- Setting: How does the setting enhance tension within the work? Do any elements in the setting foreshadow the conclusion of the piece?
- Plot:What is the conflict? How do scenes lead to a suspenseful resolution? What scenes make the plot unusual, unexpected, suspenseful?
- Point of View: Who is telling the story? Is the narrator omniscient (all knowing) or does the narrator have limited understanding?

Reader-Response Criticism

How does the text make you feel? What memories or experiences come to mind when you read? If you were the central protagonist, would you have behaved differently? Why? What values or ethics do you believe are suggested by the story? As your reading of a text progresses, what surprises you, inspires you?

Feminist Criticism

How does the story re-inscribe or contradict traditional gender roles? For example, are the male characters in "power positions" while the women are "dominated"? Are the men prone to action, decisiveness, and leadership while the female characters are passive, subordinate? Do gender roles create tension within the story? Do characters' gender roles evolve over the course of the narrative?

New Historicism Criticism

How does the story reflect the aspirations and conditions of the lower classes or upper classes? Is tension created by juxtaposing privileged, powerful positions to subordinated, dominated positions? What information about the historical context of the story helps explain the character's motivations? Who benefits from the outcome of the story or from a given character's motivation?

Media Criticism

How does the medium alter readers' interactions with the text? Has the reader employed multimedia or hypertext? What traditions from print and page design have shaped the structure of the text? In what ways has the author deviated from traditional, deductively organized linear texts?

Cite from the Work

Literary criticism involves close reading of a literary work, regardless of whether you are arguing about a particular interpretation, comparing stories or poems, or using a theory to interpret literature.Do not summarize the story. The purpose of the document is not to inform the readers, but to argue a particular interpretation. You only need to cite parts of the work that support or relate to your argument and follow the citation format required by your instructor (see Using and Citing Sources).

Below is an example from Sample Essays for English 103: Introduction to Fiction, Professor Matthew Hurt. Note how the writer uses block quotes to highlight key elements and paraphrase and summarizes the original works, using quotation marks where necessary.

…Twain offers a long descriptive passage of Huck and Jim's life on the raft that seems, at first glance, to celebrate the idyllic freedom symbolized by the river and nature. . . A close reading of this passage, however, shows that the river is not a privileged natural space outside of and uncontaminated by society, but is inextricably linked to the social world on the shore, which itself has positive value for Huck. Instead of seeking to escape society, Huck wants to escape the dull routines of life.

The passage abounds with lyrical descriptions of the river's natural beauty. For example, Huck's long description of the sunrise over the river captures the peaceful stillness and the visual beauty of the scene:

The first thing to see, looking away over the water, was a kind of dull line — that was the woods on t'other side — you couldn't make nothing else out; then a pale place in the sky; then more paleness, spreading around; then the river softened up, away off, and warn't black any more, but gray; . . . sometimes you could hear a sweep screaking; or jumbled up voices, it was so still, and sounds come so far; and by-and-by you could see a streak on the water which you know by the look of the streak that there's a snag there in the swift current which breaks on it and makes the streak look that way; and you see the mist curl up off of the water, and the east reddens up, and the river, and you make out a log cabin in the edge of the woods, away on the bank on t'other side of the river, . . . then the nice breeze springs up, and comes fanning you from over there, so cool and fresh, and sweet to smell, on account of the woods and the flowers; . . . and next you've got the full day, and everything smiling in the sun, and the song-birds just going at it! (129-130)

Here Huck celebrates the beauty of the natural world coming to life at the beginning of a new day. The "paleness" gradually spreading across the sky makes new objects visible which he describes in loving detail for the reader. The "nice breeze" is "cool and fresh" and "sweet to smell," and the world seems to be "smiling in the sun" as the song-birds welcome the new day.

However, Huck includes a number of details within this passage that would seem to work against the language of natural beauty. After describing the gradually brightening sky, Huck notes that "you could see little dark spots drifting along, ever so far away — trading scows, and such things; and long black streaks — rafts." The sun rise reveals not only natural objects (the brightening sky, the "snag," the "mist"), but also brings into view man-made objects ("trading scows" and "rafts") that signify human society's presence in this natural environment. Similarly, Huck speculates that the picturesque "log cabin" on the distant shore is a "woodyard, likely, and piled by them cheats so you can throw a dog through it anywheres." Here the marker of human society takes on a sinister tone of corruption as Huck describes how unscrupulous wood sellers stack wood loosely to cheat their customers. Finally, although the breeze is "sweet to smell," Huck assures the reader that this isn't always the case: "but sometimes not that way, because they've left dead fish laying around, gars, and such, and they do get pretty rank."

These signs of society's presence on the river are largely negative. The woodyard is "piled by cheats" and the stacked fish pollute the "sweet" smell of the breeze. At this point, the opposition between "good nature" and "bad society" remains intact. The signs of human presence suggest a corruption of nature's beauty. In the paragraphs that follow, however, this opposition is subtly reversed. After Huck's account of the sunrise over the river, he describes how he and Jim watch the steamboats "coughing along up stream." But when there are no steamboats or rafts to watch, he describes the scene as "solid lonesomeness" (130). No songbirds, no sweet breezes. Without human activities to watch, the scene suddenly becomes empty and "lonesome," and nothing captures Huck's attention until more rafts and boats pass by and he can watch them chopping wood or listen to them beating pans in the fog.

Cite Other Critics' Interpretations of the Work

Criticism written by advanced English majors, graduate students, and literary critics may be more about what other critics have said than about the actual text. Indeed, many critics spend more time reading criticism and arguing about critical approaches than actually reading original works. However, unless you are enrolled in a literary theory course, your instructor probably wants you to

focus more on interpreting the work than discussing other critical interpretations. This does not mean, however, that you should write about a literary work "blindly." Instead, you are wise to find out what other students and critics have said about the work.

Below is a sample passage that illustrates how other critics' works can inspire an author and guide him or her in constructing a counter argument, support an author's interpretation, and provide helpful biographical information.

In her critical biography of Shirley Jackson, Lenemaja Friedman notes that when Shirley Jackson's story "The Lottery" was published in the June 28, 1948 issue of the New Yorker it received a response that "no New Yorker story had ever received": hundreds of letters poured in that were characterized by "bewilderment, speculation, and old-fashioned abuse."1 It is not hard to account for this response: Jackson's story portrays an "average" New England village with "average" citizens engaged in a deadly rite, the annual selection of a sacrificial victim by means of a public lottery, and does so quite deviously: not until well along in the story do we suspect that the "winner" will be stoned to death by the rest of the villagers.

Organization

The format for literary critiques is fairly standard:

- State your claim(s).
- Forecast your organization.
- Marshal evidence for your claim.
- Reiterate argument and elaborate on its significance.

In English classes, you may be able to assume that your readers are familiar with the work you are critiquing. Perhaps, for example, the entire class is responding to one particular work after some class discussions about it. However, if your instructor asks you to address a broader audience, you may need to provide bibliographical information for the work. In other words, you may need to cite the title, publisher, date, and pages of the work.

Literary critiques are arguments. As such, your instructors expect you to state a claim in your introduction and then provide quotes and paraphrased statements from the text to serve as evidence for your claim. Ideally, your critique will be insightful and interesting. You'll want to come up with an interpretation that isn't immediately obvious. Below are some examples of "thesis statements" or "claims" from literary critiques:

- In "The Yellow Wallpaper," by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the protagonist is oppressed and represents the effect of the oppression of women in society. This effect is created by the use of complex symbols such as the house, the window, and the wall-paper which facilitate her oppression as well as her self expression. ["'The Yellow Wall-Paper': A Twist on Conventional Symbols" by Liselle Sant]
- "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Gilman is a sad story of the repression that women face in the days of the late 1800's as well as being representative of the turmoil that women face today. [Critique of "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Brandi Mahon]
- "The Yellow Wallpaper," written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, is a story of a woman, her psychological difficulties and her husband's so called therapeutic treatment of her aliments during the late 1800s. . . Gilman does well throughout the story to show with descriptive phrases just how easily and effectively the man "seemingly" wields his "maleness" to control the woman. But, with further interpretation and insight I believe Gilman succeeds in nothing more than showing the weakness of women, of the day, as active persons in their own as well as society's decision making processes instead of the strength of men as women dominating machines. "The View from the Inside" by Timothy J. Decker
- In Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain creates a strong opposition between the freedom of Huck and Jim's life on the raft drifting down the Mississippi River, which represents "nature," and the confining and restrictive life on the shore, which represents "society." ["'All I wanted was a change': Positive Images of Nature and Society in Chapter 19 of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" from Professor Matthew Hurt's "Sample Essays for English 103: Introduction to Fiction"]
- In Gabriel Garcia Marquez's short story, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings," an unexpected visitor comes down from the sky, and seems to test the faith of a community. The villagers have a difficult time figuring out just how the very old man with enormous wings fits into their lives. Because this character does not agree with their conception of what an angel should look like, they try to determine if the aged man could actually be an angel. In trying to prove the origin of their visitor, the villagers lose faith in the possibility of him being an angel because he does not adhere to their ordered world. Marquez keeps the identity of the very old man with enormous wings ambiguous to critique the villagers and, more generally, organized religion for having

a lack of faith to believe in miracles that do not comply with their master narrative. ["Prove It: A Critique of the Villagers' Faith in 'A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings'" from Sample Essays for English 103: Introduction to Fiction, Professor Matthew Hurt]

Style

Literary criticism is a fairly specialized kind of writing. Instead of writing to a general lay audience, you are writing to members of a literary community who have read a work and who developed opinions about the work–as well as a vocabulary of interpretation.

Following are some common words used by literary critics. More specialized terms can be learned by reading criticism or by referring to a good encyclopedia for criticism or writing, including the Writer's Encyclopedia:

- Protagonist: The protagonist is the major character of the story; typically the character must overcome significant challenges.
- Antagonist: The protagonist's chief nemesis; in other words, the character whom the protagonist must overcome.
- Symbols: Metaphoric language; see A Catalogue of Symbols in The Awakening by Kate Chopin
- Viewpoint: Stories are told either in the first person or third person point of view. The first person is limited to a single character, although dialog can let you guess at other characters' intentions. The third person allows readers inside the character's mind so you know what the character feels and thinks.Viewpoint can be "limited," where the character knows less than the reader, or "omniscient," where the reader can hear the thoughts and feelings of all characters. Occasionally writers will use multiple character viewpoint, which takes you from one character's perspective to another.
- Plot: Plots are a series of scenes, typically moving from a conflict situation to a resolution. To surprise readers, authors will foreshadow "false plants," which lead readers to anticipate other resolutions. The term "denouement" refers to the unraveling of the plot in the conclusion.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.5: Introduction to Early American and Puritan Literature

If we understand the past, we are more likely to recognise what is happening around us. –Helen Dunmore, British Poet



Figure 1.5.1:Danvers Church. (CC BY-SA 2.0; Spend A Day Touring, LLC, Danvers Church via Flickr)

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the major historical and cultural developments of colonial America; explain key concepts
- Describe the major conventions, tropes, and themes of Puritan and early American literature; identify and discuss those features with regard to individual works

1.5.1: Introduction to Early American Literature

1.5.2: Video- American Puritanism (I)

1.5.3: Video- American Puritanism (III)

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1.5.1: Introduction to Early American Literature

The following is a revised version of Wendy Kurant's introductory essays to Parts 1, 2 and 3 of Becoming America: An Exploration of American Literature from Precolonial to Post-Revolution.

Pre- and Early Colonial Literature

"In fourteen hundred ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue": the European perspective on the first contact between Native peoples and European explorers has been taught to Americans from pre-school onward. Less has been taught about the Native American perspective on these events. Just like their counterparts, Native American depictions of first contact with European explorers situated them within their accustomed natural, spiritual, and social contexts. The explorers' large ships were interpreted as whales, houses, or islands; their paler complexions were a sign of illness or divinity. The gifts or drinks offered by the strangers are accepted out of politeness and social custom, not naiveté or superstition. As these tales were recorded with hindsight, they often ruefully trace how these explorers and colonists disingenuously relied on the natives' help while appropriating more and more land to themselves and their introduction of alcohol and European commodities into native culture.

When Columbus sailed the ocean blue, he was not looking for previously unknown lands at all. Spain, the first European country to establish a significant foothold in the Americas in the fifteenth century, was looking for a westward passage to Asia. Earlier in the century, the Ottoman Empire had captured Constantinople and after that point, controlled the territory through which the traditional land-based trade routes to China and India ran, effectively giving the Ottoman Empire a monopoly on trade between Europe and Asia. Spain, like other European nations, looked for a solution by seeking a westward route. Spain at that time did not exist as a unified nation but rather was a collection of kingdoms, sometimes collaborating but more often competing with each other. The move toward nationhood began when King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile married in 1469 and unified two of the more powerful Iberian kingdoms. To consolidate their economic and regional power, these monarchs were very interested in securing trade routes for the very lucrative commodities coming from the east. Additional motivation came from a powerful rival within the same peninsula. Portugal had already circumnavigated Africa and looked poised to discover that westward passage. Those influences encouraged King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to support Christopher Columbus's proposal of finding a western route. Unaware that a landmass intervened between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and miscalculating the distance between western Europe and eastern Asia, Columbus thought he had succeeded in his quest when he landed on islands in the Caribbean. He hadn't, but Spain discovered that the New World had desirable commodities too, namely gold and silver mines that funded Spain's empire-building aspirations.

Just as the powerful European nations fought for supremacy within the confines of the European continent, they also grappled over territory in the Americas. Like Spain, other European countries sought new trade routes and, failing that, coveted the new land as a source of commodities such as precious metals, fur, timber, and agricultural products and as an extension of their empires. Spain primarily explored and appropriated areas in South and Central America and in the southeastern and southwestern parts of North America. Holland has the smallest territory for the briefest amount of time in the Americas, controlling the Hudson River Valley from New York City to Albany as well as the western tip of Long Island for little more than fifty years before losing it to the English in 1664 as part of the settlement of the Second Anglo-Dutch War. The French territories concentrated primarily in the Canadian areas of Newfoundland to Quebec as well as around the Great Lakes and a large swath of land in the midsection of the country from the Rocky Mountains to the Mississippi River delta. England, one of the last major European powers to create settlements in North America, ultimately ended up having the largest and most lasting colonial reach, starting with their first permanent settlement in Jamestown in 1608, and expanding along the eastern seaboard where they frequently clashed with Spanish territories to the south and Dutch and French territories to the north and west. A small and densely populated island with a system of primogeniture which increasingly invested land in fewer and fewer hands, England was the European country most in need of agricultural settlements in North America. In addition to supplying food and goods to a mother country, it provided land for younger sons and those without prospects at home as well as a convenient place to send unruly groups within the population.

The relationship between imperialism and the spread of religion in the new world was first cemented during Spanish exploration. In a 1493 papal bull, Pope Alexander VI granted Ferdinand and Isabella and their heirs the right to any lands they "discovered towards the west and south" of a demarcation line that was not already in the possession of a Christian monarch so that "the Catholic faith and the Christian religion [would] be exalted and be everywhere increased and spread." Like the Spanish, French explorers were

also accompanied by missionaries to convert North American natives to Catholicism, though they did so with less fervor and less coercion than their co-religionists from Spain. Dutch explorers showed little interest in converting the natives, as Holland had a policy of religious toleration during the time in which it colonized North America. The Church of England had already seceded from the authority of the Catholic Church by the time Jamestown was established, and though the charter from King James emphasized the motive of spreading the Christian faith and church attendance was mandatory in Jamestown's early years, more energy was put into survival and trade than into proselytizing the natives. It was the later colonies founded by Separatists and Puritans that came to the new world with the primary intention of spreading the beliefs of their denominations.

Some of the readings in this volume are exploration accounts that report back to the governments and organizations that funded the expeditions. However, the invention of the Gutenberg press with its movable type and increased productivity meant that these accounts could be more easily printed and more widely disseminated. Speaking to a wider audience, these accounts fulfilled other purposes as well. They served as written records of a nation's claim to a territory, as tales of exotic lands and thrilling adventure, and as testimonials to lure more people into investing in and emigrating to these fledgling colonies.

Seventeenth Century Colonial Literature

The Puritans tend to be overrepresented in the histories and literature of the seventeenth century English colonies in North America; however, they were hardly the only group from England to travel to the new world. Some groups came for similar reasons as the Puritans—to practice their religion freely—though many came for secular reasons. The Jamestown colony in Virginia, a territory which originally included not only the current state of Virginia but also the northern parts of North Carolina up to the Long Island Sound in New York, was founded as a commercial venture. In addition, people with commercial interests in the new world traveled alongside William Bradford's pilgrims on the Mayflower, and considerable tension existed between settlements with secular interests and those of the Puritans.

More colonies soon joined those in Massachusetts and Virginia. In 1632, Lord Baltimore (1605–1675) was given a charter for land north of the Potomac River. A Catholic, Baltimore established the colony of Maryland as a place of religious tolerance. A charter for the Carolinas, a territory which extended well beyond the modern borders of those states, was granted in 1663 and settlers established one of the first colonies under this charter near Charleston, South Carolina. In 1681, Pennsylvania was granted by King Charles II to William Penn (1644–1718) in repayment of a debt owed to Penn's father. The colony became a refuge for members of the Society of Friends or Quakers, as Penn was a recent convert to the denomination. Georgia was the last of the original colonies. Founded in 1732, the colony was intended primarily as a bulwark between the English colonies to the north and the Spanish colonies to the south.

Certainly, this ongoing expansion of English colonies caused continual tension with the Native American tribes already occupying the territory. The Powhatan Confederacy, a union of tribes occupying the tidewater Virginia region, alternately collaborated with and fought against the Jamestown colony from its founding until 1645, when the English forced the confederacy to surrender and cede land. In New England, the Pequod War (1636–1638) was one of the first significant fights between the colonies in Massachusetts and the local tribes, pitting the Pequod tribe against the Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Saybrook colonies and their allies, the Narragansett tribe. The natives of New England continued attempting to hold back English encroachments, making their last major effort when the Wampanoag, Narragansett, and other allied tribes, led by Metacom (1638–1675)—called King Philip by the English—attacked frontier towns. The so-called King Philip's War lasted from 1675 to 1676, when Metacom was captured and executed.

The use of African slaves in the colonies also grew during this century. African slavery had first been introduced to North America by the Spanish, especially after the Catholic Church started cracking down on enslaving Native Americans. Slaves were first brought to the English colony of Jamestown in 1619, to Connecticut in 1629, and to Massachusetts in 1637. The widespread adoption of slavery languished initially as it proved to be too expensive of an option for the struggling colonists. Indentured servants were a more economical option, but as wages rose in England toward the end of the century and dried up the supply of indentured servants, the use of enslaved Africans grew in the colonies. Though slavery was most prevalent in the southern colonies because of their greater focus on agriculture, the New England colonies were the first to codify slavery (in Massachusetts in 1641) and the first to forbid it (in Rhode Island in 1652). Even before America was a nation officially, America had a slavery problem.

While the Puritans were only one of many groups settling the English colonies, they were the one with the most cultural power. For that reason, it is necessary to understand who they were and how they saw the world to understand many of the readings in this

volume. The Puritans were groups who felt that the Church of England, otherwise known as the Anglican Church, retained too much of the doctrine and culture of the Catholic Church after the Protestant reformation. Their name derived from their desire to purify the church of these Catholic vestiges. There were also non-separatist and separatist groups within the Puritans as a whole. The non-separatists, like John Winthrop's company, believed that the Puritans should remain within the Anglican Church and correct it from within the system; the separatists, represented by William Bradford's Plymouth company, felt the Church of England was a lost cause from which the Puritans should separate themselves. The restoration of King James I to the throne and the subsequent persecutions of dissenters made the distinction moot. The only way to safely practice views that differed from the orthodoxy was to put considerable distance between oneself and English authorities, which both Winthrop's and Bradford's groups did.

The Puritans came to the new world with the goal of building a community constructed around religious principles that could stand as a model—a "city upon a hill," as Winthrop put it—for a Christian community. The Puritans subscribed to Calvinist theology, and Calvinism's assumptions about humanity and its relationship to God influence their works. First, Calvinism held that mankind was born depraved as a result of Adam's original sin. The presence of sin within the human soul meant that all of man's impulses, desires, and beliefs were tainted. As John Calvin put it in his Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536):

> Let it stand, therefore, as an indubitable truth, which no engines can shake, that the mind of man is so entirely alienated from the righteousness of God that he cannot conceive, desire, or design any thing but what is wicked, distorted, foul, impure, and iniquitous; that his heart is so thoroughly envenomed by sin that it can breathe out nothing but corruption and rottenness; that if some men occasionally make a show of goodness, their mind is ever interwoven with hypocrisy and deceit, their soul inwardly bound with the fetters of wickedness.

Congenitally incapable of righteousness, humanity was incapable of achieving salvation on their own. Only God's intervention could save people from the damnation they deserved.

According to Calvinism, some of the faithful will be saved because of unconditional election. Election, or God's decision to replace a person's original depraved spirit with a clean one capable of understanding and following God's will, could not be earned through good behavior; it was unconditional in that it had nothing to do with choices the person made or would make. It was also limited to a relatively small number of people rather than all of humanity. A logical outgrowth of these points of theology was the concept of predestination, which Calvin described in Institutes as "the eternal decree of God, by which He hath determined in Himself what He would have to become of every individual of mankind…eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others." Whatever one's predestined fate was, one could do nothing to change it. Nonetheless, the Puritans held that one should always behave piously regardless of one's destined outcome and emphasized the weaning of affections from the things of this world. Puritans were instructed to develop an attitude of indifference toward material things—to "wean" themselves of their natural attraction to the worldly—as well as to personal relationships, including one's own family. This was not to encourage hard-heartedness but rather to make spiritual things the main priority of one's life because the things of this world will not last; only the life of the spirit was permanent for the Puritans.

Given their beliefs in the total fallibility of mankind, Puritans looked outside of themselves for guidance in following God's will. The first source of guidance was the Bible, which the Puritans took to be the most direct expression of God's will. The Puritans, like other scholars of the Bible before them, believed in a typological relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Stories of the Old Testament were types or, as Hebrews 10:1 puts it, "a shadow of good things to come," that foreshadowed the antitypes or "the very image of the good things" in the New Testament. For example, Jonah's release from the whale in the Old Testament would be considered a type to the antitype of Jesus's resurrection in the New Testament. However, the Puritans did not confine typological interpretation to the Bible alone. Typology assumes that all of human history and experience is part of a larger pattern of meanings that communicate God's will, so any event—as big as smallpox decimating the native populations in greater numbers than the colonial populations or as small as a snake failing to ingest a mouse as recorded in John Winthrop's journal— could be considered part of that pattern and signs of God's approbation or disapprobation.

Despite vigorous policing of their theological borders against antinomians (who argued that salvation through faith meant that one needn't follow the laws of a church); Quakers who disagreed with the beliefs of total depravity and salvation for only a limited number; and others who criticized Puritan practices, the Puritans' power eventually faded along with the membership of the

denomination by the end of the seventeenth century. Initially, the bar for membership in the church was quite high. Believing that only the elect, or those who are destined to be saved, should be members of the church and thereby be able to choose leaders for both the church and the state, prospective members were required to testify of their conversion experience and be interrogated by the other members of the church. It was a rigorous experience that more and more people decided to forego, and eventually, church members in the colonies were outnumbered by non-church members. To increase their ranks and hold on to political power, Puritan churches adopted the Half-Way Covenant in 1662. Under this covenant, the children of church members could become members without testifying to their conversion. Despite this measure, the political power of the Puritan churches continued to decline, though their cultural power continues to influence American culture.

Finally, in the spirit of purification and a return to a simpler practice, many of the works in this volume demonstrate the Puritan aesthetic of plain style. In contrast to the more ornate style of writers like William Shakespeare, the Puritans and some other Protestant denominations felt that the best style was that which lacked embellishment or ornamentation and strove for simplicity and accessibility to the average person. Plain-style writing typically eschewed classical allusions, preferring to use figurative language originating either in the Bible or in everyday experience; was didactic (intended to teach a lesson) rather than entertaining; and featured limited variation in syntactical structures—though those structures might seem complex to a modern reader. This aesthetic can also be seen in the narrow color range of Puritan clothing and the distinct lack of gilding, statuary, and altars in Puritan churches.

Revolutionary and Early National Literature

The American eighteenth century—often called the Revolutionary or Early National period because it coincided with the establishment of the soon-to-be United States— was one punctuated by warfare and nation building. The country's first major experience with warfare in the century came with the French and Indian War. Part of the broader Seven Years War, this North American phase began in 1754 with territorial disputes over the upper Ohio River Valley by traders and settlers of New France and traders and setters of the Virginia and Pennsylvania colonies. The dispute escalated when both territories established forts in the area and escalated again when they called their respective mother countries into the argument. The fight between the colonies was another extension of the historic enmity between France and England and was also mirrored by enmities between different Native American tribes who allied themselves to the side which best served their interests and desire to defeat rival tribes. The North American phase of the war concluded in 1760. The larger conflict was not settled until 1763, and France was compelled to cede Canada and lands east of the Mississippi to England.

American colonies' participation in the French and Indian War affected the American Revolution in two ways: American militias gained valuable military experience that was put to use in the later conflict, and American dissatisfaction with England erupted once they started getting the bills from the war. The British government and public felt that it was only right that the American colonists help pay the costs of conducting the French and Indian War since it was on their behalf. The American colonists disagreed since they had no representation in the government that decided what to tax and how much. American resentment of and resistance to England peaked with the socalled Intolerable Acts of 1774, which added the insult of usurped governance to the injury of taxation. Among other things, the Intolerable Acts closed the port of Boston until the tea destroyed in the Boston Tea Party was repaid. It also put the Massachusetts government under direct British control and required American colonists to quarter the British soldiers there to enforce that control. In response, all the colonies with the exception of Georgia convened the First Continental Congress and sent a Declaration of Rights and Grievances to England in late 1774. England's reply was to send troops to put down colonial resistance, and the Battles of Lexington and Concord in April of 1775 initiated the American Revolutionary War.

Soon after those battles, the colonists set about establishing a government. The Second Continental Congress met to draft the Articles of Confederation. Codifying a loose connection among sovereign states with a limited central government, the Articles also established the new name of the country and a bicameral federal legislature, one side with representation proportionate to population and the other with equal representation. Completed in 1777 and finally ratified in 1781, the Articles proved to be problematic after peace with England was officially declared with the Treaty of Paris in 1783. While the new Congress had the power to pass laws, it lacked the power to enforce them, and it became clear within four years of nationhood that a new plan was needed.

When the delegates to the Constitutional Convention met in 1787, they all agreed to the rule of secrecy—no details of the new Constitution would be leaked until the draft was complete and offered to the states for ratification. It was only when the draft was

released in 1789 that the national debate about its principles began in earnest. Two major positions quickly coalesced. The Federalists, who included George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, supported the Constitution as written, favoring a strong central government composed of executive and judicial branches added to the legislative branch and relatively weaker state governments. Anti-Federalists like Patrick Henry were leery of the consolidation of power by a federal government headed by a President, arguing that the Constitution replicated a system like the one from which they had just separated. They wanted strong state governments because they thought states would be more likely to protect individual freedoms. Anti-federalists ultimately influenced the new form of the federal government by the addition of the Bill of Rights, designed to protect individual rights from the power of the federal government. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights containing ten amendments were finally ratified by the last state in 1790.

The Enlightenment was the major cultural influence on eighteenth century America, and through it, the early colonial worldview dominated by Puritan theology shifted into a world view influenced by science and philosophy. There was an explosion of improved scientific technologies during the seventeenth century, and as a result, scientists were able to collect more precise data and challenge previously held ideas about how the world functioned. To illustrate the effect that scientific discoveries and theories had on the time period, consider Isaac Newton's law of universal gravitation. If one had previously been told, as the seventeenth century Puritans had, that the workings of nature were actuated by God's inscrutable will and were beyond humanity's ability to understand, the discovery of a formula that could predict one of those workings of nature with accuracy every time (so long as the mass of the objects and the distance between them were known) would cause a seismic change in one's perceptions. The existence of laws like Newton's asserted that the universe was ordered on rational principles that man could understand using reason. As a result, the use of reason gained greater respect echoed in the era's other name, the Age of Reason, and human ability was held in much higher regard.

In the eighteenth century, science and philosophy were not considered distinct fields of knowledge, and so it is not surprising that some philosophers too prioritized reason in examining the nature of humanity. English philosopher John Locke and his articulation of Empiricism show not only the supremacy of what is now called the scientific method but also a view of human nature that differed considerably from that of the Puritans. In his Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1689), Locke asserts that "all ideas come from sensation or reflection." In other words, all human knowledge is founded in sensory information—what we see, hear, smell, taste, or feel—and inferences that can be logically drawn from that information. It then follows that the nature of an infant at birth, assumed to have had no sensory experiences until that moment, must be like a tabula rasa or blank slate, untainted by original sin. While the Puritans believed that humanity is born bad, Locke asserted that humanity was born blank. The sensory experiences that followed and the inferences drawn from them as a result of a good or faulty education would dictate the kind of person one would become.

Though Empiricism held that human nature could be swayed either way, this period was nothing if not optimistic. Some Enlightenment and Federal era thinkers emphasized the goal of human perfectibility. Despite the concept's name, they did not actually think humans could become perfect; however, they did believe that individuals and humanity in total could continually improve, if reason was applied to determine the best ways to be and the best ways to learn those ways. This period ushered in the establishment of many a library, athenaeum, and study group like Franklin's Junto Club—all institutions available to the person wishing for self-improvement because people now believed that it was possible to become better through one's own efforts. For these reasons, American literature of the eighteenth century is frequently intended to instruct, whether it be Benjamin Franklin's "bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection" or the frequent cautions about the dangers of vanity and frivolity for women in Hannah Webster Foster's The Coquette.

Though reason had a new place of prominence in the eighteenth century, its inadequacies were also explored. Franklin lays out an eminently rational system of inculcating virtue, then goes on to admit that he never could learn some of those virtuous qualities. In an echo of his younger self rationalizing the break with his vegetarian principles when the smell of cooked fish becomes too tempting, Franklin slyly acknowledges that, sometimes, a "speckled" or only partially virtuous self is best. Foster too creates a tension between the textbook virtuous women who advise her heroine to abandon her flirtatious ways and settle for the life of a dutiful minister's wife and that same heroine's clear and persuasive understanding that this proposed life would be both unsuitable for her personality and deadly boring.

This new respect for human ability and potentiality led the period to reimagine the relationship between the individual and the community. For Puritans, individualism was the cause of much evil, and so in John Robinson's letter read to William Bradford's

group when they embarked for the New World, each traveler is instructed to “repress in himself and the whole body in each person, as so many rebels against the common good, all private respects of men’s selves, not sorting with the general conveniency.” For writers of the Enlightenment, the individual and the community were not antagonists but collaborators finding a balance that benefitted both. Remarking on individual freedom, Locke in his Second Treatise on Civil Government (1689) asserts:

> But though this be a state of liberty, yet it is not a state of license . . .The state of nature has a law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one, and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.

In other words, the individual is free to do what he wants as long as it does not curtain the freedom of another; individual freedom must balance with group freedom. Locke’s statement also references two other influential concepts of the period— natural law and the golden mean—which were borrowed from classical Greek and Roman philosophy. The natural law concept argues that, to be just, laws should be founded in the observable operations of nature. Particularly in ethical arguments, this period also advocated for the desirability of finding the “golden mean” in any action and charting a middle course between two extremes of excess and paucity.

One might have supposed that the primacy of reason and an emphasis on the equality of all human beings would have vanquished prejudice against those who were not white males, but this period also illustrates that rationality is not invulnerable to bias. For some Americans such as Benjamin Franklin, it seemed obvious that one cannot both declare that all men are created equal and also support slavery. However, American slaveholders like Thomas Jefferson managed to rationalize the cognitive dissonance, arguing the paternalist position that Africans were not as fully developed as European descendants and needed to be controlled by the latter until they had moved further along on the continuum of civilization. Similar arguments were made about Native Americans, and the evidence of their advanced civilization was ignored or explained away. For example, it was a widely held belief that Native American burial mounds had been constructed by some earlier civilization that the Native Americans had overrun. Women, too, were excluded from the protections of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and were erased by the practice of coverture, which asserted that women’s legal rights were “covered” by those of her father or husband; women did not have a separate legal existence from their male relatives. Some white women were offered a limited ticket to participate in Enlightenment ideals through the concept of Republican Motherhood. This concept argued that women needed to be educated, to have some level of financial security, and to have knowledge of the political system so that they could raise sons who would be good American citizens. While Republican Motherhood increased access to education for a small group of women, their rights were still subsumed by the priorities of white men.

Though science and philosophy had increased influence on eighteenth century American culture, religion had not vanished from the scene. However, the hegemony of Calvinist theology was challenged by non-denominational groups as well as by a segment within one of its major denominations. Some American intellectuals who identified with Enlightenment principles embraced deism, often called “natural religion” in reference to natural law. More a philosophy than an organized religion, deism had little in the way of dogma and no institutional structure. This belief system followed the principles of Empiricism by asserting that religious belief should derive from reason rather than tradition. Deists believed in God, rationally deducing the existence of a Creator from the orderliness of nature observed through their senses. As Thomas Paine, perhaps the most famous deist in America, asserts in “The Existence of God” (1797), “The Universe is the bible of a true Theophilanthropist. It is there that he reads of God. It is there that the proofs of his existence are to be sought and to be found.” However, deists did not see God as behind every tiny working of nature. Unlike the Puritans, who might describe any natural event as occurring because God was pleased or displeased with them, deists believed that nature operated itself along the orderly principles created by God and revealed by science. Finally, deists, like the period in general, were humanist, following a philosophy which prioritized human concerns and needs in its ethical beliefs. Whereas a Puritan would judge an action based on whether it was in accordance with or contrary to God’s will, a humanist deist would judge it according to its effect on people.

Unitarianism was a more moderate religious belief of the time period, attempting to strike the preferred middle position between Calvinist beliefs and Enlightenment beliefs. Unitarianism grew out of the Congregationalist denomination—one of the major denominations of the Puritans who settled in the English colonies. Unlike deists, Unitarians valued the Bible as a sacred text; however, influenced by Empiricism, Unitarians argued that the Bible and religious traditions must be subjected to reason and

accepted or rejected on that basis. One such tradition Unitarians felt did not pass rational muster was the belief in a three-person God, and their name is taken from this position. Also in accordance with Empirical beliefs, Unitarians rejected the Calvinist views of corrupt human nature and the inevitability of damnation for the majority; instead, they believed in a religious version of human perfectibility, that all souls were capable of working toward salvation.

Colonial membership in Calvinist Protestant denominations experienced a resurgence in the eighteenth century especially from the 1730s to the 1750s when the Great Awakening, a movement of revitalized piety originating in Europe, arrived in America. While continuing to hold many tenets in contradiction to Enlightenment emphases, the Calvinism of the Great Awakening showed signs of the influence of that intellectual movement. Their views still held that man was born corrupt and unworthy of the salvation that God granted to some. However, the movement pushed back against the prioritization of rationality with the idea that one could prepare oneself to be open to God's grace by a public and emotional testimony about one's religious experience. For some of the foremost ministers of this movement, it was not enough to understand Biblical teachings intellectually; to truly understand God's will and prepare oneself for the gift of grace, should one be saved, one needed to feel those teachings emotionally. The movement also directed its adherents to evangelize (publicly testify about one's religious experience) to help others arrive at that deeper understanding and in that way, shows some influence of humanism.

Works Cited

Kurant, Wendy. Becoming America: An Exploration of American Literature from Precolonial to Post-Revolution. English Open Textbooks, 2019.

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1.5.2: Video- American Puritanism (I)

American Puritanism (I)

Featuring discussions of typology; John Calvin; Arminianism; materialism and idealism; phenomenal vs. noumenal; Puritan "plain style"; the form of the Puritan sermons; the Great Migration; William Bradford; and John Winthrop.



Figure **1.5.2.1**: Video produced by Cyrus Patell with New York University. All rights reserved. It is not openly licensed but freely available to all.

Note: you may skip section 16:20–40:23 of the video.

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- **2.2: Video- American Puritanism (I)** by Anne Eidenmuller is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0. Original source: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-americanlit1/.

1.5.3: Video- American Puritanism (III)

American Puritanism (III)

Featuring discussions of Puritan poetry; The Bay Psalm Book; English metaphysical poetry, including John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw; Samuel Johnson on Wit; intertextuality; paratext; Michael Wigglesworth; Anne Bradstreet; and Edward Taylor.



Figure **1.5.3.1**: Video produced by New York University, all rights reserved. It is not openly licensed but freely available to all.

Note: Please watch the video from 00:00 through 15:00.

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1.6: Introduction to Romantic Literature

The following is a revised version of Wendy Kurant's introductory essays to Part 4 of Becoming America: An Exploration of American Literature from Precolonial to Post-Revolution.

By the second decade of the nineteenth century, the United States of America had survived the War of 1812, its first international crisis, and set its sights on claiming more territory. Journalist John O'Sullivan claimed in his 1839 article "The Great Nation of Futurity" that it was "the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty." However, it was more money and military power that fueled Manifest Destiny than Providence. In terms of territory, the United States more than tripled its total area between the beginning of the nineteenth century and the Civil War. The first great increase came from the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The United States government's agreement to buy more than 500,000,000 acres of French territory stretching from New Orleans to the Rocky Mountains effectively doubled the United States' landmass in one fell swoop. Americans of European heritage did not take long to discover the valuable agricultural land east of the Mississippi River within this new territory, then occupied by Native Americans, and used force and coercion to move the tribes to less-desirable land. This mass relocation of Native Americans culminated in the "Trail of Tears," a series of forced relocations of tribes from southeastern states to an area that would eventually become Oklahoma spanning the 1830s and 1840s. The borders of the country were further expanded when American emigrants to the Mexican territory of Texas declared the region's independence from Mexico in 1835 and the United States annexed it in 1845, touching off the Mexican-American War. When the war ended with the American capture of Mexico City and the Treaty of Guadalupe in 1848, America claimed Texas as well as parts of Colorado, Nevada, and Utah. The actions in Texas inspired American emigrants in the Mexican territory of California to establish a similar independent republic in 1846, and California ultimately came under United States rule and joined the union in 1850. Finally, the Gadsden Purchase in 1853 stretched American borders even further in that area, adding territory that ultimately became Arizona and New Mexico. However much O'Sullivan's prophecy may have cited Providence, the United States achieved its continental borders through financial and military dominance.

America's economic and technological growth also continued apace as America became the center of the second Industrial Revolution. While the first Industrial Revolution had occurred in England around the 1760s to 1780s, America was the stage for the second one in the early to mid-nineteenth century. At its root was increased agricultural productivity as a result of acquiring land in the Midwest and South; the former was ideal for grain and meat production and the latter for cotton, all of which needed processing and contributed to the growth of those industries. At the same time, improvements in agricultural technology—such as the mechanical reaper, spinning machines, the cotton gin, and the automated flour mill—made it possible for a smaller percentage of the population to produce the necessary amount of food, freeing up manpower for other industries. This productivity was complemented by increased ability to deliver products faster and further. Shipping along waterways became faster after the invention of the first steamboat in 1807. By the 1840s, however, this primary mode of shipping was rivaled by the exponential growth of the railroad and its ability to reach places without navigable waterways. In 1840, less than ten years after a functional steam locomotive had been built in America, there was more than 3000 miles of railroad track; twenty years later, there was ten times that number.

The increase in raw materials, the ability to process them, and the ability to move them led to expanding markets that required a new form of labor. Previously, fabrication of goods was done according to the outwork system: piecework was done by individuals in their own homes and then sent to a central location for final assembly. The outwork system had low pay and uncertain workloads. With the increased need for workers and the development of machinery beyond what could be used in a home, the factory system replaced the outwork system. Under this system, the workers came together at one central location to work and often to live as well, as with the famous textile mills of Lowell, Massachusetts. The improved pay and the variety and independence offered by this new work system attracted the daughters of New England farmers. This change also contributed to what would become an ongoing shift of the American population from rural to urban communities and of the American economy from an agricultural to an industrial emphasis.

The population of America was also expanding during the nineteenth century. As J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur's titular farmer James observes, Americans had been a "promiscuous breed" even before America was an independent nation. Famines and warfare in Europe sent even more people to the United States looking for a more congenial place to grow. From 1820 to 1870, over seven and a half million immigrants came to America. The largest group within that period were the Irish, and many contributed to the

building of the railroad and canal systems on the eastern seaboard. Germans made another large immigrant group, many settling in Texas or in the Midwest and working in the meatpacking industry. The Chinese, an immigrant group unknown to farmer James, also came to America, particularly to California. Many were lured by news of the 1849 gold rush and driven by roadblocks to prosperity at home. They ultimately became the primary work force that extended the railroad system in the West Coast.

The extension of American territory and the division of the American population between agricultural producers and those in trade had political repercussions as well. The Federalist party of the previous century had dwindled away, leaving Democratic-Republicans as the only major political party left during the so-called Era of Good Feelings. However, there were developing divisions within the party, particularly over banking and currency issues and Southern slavery. With the banking issues, the tensions were between those in trade and farmers over debt terms; paper money versus hard currency; and the banks' role in the Panic of 1819 and its following depression. With slavery, the conflict was over whether slave-owning states had too much or not enough political power. The contentious election of 1824 blew the party apart. The Tennessee senator and former war hero Andrew Jackson was a kind of Presidential candidate who would have never made it that far before that time. Suffrage privileges in the original colonies were confined to white men of enough financial wherewithal to own a certain amount of land. Under that system, men of the elite class from populous states had the advantage, leading to what was called "the Virginia dynasty" of American presidents. But as new states with less stringent requirements for suffrage entered the union, the older states accordingly changed theirs and by 1824, most white men over 21 could vote. It was under these new circumstances that Jackson, a man from what was considered a "western state" who presented himself as a representative for "the humble members of society—the farmers, mechanics and laborers," won the popular and electoral votes. However, since he had not won with a majority, given the large field of candidates, the decision among the top three candidates went to the House of Representatives and the election was given to John Quincy Adams. Decrying this as a "corrupt bargain," Jackson proponents formed the Democratic Party, got their candidate into the Presidency in 1828, and ushered in the political philosophy known as Jacksonian democracy.

On-going moral arguments about slavery were complemented by considerable political tensions at this period. Every time a new territory was proposed or a territory petitioned for statehood, battles between the legislators of free states and legislators of slave states would erupt. Both feared that the other would gain more political power and then force its system on all states. Much of American politics at this period could be described as a series of secession crises and compromises made to maintain the tenuous balance between slave and free states, occasionally punctuated with dire warnings that balance was impossible. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 was the first attempt of the century to solve the stand-off between pro-and anti-slavery legislators by bringing in a slave state (Missouri) and a free state (Maine) together and setting up a system to make sure that the slave and free territories and states would be balanced. However, a crisis was touched off again thirty years later by California's petition for statehood and the Compromise of 1850 was made to resolve it. From this compromise came the Fugitive Slave Acts. They were part of a bigger piece of legislation meant to pacify the southern states which were threatening secession, but one of the provisions made it a criminal offense to aid an escaping slave or to fail to turn in an escaped slave, causing considerable foment in free states; they felt that they were being compelled to support slavery. Then, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 negated the Missouri Compromise and allowed the citizens of the Kansas and Nebraska territories to decide for themselves whether they wanted to allow or prohibit slavery. The act was then followed by the incidents known as Bloody Kansas, where proponents of both sides flooded those territories and fought with each other. The Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision in 1857 defined slaves as property and ruled that the United States government could not prohibit slavery in its territories. U.S. Senate candidate Abraham Lincoln connected the dots in his 1858 "House Divided" speech, where he laid out how the Dred Scott decision created the legal precedent for extending slavery to every state. He warned that the "House Divided"—in this case, between free and slave states—would not remain so; it must end up going one way or the other.

Numerous social reform movements paralleled the democratic reforms of the Jacksonian era, fueled by the middle class's increase in leisure time and income as well as by the evangelical energies of the second Great Awakening. Like the first one, the second Great Awakening was another surge in evangelical Protestant piety starting around the 1820s. As evangelicalism emphasized public testimony of spiritual experience as a way of spreading that experience, there was a natural synergy between the reformation of souls and the reformation of society which directed itself into numerous reform movements for a variety of social problems. Two of the more significant reform movements in terms of American literature were the movements to abolish slavery and for women's rights. Motivated by a mix of the desire to make the Revolutionary ideal of freedom for all a reality and the belief, originating in evangelical theology, that people must be free to choose between right and wrong in order to achieve salvation, northern churches took up the cause of immediate emancipation of slaves and asserted that message in numerous pulpits, lecture halls, and

newspapers. The abolitionist movement also overlapped the movement for reforming women's rights. The Grimkeé sisters, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucretia Mott were major forces in both. The latter two were the organizers of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, which produced a female bill of rights modeled along the lines of the Constitutional one. Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe, the blockbuster novel of the nineteenth century, can be seen as the literary nexus of religious reform, abolition, and women's rights. Arguing that women had a special role in reforming the spirituality of her family and her society, Stowe urged her readers to reject slavery, as it was an impediment to the spiritual salvation of the slaves, the slaveholders, and the nation that tolerated it.

America, from its official beginning, has had a chip on its shoulder about comparisons of its cultural achievements to those of Europe. Thomas Jefferson in Query VI of his Notes on the State of Virginia (1785) directly addresses the claim that America had not produced any great literature:

> When we shall have existed as a people as long as the Greeks did before they produced a Homer, the Romans a Virgil, the French a Racine and Voltaire, the English a Shakespeare and Milton, should this reproach be still true, we will enquire from what unfriendly causes it has proceeded, that the other countries of Europe and quarters of the earth shall not have inscribed any name in the roll of poets.

However, by the time Sydney Smith, founder of the Edinburgh Review and well known literary critic, wrote his 1820 review of Statistical Annals of the United States by Adam Seybert, it was clear that some Britons felt it was time for America to put up or shut up. Asserting that "[d]uring the thirty or forty years of their independence, they have done absolutely nothing for the Sciences, for the Arts, for Literature, or even for the statesman-like studies of Politics or Political Economy," Smith famously asked, "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? or goes to an American play?" and counseled Americans to temper their self-adulation until they had produced something. A movement to make distinctly American art, called literary nationalism, was American writers' response to such sneering. Works produced in the first few decades of the nineteenth century made a point of incorporating distinctly American elements such as untamed nature, the frontier, America's colonial and federal past, and interactions with its aboriginal inhabitants. As Charles Brockden Brown asserts in his preface to Edgar Huntly (1799), an American novel intent on "calling forth the passions and engaging the sympathy of the reader" cannot use the "puerile superstition and exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras" of Europe when "[t]he incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the Western wilderness, are far more suitable . . . for a native of America to overlook these would admit of no apology."

The literary period of American Romanticism is often dated as starting around 1820 with the publication of Washington Irving's The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon and terminating with the American Civil War. Like earlier periods, this period's assumptions are rooted in its views of human nature and truth. For the Romantics, human nature was neither born bad nor blank; it was born good, though it could be swayed from its essential nature by the pernicious effects of excessive rationalism or hidebound social mores. A period's stance on human nature also affects its beliefs about the best ways to access truth. If human nature is initially corrupt, the sources of truth must be outside of it; if human nature is neither good nor bad but is accompanied by the ability to discern the workings of the world around it, then truth comes from the interaction of human ability and outside sources. For the Romantics, the essential goodness of human nature meant that the sources of truth could be discerned from within, particularly through imagination, feelings, and intuition.

As the reputation of human nature rose, so did the belief in the primacy of the individual over the community. While seventeenth century American literature most frequently warned readers to suppress self-interest in favor of the common good and eighteenth century literature presented the two as working in tandem, American Romantic literature valorized the drama of an individual striving against a repressive society. In addition, Romanticism emphasized idealism over realism. For them, literature's purpose was not to represent the common and probable experiences of life or to teach improving lessons. Instead, literature's role was to flesh out otherwise abstract concepts and accurately represent human emotions, what Nathaniel Hawthorne in his preface to The House of the Seven Gables (1851) calls "the truth of the human heart." Finally, the Romantics felt that the essential goodness of human nature had a strong link to nature itself. Unlike earlier texts that portrayed nature as, at worst, aligned with malevolent forces and, at best, raw material existing to be used by man, Romantic texts often represented nature as beneficial and congenial to the human soul. It was a place of resort when man was in need of comfort or clarity and an antidote to the negative effects of science, reason, and tradition.

The philosophies and literature of the Transcendental movement differ from Romantic qualities more in degree than in kind. American Transcendentalism was a concise moment, both in geography and time. Arising from a faction of the Unitarian denomination that felt its theology did not place enough emphasis on the role of intuition in religion, this movement is typically dated as starting in 1836 with the publication of Ralph Waldo Emerson's manifesto Nature and gradually faded as an active movement at the approach of the American Civil War, with the exception of Walt Whitman. Nearly all of its proponents lived in Boston or Concord, Massachusetts. Nonetheless, Transcendentalism had an outsized impact of the American intellectual conversation and on the literature produced during the latter half of the Romantic period. Like prior Romantics, Transcendental writers also emphasized the supremacy of the individual, some to the degree that the individual was better off distancing himself physically or mentally from all other people, even family, to preserve the sanctity of self-reliance. Transcendentalists extended the Romantic kinship between human nature and the natural world, arguing that humanity and nature were all expressions of God (referenced under several different names like the Absolute Spirit or the Oversoul) and that nature served to guide humanity toward realization of that essential truth. Furthermore, Transcendentalists also agreed that the conduit to truth was within and located it particularly in intuition, a kind of knowledge prior to and superior to any Lockian sensory experience or reflections upon it.

Transcendentalism had an impact on American literary culture both directly and indirectly. Several of the best known American Romantics sneered at its beliefs. Poe roundly insulted several major Transcendental figures in his criticism and Melville included satiric versions of Emerson and Thoreau in his final novel The Confidence Man (1857). Nonetheless, even authors critical of Transcendentalism could not help but address some of its key concerns, either positively or negatively and sometimes both within the same work. In short, Transcendentalism introduced a series of pronouncements to which other writers of the period felt compelled to respond. Writers of the latter part of the Romantic period pondered questions of whether nature existed to teach us, whether we were capable of seeing past our biases to the truth, and whether it was possible or even desirable to live a life completely independent of others.

As a final note in these descriptions of Romantic and Transcendental emphases, it should be acknowledged that literary periods are constructions—lenses that help us organize an otherwise chaotic spectrum of years of literary production. Some works written during the Romantic and Transcendental periods challenge those lenses and are worthy of consideration nonetheless. Romanticism's insistence that art should not be required to teach a lesson—Hawthorne compared making it do so to sticking a pin through a butterfly—is a luxury of which not all writers could partake. Slave narratives, such as those of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, depicted common experiences of slaves, aimed to teach a lesson about the evils of slavery, and hoped to have real world results. Similarly, woman's fiction—sometimes called sentimental or domestic fiction—often revealed the vulnerability of women to unscrupulous relatives and suitors and sought to question the domestic sphere to which women were confined or to compel greater respect for the work women did within it. Though these works are less familiar to modern readers, these were some of the most popular genres for nineteenth century readers and represent the vast majority of what Americans actually read during this period.

Works Cited

Kurant, Wendy. *Becoming America: An Exploration of American Literature from Precolonial to Post-Revolution*. *English Open Textbooks*, 2019.

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1.7: Introduction to Realism and Naturalism

The following is a revised version of the introductory essays to Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present.

Late Romanticism

Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman are unlikely protagonists—or leading characters—for a literary movement. Each was an outsider: Dickinson, an unmarried woman who lived a life of quiet seclusion in western Massachusetts, and Whitman, a vagabond who lived a life in search of community. Dickinson and Whitman promoted a spirit of exploration and inventiveness that matched the geographical, industrial, political, and social growth of the United States. From their works, we gain not so much a literary renaissance as we do a sense of artistic innovation that developed alongside these other areas of American life and commerce.

As literary historians like William Charvat have noted, the development of an American literary tradition owes as much to the development of the American publishing industry in the middle decades of the nineteenth century as it does to the prominence of individual authors like Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Sales of these authors' works were dwarfed by the sales of pirated editions of novels by British authors like Walter Scott and Charles Dickens. Nonetheless, the success of these British imports convinced American publishers that the American market was sufficiently robust to demand new works; this demand created an opportunity for American writers to expand their audience, and a flourishing literary culture began to prosper.

American authors still faced steep odds in seeing their works into print, and American literary publishing did not flourish until the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 allowed the reliably consistent shipment of individuals and goods across the country. Additional technological improvements, including the widespread adoption of steam-powered machinery and gas-fueled lights, also provide the necessary conditions for the rapid production of printed materials and the means by which these materials could be enjoyed at the conclusion of a day of laboring. Thus, only when the Industrial Age expands the definition of leisure do Americans begin to embrace the culture of print and expand the boundaries of American literature.

The first attempts to define the literary culture of the mid-nineteenth century began in the 1930s and early 1940s as the United States took on a larger role in global politics, and the need for definition gained sharper focus with the publication of F. O. Matthiessen's The American Renaissance in 1941. Matthiessen argued that writers like Hawthorne, Melville, Emerson, and Thoreau represented the expansion of a uniquely American style of writing that interacted with, and embraced, the North American landscape in new ways. What Matthiessen called a renaissance, however, was less of a cultural flourishing than the limited success of a few male authors from New England. Despite the real impact of Matthiessen's work in recognizing the presence of significant male American writers, his catalogue still neglected writing of women, African-Americans, and Native Americans whose works would not be widely recognized until the 1970s.

In order to describe the work of these authors, Matthiessen and others turned to literary labels popularized in reference to British authors of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Romanticism, a literary movement emphasizing the freedom and originality of self-expression that began in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, also seemed to capture the spirit of nineteenth-century America and was frequently applied to authors of both prose and poetry. In the hands of these authors, the meadows of western Massachusetts replaced the Lake District as the source of inspiration, and the rejection of Puritan morality continued the American emphasis on freedom of expression. When Whitman and Dickinson began writing poetry in the 1850s, the thriving Abolitionist movement added urgency to the need for new voices and rapid change.

When we refer to Whitman and Dickinson as late Romantics, we place them at the end of a period that begins in the 1820s, and we suggest that their works are merely derivative from those that preceded them chronologically. Yet Whitman's and Dickinson's poetry is contemporary with these other works, and it seems more fruitful to consider the differences in genre than the differences in chronology. Whitman and Dickinson achieved their fame by changing American poetry from patriotic and historical ballads to free verse—poetry that lacks both rhyme and regular meter—and musically inspired celebrations of the individual in the American landscape. Whitman and Dickinson are the most famous of the Late Romantics, and their work inspired successive generations of American authors. From these poets, Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, and Charles Chesnutt found the freedom to use a variety of American dialects in their work, the realists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries discovered the richness of the

American landscape, and the Modernist poets located a source of new poetical forms to meet the needs of the adolescent Republic that came of age in the decades immediately following the Civil War.

Many of the works in this volume chart that national coming of age, in the years of Reconstruction, Western Expansion, Manifest Destiny, industrial might, and rapid immigration. The Civil War, while not a precise dividing line, is regarded as the most reliable current method for marking the split between the first and second half of the literary history of the United States. Teachers and critics quickly realized, however, that the continued growth of the literary and cultural productions of the United States required more precise divisions than the chronological division into pre-bellum and post-bellum periods can provide. Hence new divisions emerged, including Late Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, Pre-Modernism, Modernism, and Contemporary American Literature, but the boundaries between these divisions remain fluid.

Realism

After the Civil War and toward the end of the nineteenth century, America experienced significant change. With the closing of the Western frontier and increasing urbanization and industrialization, and with the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad and the advent of new communication technologies such as the telegraph, America began to emerge as a more unified nation as it moved into the Industrial Age. As immigration from both Europe and Asia peaked during the last half of the nineteenth century, immigrants provided cheap labor to rising urban centers in the Northeast and eventually in the Midwest. There was a subsequent rise in the middle class for the first time in America, as the economic landscape of the country began to change. The country's social, political, and cultural landscape began to change as well. Women argued for the right to vote, to own property, and to earn their own living, and, as African-Americans began to rise to social and political prominence, they called for social equality and the right to vote as well. Workers in factories and businesses began to lobby for better working conditions, organizing to create unions. Free public schools opened throughout the nation, and, by the turn of the century, the majority of children in the United States attended school. Throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century, activists and reformers worked to battle injustice and social ills. Within this heady mix of political, economic, social, and cultural change, American writers began to look more to contemporary society and social issues for their writing material, rather than to the distant or fictional past.

The first members of the new generation of writers sought to create a new American literature, one that distinctly reflected American life and values and did not mimic British literary customs. At the same time, these writers turned to the past, toward writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and James Fenimore Cooper, and reacted against their predecessors' allegiance to the Romantic style of writing which favored the ideal over the real representation of life in fiction. William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, and Henry James wrote prolifically about the Realistic method, where writers created characters and plot based on average people experiencing the common concerns of everyday life, and they also produced their own literary masterpieces using this style.

All writers in the Realistic mode shared a commitment to referential narrative. Their readers expected to meet characters that resembled ordinary people, often of the middle class, living in ordinary circumstances, who experienced plausible real-life struggles and who often, as in life, were unable to find resolution to their conflicts. Realists developed these characters by using ordinary speech in dialogue, commensurate to the character's social class. Often in Realistic stories, characterization and plot became intertwined, as the plot was formed from the exploration of a character working through or reacting to a particular issue or struggle. In other words, character often drove the plot of the story. Characters in Realistic fiction were three-dimensional, and their inner lives were often revealed through an objective, omniscient narrator.

Realists set their fiction in places that actually existed, and they were interested in recent or contemporary life, not in history or legend. Setting in Realistic fiction was important but was not limited to a particular place or region. Realists believed in the accuracy of detail, and, for them, accuracy helped build the "truth" conveyed in the work. The implied assumption for these writers is that "reality" is verifiable, is separate from human perception of it, and can be agreed upon collectively. Finally, Realistic writers believed that the function of the author is to show, not simply tell. The story should be allowed to show itself with a decided lack of authorial intrusion. Realistic writers attempted to avoid sentimentality or any kind of forced or heavy handed emotional appeal. The three most prominent theorists and practitioners of American Literary Realism are Mark Twain, often called the comic Realist; William Dean Howells, often termed the social Realist; and Henry James, often characterized as the psychological Realist.

Two earlier literary styles contributed to the emergence of Realism: Local Color and Regionalism. These two sub-movements cannot be completely separated from one another or from Realism itself, since all three styles have intersecting points. However, there are distinct features of each style that bear comparison.

Local Color

After the Civil War, as the country became more unified, regions of the country that were previously "closed" politically or isolated geographically became interesting to the populace at large. Readers craved stories about eccentric, peculiar characters living in isolated locales. Local Color writing therefore involves a detailed setting of the characteristics of a particular locality, enabling the reader to "see" the setting. The writer typically is concerned with habits, customs, religious practices, dress, fashion, favorite foods, language, dialect, common expressions, peculiarities, and surrounding flora and fauna of a particular locale. In some stories, the local inhabitants would examine their own environments, nostalgically trying to preserve in writing the "ways things were" in the "good old days." More often, Local Color pieces were told from the perspective of an outsider (such as travelers or journalists) looking into a particular rural, isolated locale that had been generally closed off from the contemporary world. The Local Color story often involved a worldly "stranger" coming into a rather closed off locale populated with common folk. From there the story took a variety of turns, but often the stranger, who believed he was superior to the country bumpkins, was fooled or tricked in some way. Nostalgia and sentimentality, and even elements of the Romantic style of the earlier part of the century, may infuse a Local Color story. Often, the story is humorous, with a local trickster figure outwitting the more urbane outsider or interloper. In Local Color stories about the Old South, for example, nostalgia for a bygone era may be prevalent. The "plantation myth" popularized by Thomas Nelson Page, for instance, might offer a highly filtered and altered view of plantation life as idyllic, for both master and slave. Local Color stories about the West, such as Mark Twain's "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," might offer raucous stories with stock characters of gamblers or miners who outwit the interloper from the city, who flaunts his intellectual superiority over the locals. An early African-American writer, Charles Chesnutt , used the Local Color style of writing to deconstruct the plantation myth by showing the innate dignity, intelligence, and power of slaves or former slaves who outwit the white racist landowners.

Local Color writing can be seen as a transitional type of writing that took American literature away from the Romantic style and more firmly into the Realistic style. The characters are more realistically drawn, with very human, sometimes ignoble, traits: they swear, speak in regional dialect, swat flies away from their faces, and make mistakes; they are both comic and pitiable. The setting is realistically drawn as well: a real-life location, with accurate depictions of setting, people, and local customs. Local Color writing, however, does not reach the more stylistically and thematically complicated dimensions of Realistic writing. Local Color works tend to be somewhat sentimental stories with happy endings or at least endings where good prevails over evil. Characters are often flat or two-dimensional who are either good or bad. Outlandish and improbable events often happen during the course of the story, and characters sometimes undergo dramatic and unbelievable changes in characterization. Local Color did, however, begin a trend in American literature that allowed for a more authentic American style and storyline about characters who speak like Americans, not the British aristocracy, real-life American places, and more down-to-earth, recognizably human characters.

Regionalism

Regionalism can be seen as a more sophisticated form of Local Color, with the author using one main character (the protagonist) to offer a specific point of view in the story. Regionalist writers often employ Local Color elements in their fiction. After all, they are concerned with the characteristics of a particular locale or region. However, regionalist writers tell the story empathetically, from the protagonist's perspective. That is, the Regional writer attempts to render a convincing surface of a particular time and place, but investigates the psychological character traits from a more universal perspective. Characters tend to be more three-dimensional and the plot less formulaic or predictable. Often what prevents Regional writers from squarely falling into the category of "Realist" is their tendency toward nostalgia, sentimentality, authorial intrusion, or a rather contrived or happy ending.

In Sarah Orne Jewett's "A White Heron," for example, the story has a number of features of Local Color stories: characters speak in a New England dialect, the landscape is described in detail, the customs and rituals of farming class families are described, and an outsider—the young male ornithologist—comes to this secluded region with a sense of superiority and is thwarted in his endeavors by young Sylvy who refuses to give up the secret location of the heron. However, the story is told from the perspective of Sylvy, and readers gain insight into her inner conflict as she attempts to make a difficult decision. We gain awareness of Sylvy's complexity as a character, a young girl who is faced with making an adult decision, a choice that will force her to grow up and face the world from a more mature stance. Jewett does, at times, allow the narrator to intrude in order to encourage readers to feel sympathy for Sylvy. Therefore, the story does not exhibit the narrative objectivity of a Realistic story.

Regionalism has often been used as a term to describe many works by women writers during the late nineteenth century; however, it is a term which, unfortunately, has confined these women writers' contribution to American literature to a particular style. Sarah

Orne Jewett and Mary Wilkins Freeman, for example, certainly wrote about the New England region, but their larger focus was on ordinary women in domestic spaces who seek self-agency in a male-dominated culture. Kate Chopin set most of her works among the Creole and Acadian social classes of the Louisiana Bayou region, yet the larger themes of her works offer examinations of women who long for passionate and personal fulfillment and for the ability to live authentic, self-directed lives. Like the established theorists of Realism—Howells, Twain, and James—women writers of the time, including Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Ellen Glasgow, who are generally not thought of as Regional writers, produced work which often defied strict labeling and which contributed to the beginning of a feminist tradition in American literature. While literary labels help frame the style and method of stories written in the late nineteenth century, most literary works—especially those that have withstood the test of time—defy reductionism.

Naturalism

The generation of writers that followed William Dean Howells broke with their past, as did the Realists when they rejected Romanticism as a literary style. Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, Harold Frederic, Hamlin Garland, Ellen Glasgow, and Kate Chopin, to name a few, rejected the limitations of Realism in terms of subject matter. While they all, to some extent, embraced the Realist style of writing with its attention to detail and authenticity, they rejected Realism's tendency not to offend the sensibilities of readers in the genteel classes. The new writers were not afraid of provocative subject matters and wrote about the human condition in starker, grimmer contexts. They all, to some extent, were influenced by not only scientific ideas of the day, including Charles Darwin's views on evolution, but also European writers experimenting with this new style: Naturalism. Émile Zola, a prominent French novelist, had articulated a theory of Naturalism in Le Roman Expérimental (1880). Zola had argued for a kind of intense Realism, one that did not look away from any aspects of life, including the base, dirty, or ugly. Also influenced by Darwin, Zola saw the human in animal terms, and he argued that a novel written about the human animal could be set up as a kind of scientific experiment, where, once the ingredients were added, the story would unfold with scientific accuracy. He was particularly interested in how hereditary traits under the influence of a particular social environment might determine how a human behaves. The American writers Norris, Crane, and London, similarly characterize humans as part of the evolutionary landscape, as beings influenced—and even determined—by forces of heredity and environment beyond their understanding or control.

With Darwin's and Zola's influence apparent, the naturalists sought to push Realism even further, or as Frank Norris argued in his essay "A Plea for Romantic Fiction," to go beyond the "meticulous presentation of teacups, rag carpets, wall paper, and haircloth sofas"—or beyond Realism as mere photographic accuracy—and to embrace a kind of writing that explores the "unplumbed depths of the human heart, and the mystery of sex, and the black, unsearched penetralia of the souls of men." Norris is calling for a grittier approach in examining the human being as essentially an upright animal, a kind of walking complex combination of inherited traits, attributes, and habits deeply affected by social and economic forces.

Naturalistic works went where Realistic works did not go, dealing with taboo subjects for the time, subjects such as prostitution, alcoholism, domestic violence, violent deaths, crime, madness, and degeneration. Sometimes defined as pessimistic materialistic determinism, Naturalism sought to look at human nature in a scientific light, and the author often took on the role of scientist, coolly observing the human animal in a variety of plights, at the mercy of forces beyond his control or understanding, compelled by instinct and determined by cause and effect to behave in certain, often self-destructive, ways as a result of heredity and environment. In such works, the plot plays out on the material evolutionary plain, where a benevolent deity or any supernatural form is absent and idealistic concepts, such as justice, liberty, innate goodness, and morality, are shown as illusions, as simple fabrications of the human animal trying to elevate himself above the other animals.

In the Naturalistic works, nature is depicted as indifferent, sometimes even hostile, to humans, and humans are often depicted as small, insignificant, nameless losers in battles against an all-powerful nature. Characters may dream of heroic actions in the midst of a battle to survive extreme conditions, but they are most often trapped by circumstances, unable to summon the will to change their determined outcome. Characters rarely exhibit free will at all; they often stumble through events, victims of their own vices, weaknesses, hereditary traits, and grim social or natural environments. A male character in a Naturalistic novel is often characterized as part "brute," and he typically exhibits strong impulses, compulsions, or instinctive drives, as he attempts to satiate his greed, his sexual urges, his decadent lusts, or his desire for power or dominance. Female characters also typically exhibit subconscious drives, acting without knowing why, unable to change course.

Naturalistic works are not defined by a region; the characters' action may take place in the frozen Alaska wilderness, on the raging sea, or within the slums of a city. Stylistically, Naturalistic novels are written from an almost journalistic perspective, with narrative distance from action and the characters. Often characters are not given names as a way to reinforce their cosmic insignificance. The plot of the story often follows the steady decline of a character into degeneration or death (known as the "plot of decline").

Turn of the Twentieth Century/Pre-Modernism

In the twenty-one years between the World's Columbian Exposition (also known as the Chicago World's Fair) in 1893 and the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the economic, political, and social landscape changed forever. Unprecedented immigration irrevocably changed both the American landscape and American politics, and the colonial powers of nineteenth-century Europe began to lose their grip on their possessions and territories. American literature of the period reflected these changes.

In the United States, the northern and western migration that followed Reconstruction (the period between 1865 and 1877 when the Federal government set the conditions by which the states of the former Confederacy would be readmitted to full participation in the national government) caused such rapid growth in northern cities that the municipal governments were strained to the breaking point as they rushed to deliver services to millions of residents in thousands of languages. In the West, waves of migration were rapidly filling in the plains and prairies; this population boom set up a clash of cultures that continues to have repercussions in contemporary politics. In less than twenty years, the United States marked two population milestones: the population of New York City exceeded five million persons for the first time and, in 1915, the total population of the United States topped one hundred million.

Many immigrants to the United States in this period were fleeing from the collapse of the ancient European monarchies and empires. When Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom died on January 22, 1901, more than half of the persons in the world owed her allegiance; by the outbreak of World War I, a new wave of self-governance had swept through Europe. The political consequences of this destabilization continue to be felt throughout the world today.

These two decades were also remarkable for American literature. F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway were born within three years of each other, and they would collectively reshape the American literary landscape in the twentieth century. Literary contributions were not, however, restricted to white males. Although Mark Twain continued to hold court as the most famous author in the country, Charlotte Perkins Gillman, Kate Chopin, Edith Wharton, and Willa Cather were also making literary and social headlines.

The selections in this volume speak to the growth of African-American literary culture. The selections by Booker T. Washington (1901) and W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) both continue the tradition of African-American autobiography begun in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Olaudah Equiano and Frederick Douglass, and forge new ground as political and social manifestoes. In these works both authors advocated passionately, in the wake of the 1896 U.S. Supreme Court decision Plessey v. Ferguson, that the schools and municipal services provided to African-Americans were, in fact, not equal to those provided to the rest of the population. These works are not just autobiography, however: The Souls of Black Folk is often considered one of the earliest works in the field of sociology.

Booker T. Washington's Up From Slavery (1895), demonstrates the development of African-American narrative and autobiography. Unlike Frederick Douglass's Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Washington struck a more conciliatory tone aimed at lifting African Americans out of poverty in exchange for lesser political and individual autonomy. In the following decades, the debates between Du Bois and Washington formed the backdrop for the struggle over African-American art and literature during the Harlem Renaissance.

The dawn of the twentieth century witnessed the first significant crisis of American identity since the end of the Civil War, and this time the crisis played out on the world stage. In the decades that followed World War I, the United States would undergo even more dramatic changes, and the most significant literary changes were yet to come.

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1.8: Introduction to Modernism

The following is a revised version of the introductory essay to Chapter 5 of Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present.

"Make it New" instructed Ezra Pound, encouraging innovative work. Whether it was technology, art, architecture, or poetry, Modernism sought to reinvent the world, a world engaged in the first of two world wars. Uninhibited by the past, the Modernist era redefined America's political, religious, economic, and social values. From areas of women's suffrage to the invention of the assembly line, from Harlem to the Deep South, Modernism was a time of social upheaval, extraordinary growth, and accelerated change for America.

Dubbed "the Great War," WWI was largely a four-year (1914-1918) European conflict between the Allied Forces (Great Britain, France, Russia, and Italy), and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire). Yet it brought turbulent changes to the entire world, America included. Although America did not officially enter the war effort until 1917, many young men already volunteered before then to fight with other detachments, such men including Ernest Hemingway, who was stationed as an ambulance driver on the Italian front. This war was the first global war and, as the world evolved, so did warfare. Additionally, this war was the first fully-industrialized war, featuring shelling, machine guns, mustard gas, and several other kinds of advanced weaponry. Indeed this war was the likes of which no one had ever seen. As such, it was a war of attrition, with over 30 million casualties. Never before in the history of civilization had there been such a large and full-scale military affair. Although in 1918, the Armistice signaled the end to World War I, many tensions and hostilities remained, especially among the combatants who felt disillusioned and used by their country. It's no coincidence that in 1919, just one year later, riots broke out across the United States. After the dust settled, one thing was clear: the world had changed permanently; this change would be at the heart of Modernist literature and art.

Of course World War I did not end European conflict; tension began to arise when Adolf Hitler came to power in the 1930s and bristled under Germany's heavy sanctions imposed by the Armistice. Hitler's rise in Germany would lead to World War II, which the United States tried to avoid using isolationist policies. However, Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941) served as the catalyst for America's entrance into World War II. This period between the two wars marks an important time in American life and culture. During this time, America grew and matured, largely in reaction to these events that unified the nation against common enemies. This unprecedented American growth included growth from immigration, industrialization, technological developments, and the development of the modern cities.

If the mantra of Modernism was Pound's "Make it New," then the defining characteristic for the generation comes from Gertrude Stein's comment to young Ernest Hemingway that you are all "*une generation perdue*" (you all are a lost generation). With the economy at an all-time high—due to the increased industrial manufacturing and development of so many new industries—came an increase in wealth in America; indeed, the Modernist period is characterized by the boom of a growing economy before the bust of the Great Depression. While overall wealth increased, dissatisfaction with America also increased and a growing number of young people, artists and veterans alike lived as expatriates outside the country— largely taking up residence in France and Spain. Most notable among these expatriates were writers T. S. Eliot, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway. This movement is depicted in Hemingway's novel, *The Sun Also Rises.*

The industrial revolution and the meteoric rise of factories helped shift the nation's economy from its agricultural roots to an industry-based economy. World War I (which began in 1914) along with America's entrance into the war (1917) put pressure on all of the citizens to ration goods and supplies. To meet demand, more factories began to experiment with mass production. This boom led to more jobs and a stronger economy, often referred to as the Boom years. Furthermore, while live music led to the prevalence of nightclubs, Prohibition created an underground industry of bootlegging to supply alcohol for these entertainment and music venues. This instant wealth led to a greater population of the newly rich and encouraged growth throughout the country. Often called "The Jazz Age," this era of wealth was written about by many different Modernists but made famous by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

However, the Boom years did not last forever. This age of prosperity came to a sudden halt in October 1929, when the sudden stock market collapse led to the Great Depression. The economic downturn led to more than 10,000 banks shutting down and more than 15 million workers becoming unemployed. Worse still, a series of droughts in the early 1930s, known as the "Dust Bowl," left

500,000 people homeless, as many of these families moved to California looking for work. The Great Depression became a major literary theme chronicled, most notably, by John Steinbeck in his novel, *The Grapes of Wrath.*

The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt (1932) ushered in the age of "The New Deal." During the New Deal era, Roosevelt created the Works Progress Administration (WPA) which used federal funds to put more people to work, building America's infrastructure. The WPA was responsible for roads, various public buildings, and other projects, most notably the Hoover Dam, using federal funds. The WPA provided employment for millions, including writers and artists who were sponsored by the Federal Writers' Project. James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, featuring the photography of Walker Evans, was an eye-opening book that captured the extent of New Deal poverty in the American South.

At the same time, more and more people started migrating out of small rural agricultural areas into cities. Most notable among this time period is the Great Migration, during which African-Americans left the South to escape poverty and Jim Crow laws and moved to larger cities like Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and New York. The Great Migration included as many as 1.5 million African-Americans and represents the greatest population shift in American history. These cultural and population shifts, along with the freedom of transportation, caused cultural cross-pollination, as people brought their old customs to new places. These shifts helped spark regional cultural revolutions, such as the Harlem Renaissance in Harlem, which brought many important African-American artists to the forefront and is captured in works like Zora Neal Huston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* or Jean Toomer's *Cane*. Additionally, the Southern Literary Renaissance, also referred to by Southern Writers as the Southern Literary Renascence, foregrounded the creativity of the South and brought authors like William Faulkner and Eudora Welty to national prominence.

New technologies were changing the face of modern life. The Brooklyn Bridge, completed in 1883, was a giant suspension bridge which connected Brooklyn with Manhattan. Although it pre-dates Modernism, it was seen as one of America's greatest technological achievements and was the subject of Hart Crane's famous Modernist book of poems, *The Bridge*. The invention of the automobile by inventors like Henry Ford and the development of the assembly line in the early 1920s not only created an industry, but also spurred investments in America's infrastructure, that is, its roads and highways. Suddenly, all of America was connected and personal travel was more readily available. The mass production of phonographs, projection reels, and telephones made these technologies more accessible to the public and allowed for more recording, making mass culture possible. The same could be said about the publishing industry, which flourished during this time. The paperback book made books more affordable, and the development of Book-of-the-Month clubs and subscription reading programs allowed for mass audiences, giving rise to the modern day "best seller." The affordability of magazines also made them a popular venue for many writers, as F. Scott Fitzgerald regularly published in *The Saturday Evening Post*, while many famous Modernist writers, such as Ezra Pound, held editorial positions for magazines, and literary magazines, such as *The Dial*, became popular venues for Modernist writers to publish.

The term Modernism as a literary term is largely used as a catchall for a global movement that was centered in the United States and Europe, for literature written during the two wars, which is said to be the first industrialized modern period. In another sense, Modernism refers to the general theme: much of the literature of the period is written in reaction to these accelerated times. After World War I, many writers felt betrayed by the United States, but even more than that, there was a general feeling of change, of progress, of questioning the ways of the past. Throughout the art of this time period, whether it is painting, sculpture, poetry, fiction, or non-fiction, all question the truths of the past, all question the status quo. Largely, this attitude goes hand-in-hand with the disaffection with politics caused by World War I.

There is no single style that would encompass all of Modernist poetry; rather, a lot of Modernist poetry could be separated as High Modernism and Low Modernism. These terms are not meant to serve as an aesthetic judgment about the quality of the work, but rather help us understand the range of experimentation occurring during this period. High Modernism features poets who are much more formal, such as T. S. Eliot with his "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," and who look at the modern era as a period of loss, in some ways, looking at how much America has changed and fearing that the change might be for the worse. Essentially, in high Modernist works, the authors realize that society has shifted so much, it will never be possible to return to the old ways, so they often represent the world as fragmented, disjointed, or chaotic. High Modernist poetry also maintains a traditional structure and form and often contains explicit allusions to history, myth, or religion, such as the epigraph from Dante's *Inferno* which begins T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."

Low Modernism is much less formal, experimenting with form. The poetry of William Carlos Williams, the doctor turned poet, is a great example of Low Modernism. His poetry—like "This is Just to Say" and "The Red Wheelbarrow"— often plays with the

traditional structure of a poem. These writers tend to be so different that first-time readers often questioned whether these works—Williams's "This is Just to Say"; Pound's "In a Station of the Metro"; Cummings's "[in Just-]"— are poems. Ezra Pound did not even consider himself a poet; rather, in his essay, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," he refers to himself as an imagiste, or one who creates images.

Experimentation was not limited to Modernist poetry, as prose (fiction and nonfiction) writers were also challenging form, style, and content, that is, what you could or could not write about. Authors such as Faulkner experimented with how to tell a story, especially by using a rotating cast of characters often set in the same county of Yoknapatawpha, while Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons* experimented with what exactly was a story. Sherwood Anderson's book, *Winesburg, Ohio*, was able to blur the line between short stories and the novel by writing a book of short stories that fit together as a novel. In much the same way, Jean Toomer's *Cane* combined poetry, prose, and drama in one strange and beautiful book, foregrounding the dangerous racial politics of the time. Modernist prose was much more than just experimentation, though, in that it also introduced new subject matter. Writers no longer felt the need to veil their opinions; instead, many were explicit in their political critiques. The Great Depression gave rise to Communism among many artists, especially in the works of Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin, while the Women's Suffrage Movement highlighted early feminism. Furthermore, the widespread distribution of easily affordable magazines and paperbacks meant that these writers were reaching a wider audience with a more radical message.

The Modernist period was perhaps the birth of the American playwright. Before Modernism, theater consisted of largely vaudeville or productions of European works. However, the success of Eugene O'Neill paved the way for several other successful American playwrights, such as Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams.

Although theirs was a time of great change, the common thread that ties the Modernist writers together—whether they write poetry, prose, or drama—is the techniques they invented. Writers such as Faulkner, whose novel *The Sound and the Fury* offered an entirely new way to narrate a book, or Langston Hughes, whose poetry blended music and verse, developed entirely new ways of telling a story. Modernist writers radically rejected previous standards in an attempt to "make it new" and, in the process, changed the course of literary history.

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1.9: Introduction to Contemporary Literature

The following is a revised version of the introductory essay to Chapter 6 of Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present.

Since the end of the Second World War to the present day, the people of the United States of America have witnessed the incredible economic and technological growth of their nation into a global cultural and military superpower. These years of growth also have often been times of radical cultural transformation, during which the nation reassessed its traditions. Americans in this period lived through times of war and times of peace, decades of cultural conformity and decades of social revolt. For the first two decades of this period, Americans lived in a racially segregated nation; they now live in a multicultural nation that has twice elected a black president. For much of this period, Americans lived in a world of ideologically warring superpowers poised on the brink of nuclear annihilation; they now live in a world intimately connected by massive computer networks and a complex global economy, yet one still riven by dangerous religious and economic disputes. In popular culture, Americans' tastes in music have moved from jazz and rock and roll to hip-hop and electronic music. In the visual arts, Americans have seen the explosive canvases of abstract expressionists such as Jackson Pollock become the Campbell's Soup cans of pop artists such as Andy Warhol and then the video screens of cable television's MTV and multimedia artists on YouTube. Their art and entertainment have come to them increasingly through technologies, starting with film and radio, then television, and now the Internet. In the literature of this amazingly transformative era, we find a record of how the nation has known, questioned, and even redefined itself.

When the United States ended the Second World War by dropping atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the nation was well positioned to assume a role of global leadership. While the cities and factories of both its enemies Germany and Japan and its allies Britain and the Soviet Union were destroyed in the war, the continental U.S. was never attacked. The American industries that won the war quickly retooled to win the peace, selling cars, radios, and washing machines within an increasingly global economy and ushering in an era of unparalleled American prosperity. The United States government spent tens of billions of dollars in foreign aid to rebuild its former enemies Germany and Japan, ensuring that they would be both economic and military allies in the future. The GI Bill paid for an unprecedented number of young American men to attend colleges and buy homes, creating a huge professional middle class eager to work for the nation's mighty hightech corporations and live in its swiftly growing new suburbs. The decade and a half following the Second World War is often called the age of conformity, as the nation's large, college-educated middle class embraced the values of the nuclear family and sought happiness, after years of desperate war, in their society's newfound abundance of consumer goods.

Yet the peace was short lived, and there was dissent at home. In the midst of this postwar era of prosperity, Allen Ginsberg composed his great poem "Howl," in which he lambasted the nation's conformist culture for destroying its best and brightest citizens. Authors of the Beat movement of the 1950s such as Ginsberg celebrated America's countercultures and sought to free literature from traditional formalism and align it more closely with the improvisatory musical solos of jazz, the spontaneous drips and splashes of abstract expressionist action painting, and the everyday utterances of the American street. Storytellers of the second wave of the Southern Renaissance resisted America's culture of conformity and embraced their distinctive regionality, with Georgia author Flannery O'Connor lamenting in her essay, "The Fiction Writer and His Country," that the traditional American South was "getting more and more like" the rest of the materialistic, money-hungry nation. Poets during this period, such as Theodore Roethke and Sylvia Plath, began sharing intimate, sometimes disturbing details from their lives in a newly confessional mode of poetry that showed how the nuclear family could be a source of stress as well as stability, ultimately showing the nation how the personal situation of the writer could represent the politics of the nation as a whole.

On the world stage, the Soviet Union organized the Eastern European nations it had conquered during the Second World War into a political bloc dedicated to Russian-led state socialism under which the state owns all businesses and administers all social services as opposed to American-led free-market capitalism, under which private individuals own all businesses. The former allies found themselves competing for the hearts and minds of the world over the value of their respective social systems. When the Soviet Union tested its own atomic bomb in 1949, the U.S. and the Soviet Union entered into a conflict called the Cold War. The two enemies proceeded to build tens of thousands of nuclear weapons over the following decades to deter each from attacking the other, accumulating enough atomic bombs to destroy human civilization many times over. The U.S. committed itself to a policy of Soviet containment, checking the influence of the so-called red menace abroad through foreign aid and limited military action, and prosecuting American artists and activists with leftist sympathies at home through such venues as the House Un-American

Activities Committee. Some of the authors in this chapter had their careers curtailed during this fearful period because of their political beliefs, as when poet William Carlos Williams was stripped of his consultancy to the Library of Congress in 1952 for once having written a poem titled “Russia.”

In addition to grappling with the threats of nuclear war and the red menace, Americans at this time were also grappling with the homegrown injustice of racial segregation. Up until 1965, Americans in many states lived under Jim Crow laws that disenfranchised African Americans, keeping black American citizens socially separate from and legally inferior to white citizens. The civil rights and black power movements of the 1950s and 60s, led by Dr. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, increasingly showed the nation that the experience of its prosperous, college-educated white middle class was not the experience of all Americans. The often-violent struggle to desegregate America was televised across the nation, unifying the country within a new television culture in the very act of displaying its deep ideological divisions. The works in this volume by Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, and Ralph Ellison present a good record of what life was like in segregated America and during the civil rights movement.

In 1963, American President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. In 1974, another American president, Richard M. Nixon, resigned from office in disgrace. The tumultuous decade in between these two events is known as the Sixties. During this decade, America was fighting a seemingly endless war of containment in Vietnam. Students on college campuses protested the war and the policies of their own government. Urban populations rioted against racism and economic disparity. Artists and intellectuals radically reassessed America’s prosperous postwar era, challenging the gendered depictions of corporate men trapped in skyscrapers and servile women trapped by what feminist critic Betty Friedan called the feminine mystique. Led by author-activists such as Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem, women in the 1960s and ’70s launched a second wave of feminist political activity, demanding full social and economic equality with men. Poets such as Adrienne Rich embodied the radical politics of their era, composing feminist poems.

America returned to a Cold War culture of conformity in the decade preceding the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Yet the changes the Sixties had wrought in the nation’s culture were permanent. From the time of the civil rights movement to the present day, American writers have increasingly come to see the U.S. as being home to several different kinds of Americans—African-Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Straight Americans, Queer Americans—each with their own unique experience of life in America. The civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s were followed by the gay rights and multicultural movements of the 1980s, 1990s, and early twenty-first century. Western culture itself became more welcoming of difference after the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War as the nations of Europe cast aside millennia of enmities and joined in a European Union, sharing a common currency, the Euro, and a common economic fate. While the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 illustrated how economically and technologically connected the world had become, they also drove home how socially and ideologically divided it remains in the early twenty-first century.

America’s growing multicultural sensibility and tolerance of diversity has been both empowering and challenging, reflecting new kinds of political identity that often conflict with Americans’ senses of who they are. Beholding the diversity within America, authors of the 1960s once worried about the “death of the novel.” It no longer felt possible for a single story to represent the American experience as a whole. Back in 1949, Arthur Miller’s salesman Willy Loman in his play, *Death of a Salesman*, could stand on stage as an American Everyman dreaming the American dream. Yet Willy’s life is far from representative of every life in America, starting with the lives of every American woman and extending to every member of an American minority. American authors of the following decades began to represent America multiculturally as a nation of indigenous peoples and immigrants from other lands. The short stories by Alice Walker and Leslie Marmon Silko are good examples of multicultural literature. Silko draws specifically on her Native American heritage while Alice Walker shows us the tensions that arise as her characters negotiate an identity that is grounded in both Africa and America.

The changes that the nation has undergone since 1945 have often been disorienting. The United States has remained an economic and cultural global superpower since 1945, but the politics of both the nation and the world during this time have been radically in flux, seeing the rise and fall of global empires, the emergence of new social justice movements, and the creation of new senses of national identity. Science and technology, so important to winning the Second World War, have penetrated more and more parts of American society. The computer has been the most influential invention of the era, changing the way Americans both work and play. The media of the book, radio, and film have been joined by the new media of the television and computer screen, giving

Americans since 1945 an overwhelming variety of often contradictory ways to know themselves, their fellow citizens, and their world.

With so many media in which to see, know, and communicate with one another, Americans in the final decades of the twentieth century developed a growing sense of the "textuality" of experience, the recognition that their lives are increasingly lived through signs and images seen on life's many screens, that videos and computer simulations have become an indispensable part of, and perhaps have even taken the place of, their reality. This sensibility is reflected in the transition from literary modernism to Postmodernism during this period. Postmodernist authors playfully use all the experimental literary techniques developed by the Modernists in the first half of the century to represent the many lives Americans live in the century's second half and beyond.

American literature since 1945 has seen the rise of countercultural Beats and the confessional poets. It contains the voices of radical feminists, conservative regionalists, and proud multiculturalists. It presides over the reinvention of America as its modernist storytellers of one American experience now stand beside the postmodernist storytellers of many American experiences. In all these ways and more, the American writers who lived through the extraordinary era since 1945 present us with an insightful record of what their nation and its people once were, of what they are, and of what they may become.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.10: Module 1- The Reader and the Text

1.10.1: Introduction

1.10.2: The Purpose of Literature

1.10.3: Literature's Forms and Parts

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1.10.1: Introduction

Module 1 – The Reader and the Text

Module Introduction

Introduction

Literature in the Humanities is an introduction to the study of the characteristics, conventions, and socio-historical contexts of the major literary forms, including the analysis and interpretation of literary elements and devices, and the application of literary theory and criticism. This course is designed to encourage a deep appreciation of literature, hone critical thinking skills, and to illustrate the importance of literature as an expression of the human cultural experience.

LIT2000, as well as all Humanities General Education courses, approaches the concept of culture as a system of meanings allowing groups and individuals to give significance to the world and mediate their relationships with each other and their known universe. Humanities courses are distinguished from traditional Liberal Arts disciplines through an emphasis on interdisciplinarity and comparative cultural contexts. Through these approaches to cultural texts and artifacts, the humanities attempt to investigate, contest, analyze, and synthesize the phenomena of human agency and subjectivity both within and between cultures. By pursuing these forms of inquiry we may better understand our world and our places within it. [1]

Course Learning Outcomes

This module addresses the following Course Learning Outcomes listed in the Syllabus for this course:

- Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
- Understand cultural expressions
- Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance
- Understand basic literary elements of specific genres: short story, poetry, and drama
- Analyze and evaluate selected works of literature in classroom or online settings
- Analyze and evaluate both in class discussions (whether face-to-face or electronic) and in class writing, selected works of literature
- Demonstrate and understand how literature is relevant to their personal, social, and historical awareness [1]

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Discuss the purpose of literature
- Identify metaphors and explain their role in literature
- Evaluate their own prior relationship with reading and literature [1]

Readings and Resources

- Read: Learning Unit – The Reader, the Text, and the World [1] (below)
- Read: Module 1 Readings (Link to *Module_01.pdf*) [1]

Optional Further Reading

- Baldwin, James. “Letter from a Region in My Mind.” The New Yorker 17 Nov. 1962.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By* . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* . Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

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1.10.2: The Purpose of Literature

What is literature for?

One of the primary goals of this course is to develop an understanding of the importance of literature as a vital source of cultural knowledge in everyday life. Literature is often viewed as a collection of made-up stories, designed to entertain us, to amuse us, or to simply provide us with an escape from the "real" world.

Although literature does serve these purposes, in this course, one of the ways that we will answer the question "What is literature for?" is by showing that literature can provide us with valuable insights about the *world* in which we live and about our *relationships* to one another, as well as to *ourselves* . In this sense, literature may be considered a vehicle for the exploration and discovery of our world and the culture in which we live. It allows us to explore alternative realities, to view things from the perspective of someone completely different to us, and to reflect upon our own intellectual and emotional responses to the complex challenges of everyday life.

By studying literature, it is possible to develop an in-depth understanding of the ways that we use language to make sense of the world. According to the literary scholars, Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, "Stories are everywhere," and therefore, "Not only do we tell stories, but stories tell us: if stories are everywhere, we are also in stories." From the moment each one of us is born, we are surrounded by stories — oftentimes these stories are told to us by parents, family members, or our community. Some of these stories are ones that we read for ourselves, and still others are stories that we tell to ourselves about who we are, what we desire, what we fear, and what we value. Not all of these stories are typically considered "literary" ones, but in this course, we will develop a more detailed understanding of how studying literature can enrich our knowledge about ourselves and the world in which we live.

If literature helps us to make sense of, or better yet question, the world and our place in it, then how does it do this? It may seem strange to suggest that literature performs a certain kind of work. However, when we think of other subjects, such as math or science, it is generally understood that the skills obtained from mastering these subjects equips us to solve practical problems. Can the same be said of literature?

To understand the kind of work that literature can do, it is important to understand the kind of knowledge that it provides. This is a very complex and widely debated question among literary scholars. But one way of understanding the kind of knowledge that can be gained from literature is by thinking about how we use language to make sense of the world each day. [(1)]

What does literature do?

Every day we use **metaphors** to describe the world. What is a metaphor? According to *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* , a metaphor is "a figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another." You have probably heard the expressions, "Time is money" or "The administration is a train wreck." These expressions are metaphors because they describe one less clearly defined idea, like time or the administration of an institution, in relation to a concept whose characteristics are easier to imagine.

A metaphor forms an implied comparison between two terms whereas a **simile** makes an explicit comparison between two terms using the words like or as — for example, in his poem, "A Red, Red Rose," the Scottish poet Robert Burns famously announces, "O my Luve is like a red, red rose/That's newly sprung in June." The association of romantic love with red roses is so firmly established in our culture that one need only look at the imagery associated with Valentine's Day to find evidence of its persistence. The knowledge we gain from literature can have a profound influence on our patterns of thought and behavior.

In their book *Metaphors We Live By* , George Lakoff and Mark Johnson outline a number of metaphors used so often in everyday conversation that we have forgotten that they are even metaphors, for example, the understanding that "Happy is up" or that "Sad is down." Likewise, we might think "Darkness is death" or that "Life is light." Here we can see that metaphors help us to recognize and make sense of a wide range of very complex ideas and even emotions. Metaphors are powerful, and as a result they can even be problematic.

The author Toni Morrison has argued that throughout history the language used by many white authors to describe black characters often expresses ideas of fear or dread — the color black and black people themselves come to represent feelings of loathing, mystery, or dread. Likewise, James Baldwin has observed that whiteness is often presented as a metaphor for safety. [(1)]

Figure 1 is taken from a book published in 1857 entitled *Indigenous Races of the Earth* . It demonstrates how classical ideas of beauty and sophistication were associated with an idealized version of white European society whereas people of African descent were considered to be more closely related to apes. One of Morrison's tasks as a writer is to rewrite the racist literary language that has been used to describe people of color and their lives.

By being able to identify and question the metaphors that we live by, it is possible to gain a better understanding of how we view our world, as well as our relationship to others and ourselves. It is important to critically examine these metaphors because they have very real consequences for our lives. (1)

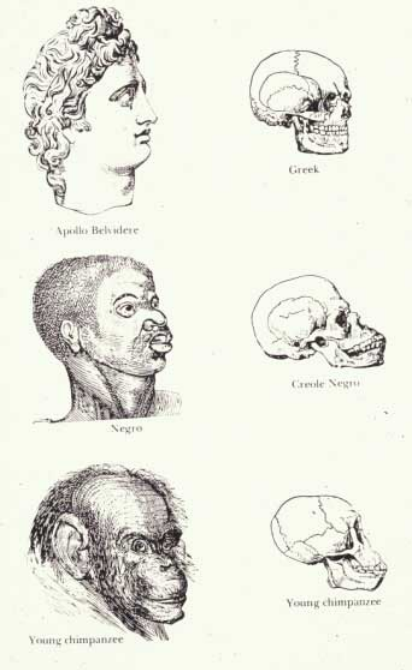


Figure 1.10.2.1: "Races and Skulls". (Public Domain, Nott, Josiah, and George R. Giddon, via Wikimedia Commons)

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1.10.3: Literature's Forms and Parts

Literature's forms and parts

This course will explore three main categories or **genres** of literature — fiction, poetry, and drama. For each one of these genres of literature, there are numerous **subgenres** , which consist of different styles or approaches to writing stories, composing poems, and performing dramas. Although these genres all differ from one another in significant ways, the general approaches to reading and interpreting that we will develop in this course can be somewhat easily be applied from one genre to another.

Most works of literature may be understood to be composed of three major aspects: **content** , **form** , and **context** . Taking an active approach to reading means focusing on the relationship between these three major aspects of a literary work. While at first it can be difficult to analyze the content, form, and context of a text simultaneously, learning to break down these key aspects and focus on them one at a time will help develop your abilities to think critically and write specifically about literature. Over time, as you become more comfortable and confident with the tasks of analysis, you will be able to see how each of these key aspects are interconnected and work together to create sophisticated works of literature. (1)

Content

Content includes the themes, ideas, and the subject matter of a specific poem, story, or play. (1)

Form

Form is a broad term that encompasses all the specific literary or rhetorical elements that make up how a poem, story, or play is written. Examples include sentence-level literary devices with which you may already be familiar, such as metaphor, simile or personification. But form also includes the overall structure and style of a work, such as whether a poem is written in a specific pattern, as in a sonnet, or whether a story is narrated from a specific point of view, such as the first-person perspective.

There are seemingly innumerable literary and rhetorical devices, which vary slightly depending on the genre of literature. Later modules in the course will enumerate some of the most useful literary devices for each genre, but broadly, analyzing the form of a literary work means analyzing the structure and the use of language. Increasing your understanding of different types of literary structures, literary devices, and rhetorical strategies can become a very useful toolkit for writing effective analyses. (1)

Context

Every work of literature was created in a specific historical and literary **context** . Likewise, almost all literary works will refer to elements of other literary works. Analyzing how the literary, social, and cultural dynamics of that specific context may have influenced the writing of the literary work — or perhaps how it was published and received in its time — adds another important layer of understanding. However, interpretations of literary texts also change over time as the expectations and values of readers change. Further consideration of the context may benefit from targeted analysis of the **audience** . As a reader, you are also a crucial member of any text's audience. (1)

Close reading

To conclude, let's take a close look at a short poem by the British poet John Keats. In this poem, the poet reflects upon the transformative experience of reading the epic poetry of Homer translated into English by the playwright George Chapman. In contrast to other popular translations of Homer's work, the translation by Chapman was instantly more relatable for Keats due to its less formal tone and more lively style of writing.

First listen to the recording of the poem, and then read it a second time on your own. Perhaps do some research to look up the definitions of any unfamiliar words. (1)

"On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold, And many goodly states and kingdoms seen; Round many western islands have I been Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold. Oft of one wide expanse had I been told That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne; Yet did I never breathe its pure serene Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold: Then felt I like some watcher

> of the skies When a new planet swims into his ken; Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men Look'd at each other with a wild surmise — Silent, upon a peak in Darien. (2)

The poem contains a number of implied and explicit metaphors. Try to identify some on your own, and then click on the words below to view the completed metaphors. (1)

Click on the missing word in each sentence below to reveal the answer

Reading is _____

A poem is _____

Poetry _____

Attributions

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer by John Keats is marked CC0 1.0.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.11: Module 2- Responding to Fiction

1.11.1: Introduction

1.11.2: Active Reading and Fiction

1.11.3: Literary Movements

1.11.4: Elements of Fiction

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1.11.1: Introduction

Module 2 – Responding to Fiction

Module Introduction

Introduction

Perhaps you have heard the expression, “Everybody loves a good story.” Reading fiction is widely thought to be for the purpose of enjoyment. In fact, that is why some people were skeptical of fiction (novels in particular) when it began to rise in popularity in the 18th century. It was feared that reading and enjoying literature based on the imagination – even fantasy – might corrupt the moral reasoning of the audience, although these fears did not significantly dampen the growth and popularity of the genre. In addition to providing entertainment, reading fiction is a particularly effective way of developing complex reasoning and active reading skills that can be applied to numerous other professional and academic pursuits.

The selection of fiction included in this module is not intended to represent a comprehensive survey of every major time period, literary style, or culture. Instead, the works of fiction included in this module were selected because of their unique narrative complexity. Adding to our close reading skills, we will aim to deepen our analysis more actively consider how an understanding of the formal elements of fiction can help us to analyze and interpret literary texts. This module will focus on works of short fiction by Edgar Allan Poe, Franz Kafka, and William Faulkner. The genre of fiction includes of course much longer works than short stories. Novels (full-length books) and novellas (shorter books that are still longer than a short story) have played a major role in the development of the genre. For the purposes of introductory study, however, this module focuses on short fiction, or the short story. [1]

Course Learning Outcomes

This module addresses the following Course Learning Outcomes listed in the Syllabus for this course:

- Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
- Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance
- Understand basic literary elements of specific genres: short story, poetry, and drama
- Analyze and evaluate selected works of literature in classroom or online settings
- Analyze and evaluate both in class discussions (whether face-to-face or electronic) and in class writing, selected works of literature
- Demonstrate and understand how literature is relevant to their personal, social, and historical awareness [1]

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Describe the general history of the development of literary genres
- Recognize literary elements and formal structures of fiction
- Describe themes and major ideas of selected short fiction Interpret selected short fiction for meaning and significance
- Analyze fiction in writing
- Develop a literary analysis of a specific short story [1]

Readings and Resources

- Read: Learning Object: Fiction and Active Reading (1) (see below)
- Read: Module 2 Readings (Attached above *Module_02.pdf*)

Optional Further Reading

- Eaglestone, Robert. *Contemporary Fiction: A Very Short Introduction* . Oxford: OUP, 2013.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction.* Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2011.
- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five: A Novel* . New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2009.

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1.11.2: Active Reading and Fiction

Active Reading

One of the goals of this course is to develop complex **reasoning skills** by learning how to **actively** read literary texts. Firstly, what are complex reasoning skills? Complex reasoning can be understood as the ability to analyze and interpret many different kinds of information, and then to draw conclusions based on the inferences you develop about the meaning of that information. To infer means to find a non-obvious answer to a complex problem or question. **Inferences** are developed by making use of the knowledge that you already have, by combining that with insights you gain from reading and research, and finally by applying that knowledge to offer a unique conclusion to a problem or question that is often open-ended — a problem or question for which there might be numerous possible solutions.

Studying literature and writing about it are particularly effective ways of developing complex reasoning skills because the best literary texts always pose readers with certain kinds of intellectual or **interpretive challenges** . An interpretive challenge can be any aspect of a work of literature that motivates us to ask the very basic question, “What does this mean?” By seeking to answer this question, we are motivated to dig deeper into questions about language, human life, and our responses to the conflicts and challenges we encounter each day.

To take an **active** approach to reading means to read with a purpose. Rather than treating texts as a set of instructions with a clearly specified purpose or meaning, when we read actively, we look for patterns, contradictions, and challenges within in a text. Studying literature is an effective way of developing active reading skills because the language of literary texts is uniquely designed to stimulate and challenge our imaginations. What distinguishes literary texts from other kinds of texts is the way that creative writers use language in very unique, often confusing ways. This is also the thing that can frustrate students most about reading literature. Because authors often make it a point not to tell us explicitly what their texts me, many people find their ambiguity to be troubling, even unsettling.

In this module, you will learn about the basic history of short fiction and the literary movements that have contributed to the development of fiction in English literature. Most importantly, you will be introduced to some basic approaches to reading actively which will help you to identify and respond to the interpretive challenges posed in works of short fiction. You will learn to apply your complex reasoning skills by developing a written analysis of a work of fiction. **Analytical writing** is grounded in strong critical thinking and attention to specifics in supporting ideas. The word analysis literally means to break something down into parts. A scientist may analyze a chemical compound to determine the elements from which it is made. Similarly, **analyzing literature** — and learning to write analytically about literature — consists of reading for specific elements and noticing how those elements are assembled to form a whole work. An effective literary analysis involves active reading and complex reasoning skills. (1)

About Fiction

The genre of fiction consists of written works of any length that narrate events that are mainly imaginary. Of course, many works of fiction are inspired by and often incorporate “real world” events. Nevertheless, a work of fiction is the product of the author’s imagination. As discussed in Module 1, the important thing to remember about works of fiction is that they are fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Works of fiction offer their readers the opportunity to follow them as they complete the proposition, “Imagine the world as if…” By portraying or representing unique characters, conflicts, and imaginary worlds to readers, fiction writers provide us with the opportunity to reflect back on the ways that we view our own “real-world” conflicts and perhaps offer us opportunities to imagine new ways of thinking, acting, and living in our own world.

Many works of fiction aim to be **realistic** in that the stories attempt to represent people and society as the author perceives them to be. However, other fictional works may aim to create more **fantastical** realities. Such works may take the form of myths and legends or more contemporary fantasy literature. Fiction may take the form of a novel, a novella, or a short story. Some of the earliest novels were even published as **serials** , stories which were printed as short chapters in newspapers and magazines before being released as a whole book.

The origins of the **short story** may be traced to the oral traditions of many cultures, whether in the origin stories (sometimes called myths) of indigenous cultures, Greek drama, or European epics (long, narrative poems). A few early examples of short stories

printed separately between 1790 and 1810 exist, but the first collections of short stories appeared between 1810 and 1830 in several countries around the same time. One of the earliest short stories was by the American writer Charles Brockden Brown. *Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist* , a fragment of what was intended to be a larger work, was published from 1803–1805. Other U.S. authors such as Washington Irving (author of “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle”), Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Edgar Allen Poe, further popularized the short story in America. In Europe, Thomas Hardy (England), Guy de Maupassant (France), and Anton Chekhov (Russia) were, and are, considered to be masters of the short story.

The short story cemented its status as a commercial success with the rise of printed journals and magazines in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, writers such as Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Willa Cather, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Eudora Welty, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce, to name but a few modern writers, refined and stretched the formal structures and literary styles of fiction, elevating the genre from popular status to be considered high art as well. In contemporary times, while novels remain popular, the short story seems to have an increasing readership with subgenres such as micro-fiction, flash fiction or nanofiction (super short stories), and graphic fiction (illustrated stories) continuing to broaden the appeal of the genre. (1)

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1.11.3: Literary Movements

Literary Movements

As mentioned in the previous module, attention to the **context** . in which a work of literature was created and distributed is a critical layer to include in one's analysis. Beyond specific historical or cultural events relevant to a given literary work, appreciating the rise and fall of the prominence of particular literary movements can inform the interpretations of what we read. There are four major literary movements applicable to the study of modern short fiction: **Romanticism** , **Realism** , **Naturalism** , and **Modernism** .

Romanticism was an artistic and intellectual movement that originated in Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century characterized by a heightened interest in nature and an emphasis on individual expression of emotion and imagination. Romanticism flourished from the early to the mid-nineteenth century, partly as a reaction to the rationalism and empiricism of the previous age (the Enlightenment). In fiction, Romanticism is often expressed through an emphasis on the individual (a main character) and the expression of his or her emotional experience, such as by having the plot coincide with the character's emotional conflicts. In opposition to the logic of the previous age, Romantic fiction sometimes even returns to Gothic elements, which often includes stories about the supernatural of the uncanny. (An example of this literary movement in this module is Edgar Allen Poe's "A Descent into the Maelström.")

Realism was an artistic and intellectual movement of the late nineteenth century that stressed the faithful representation of reality or **verisimilitude** . Realism was a reaction to what were viewed as the exaggerations or flights of fancy of Romanticism. Realists sought to develop an artistic style that valued the faithful portrayal of everyday experience, what Henry James described as "the drama of a broken tea cup." The development of realism coincided with the rise of social reform movements and many realistic writers and artists chose to focus on social issues, such as poverty and the plight of the working class, in cities as well as in the country. The height of realist writing in American literature is considered to have occurred from the time of the U.S. Civil War (c. 1865) to the turn of the century (c. 1900). Realism as a literary movement swept across the country. This wave also fostered an interest in **Regionalism** , the realistic portrayal of specific areas and locales almost as a fictional form of travel literature. It should be noted that literary realism was equally popular in Europe, such as in the work of Charles Dickens or George Eliot in England, Honoré de Balzac and Gustave Flaubert in France, and Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Leo Tolstoy in Russia.

Overlapping with the development of Realism was the literary movement known as **Naturalism** (approximately 1880–1930). Naturalist literature sought to apply scientific principles of objectivity and detachment to the characters and subjects represented in novels and short fiction. In this way, Naturalism is influenced more by philosophical ideals than literary techniques including, though not exclusively, existentialism and social determinism. Characters in naturalistic stories frequently confront social conditions or personal conflicts which cannot be reconciled through the exercise of free will alone; these characters may fall upon tragic circumstance due to their social class, the harsh realities of nature or the inner strife of conflicting emotions, morals, and passions. Naturalist authors borrowed some of the stylistic innovations of Realism, yet often felt Realist works did not portray everyday experience in its full grit and trauma, remaining more to middle class tastes. In order to convey what they felt to be the harshness of life circumstances across the spectrum of human experience, some Naturalist writers combined elements of Realism (a focus on the everyday) with elements of Romanticism (a focus on emotion and symbolism) in order to portray what they understood to be the futility of human striving in an indifferent universe.

Modernism became the predominant literary and artistic movement of the 20 th century. Modernism is a broad term referring to the social thought, cultural expressions, and artistic techniques that broke with past traditions following the political upheavals across Europe in the mid–1800s (including the French Revolution) through the horrors of the first World War, as well as the scientific and technological developments flowing from the Industrial Revolution. Yet, 'modernism' also is a term that is specifically used in relation to a precise style of fiction that attempted to chronicle the personal alienation, cultural disruption, and even loneliness of living in a century of rapid and often traumatic change. Some modernist literature (Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, William Faulkner) relied on a style of writing known as **stream-of-consciousness** , where the narrative followed the organic (and sometimes chaotic) pathways of one or more characters' thoughts. Other modernist authors, such as Hemingway, sought to pare down the comparatively flowery language of previous literary movements and present the complexity of modern life through crisp, sharp detail. Many modernist writers sought to create work that represented not simply a moment or a region (as in Realistic fiction) but a

larger, universal truth that transcended personal experience. (Examples of this literary movement in this module include William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" and Franz Kafka's "Before the Law.")

The Modernist movement (which many believe is still active) is followed by **postmodern** innovations in fiction; post-modernist literature extends the disillusionment and disruption that characterized modernism by further fragmenting language and literary structures, even by creating "hybrid" forms so that it becomes less clear what is a poem and what is a story, for example. Some postmodernist literature exaggerates the irony at the height of Modernism to the point of becoming parody, obscuring what is comic and what is tragic about the subjects being represented. This course does not include an example of a postmodern short story (largely due to the difficulty in securing copyright of recent works) but students should be aware that a sizable body of literature exists that would no longer be best classified as "Modernist." The work of the American author Kurt Vonnegut, particularly his novel *Slaughterhouse Five* , is a prime example of postmodern fiction. [(1)]

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1.11.4: Elements of Fiction

The Formal Elements of Fiction

Active reading involves reading a text and analyzing its features to determine its potential meanings. A common approach to analyzing short fiction is to focus on five basic elements: **plot**, **character**, **setting**, **conflict** , and **theme** .

The **plot** of a work of fiction is the series of events and character actions that relate to the central conflict. A **character** is a person, or perhaps an animal, who participates in the action of the story. The **setting** of a piece of fiction is the time and place in which the events happen, including the landscape, scenery, buildings, seasons, or weather. The **conflict** is a struggle between two people or things in a short story. The main character is usually on one side of the central conflict. The **theme** is the central idea or issue conveyed by the story. These five basic elements combine to form what might be called the overall **narrative** of story. In the next section, we will discuss the narrative arc of fiction in more detail.

Below are the formal elements of fiction and questions that will help you to read texts actively.

Questions for Active Reading:

Plot

- How does the text present the passing of time?
- Does it present time in a chronological way?
- Or does it present the event in a non-chronological way?
- What verb tenses are used? (i.e. past, present, future)

Character

- How are the characters described?
- Do the characters talk in unique or peculiar ways?
- Are the names of the characters important or meaningful?
- What kind of conflicts emerge between the characters?

Setting

- When and where does the story seem to take place?
- Is there anything important or meaningful in regards to the time of day or time of year the story seems to take place?
- Is there any significance to the atmospheric, environmental, or weather events that take place?

Conflict

- What problem or issue serves as the story's focus?
- Is the conflict an explicit one between the story's characters?
- Or is there a larger question or concern that is implied through the story's narration?

Theme

- What is the relationship between the title of the story and the text?
- What main issue or idea does the story address? [(1)]

Narrative Arc

The narrative arc — or dramatic structure — of a story may be divided into several phases of development. One traditional method of the analysis of fiction involves identifying five major stages of the development of the plot. The five major stages are known as the **exposition** (or introduction), **the rising action** (sometimes referred to as complicating action), **the climax** (or turning point), **the falling action** , and **the denouement** (or resolution).



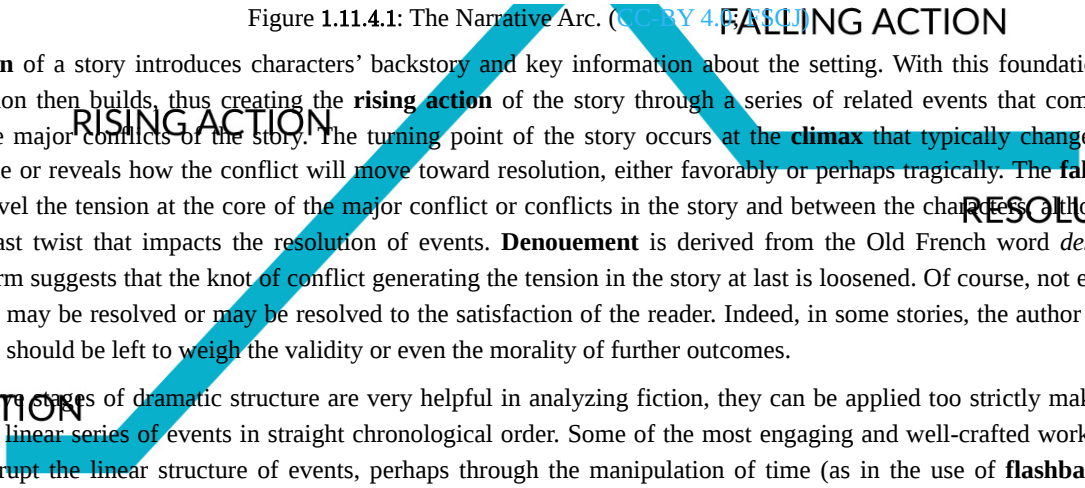


Figure 1.11.4.1: The Narrative Arc. (CC-BY 4.0; ESCJ)

The **exposition** of a story introduces characters' backstory and key information about the setting. With this foundation laid, the dramatic tension then builds, thus creating the **rising action** of the story through a series of related events that complicate and exacerbate the major conflicts of the story. The turning point of the story occurs at the **climax** that typically changes the main character's fate or reveals how the conflict will move toward resolution, either favorably or perhaps tragically. The **falling action** works to unravel the tension at the core of the major conflict or conflicts in the story and between the characters, although it may include one last twist that impacts the resolution of events. **Denouement** is derived from the Old French word *desnouer* ("to untie"); the term suggests that the knot of conflict generating the tension in the story at last is loosened. Of course, not every aspect of the conflict may be resolved or may be resolved to the satisfaction of the reader. Indeed, in some stories, the author may intend that the reader should be left to weigh the validity or even the morality of further outcomes.

While these five stages of dramatic structure are very helpful in analyzing fiction, they can be applied too strictly making a story seem like one linear series of events in straight chronological order. Some of the most engaging and well-crafted works of fiction break or interrupt the linear structure of events, perhaps through the manipulation of time (as in the use of **flashback** or **flash forward**) or through the inclusion of an extended **interior monologue** (a digression into the interior thoughts, memories, and/or feelings of a particular character). Therefore, readers should be careful not to simplify the plot of a story into an ordered, numerical list of events.

The terms **protagonist** (main character, or hero/heroine) and **antagonist** (anti-hero/ine) can be helpful in highlighting the roles of the major characters in a story. The story also may unfold through a particular **point-of-view** , or even through alternating points-of-view. The two most utilized narrative perspectives to consider are **first-person point-of-view** where the protagonist narrates the story from the voice of "I," and **third-person point-of-view** , or **omniscient** point-of-view, where the narrative refers to each character as "he," "she," or "it" thus offering a more distanced perspective on events.

Readers may be persuaded, or not, of a narrative's **credibility** through point-of-view(s) and/or the presentation of the **persona** of the narrator (if there is one). A persona is the role that one assumes or displays in public; in literature, it is the presented face or speaking voice of a character. Credibility is the quality of being believed, convincing, or trustworthy. When the credibility of a text is called into question, perhaps as a result of conflicting accounts of events, or detected bias in a point-of-view, the text is said to have an **unreliable narrator** . Sometimes authors choose to intentionally create an unreliable narrator either to raise suspense, obscure their own position on a subject, or as a means of critiquing a particular cultural or social perspective.

Additionally, to analyze a short story more closely, as in poetry, students may also pay attention to the use of **figurative language** . Figurative language, such as the use of **imagery** and **symbol** can be especially significant in fiction. What brings value to one's analysis is the critical thought that prioritizes which of these many formal elements is most significant to communicating the meaning of the story and connects how these formal elements work together to form the unique whole of a given fictional work. [(1)]

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Introduction to Enlightenment Literature

“The sacred rights of mankind…are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the divinity itself.” – Alexander Hamilton



Figure **2.1**: Traveling through time on the Spadina Streetcar (*CC BY-ND 2.0*; Erik Mauer via Flickr)

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the major historical and cultural developments of the Enlightenment; explain key concepts
- Describe the major conventions, tropes, and themes of Enlightenment literature; identify and discuss those features with regard to individual authors/works

2.1: Reader-Response Criticism

2.2: Video- Edwards and the Transition to Enlightenment

2.3: Video- American Puritanism (I)

2.4: Video- The American Enlightenment

2.5: Video- American Gothic (I)

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2.1: Reader-Response Criticism

Summary

We have examined many schools of literary criticism. Here you will find an in-depth look at one of them: Reader-Response.

The Purpose of Reader-Response

Reader-response suggests that the role of the reader is essential to the meaning of a text, for only in the reading experience does the literary work come alive. For example, in Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), the monster doesn't exist, so to speak, until the reader reads *Frankenstein* and reanimates it to life, becoming a co-creator of the text. Thus, the purpose of a reading response is examining, explaining, and defending your personal reaction to a text. Your critical reading of a text asks you to explore:

- why you like or dislike the text;
- explain whether you agree or disagree with the author;
- identify the text's purpose; and
- critique the text.

There is no right or wrong answer to a reading response. Nonetheless, it is important that you demonstrate an understanding of the reading and clearly explain and support your reactions. Do not use the standard approach of just writing: *"I liked this text because it is so cool and the ending made me feel happy," or "I hated it because it was stupid, and had nothing at all to do with my life, and was too negative and boring."* In writing a response you may assume the reader has already read the text. Thus, do not summarize the contents of the text at length. Instead, take a systematic, analytical approach to the text.

Write as a Scholar

When writing a reader-response write as an educated adult addressing other adults or fellow scholars. As a beginning scholar, if you write that something has nothing to do with you or does not pass *your* "Who cares?" test, but many other people think that it is important and great, readers will probably *not* agree with you that the *text* is dull or boring. Instead, they may conclude that *you* are dull and boring, that you are too immature or uneducated to understand what important things the author wrote.

Criticize with Examples

If you did not like a text, that is fine, but criticize it either from:

- *principle*, for example:
  - Is the text racist?
  - Does the text unreasonably puts down things, such as religion, or groups of people, such as women or adolescents, conservatives or democrats, etc?
  - Does the text include factual errors or outright lies? It is too dark and despairing? Is it falsely positive?
- *form*, for example:
  - Is the text poorly written?
  - Does it contain too much verbal "fat"?
  - Is it too emotional or too childish?
  - Does it have too many facts and figures?
  - Are there typos or other errors in the text?
  - Do the ideas wander around without making a point?

In each of these cases, do not simply criticize, but give examples. As a beginning scholar, be cautious of criticizing any text as "confusing" or "crazy," since readers might simply conclude that *you* are too ignorant or slow to understand and appreciate it.

The Structure of a Reader-Response Essay

Choosing a text to study is the first step in writing a reader-response essay. Once you have chosen the text, your challenge is to connect with it and have a "conversation" with the text. In the beginning paragraph of your reader-response essay, be sure to mention the following:

- title of the work to which you are responding;
- the author; and
- the main thesis of the text.

Then, do your best to answer the questions below. Remember, however, that you are writing an essay, not filling out a short-answer worksheet. You do not need to work through these questions in order, one by one, in your essay. Rather, your paper as a whole should be sure to address these questions in some way.

- *What does the text have to do with you, personally, and with your life (past, present or future)?* It is not acceptable to write that the text has NOTHING to do with you, since just about everything humans can write has to do in some way with every other human.
- *How much does the text agree or clash with your view of the world, and what you consider right and wrong?* Use several quotes as examples of how it agrees with and supports what you think about the world, about right and wrong, and about what you think it is to be human. Use quotes and examples to discuss how the text disagrees with what you think about the world and about right and wrong.
- *What did you learn, and how much were your views and opinions challenged or changed by this text, if at all? Did the text communicate with you? Why or why not?* Give examples of how your views might have changed or been strengthened (or perhaps, of why the text failed to convince you, the way it is). Please do not write "I agree with everything the author wrote," since everybody disagrees about something, even if it is a tiny point. Use quotes to illustrate your points of challenge, or where you were persuaded, or where it left you cold.
- *How well does the text address things that you, personally, care about and consider important to the world? How does it address things that are important to your family, your community, your ethnic group, to people of your economic or social class or background, or your faith tradition? If not, who does or did the text serve? Did it pass the "Who cares?" test?* Use quotes from the text to illustrate.
- *What can you praise about the text?What problems did you have with it?* Reading and writing "critically" does not mean the same thing as "criticizing," in everyday language (complaining or griping, fault-finding, nit-picking). Your "critique" can and should be positive and praise the text if possible, as well as pointing out problems, disagreements and shortcomings.
- *How well did you enjoy the text (or not) as entertainment or as a work of art?* Use quotes or examples to illustrate the quality of the text as art or entertainment. Of course, be aware that some texts are not meant to be entertainment or art: a news report or textbook, for instance, may be neither entertaining or artistic, but may still be important and successful.

For the conclusion, you might want to discuss:

- your overall reaction to the text;
- whether you would read something else like this in the future;
- whether you would read something else by this author; and
- if would you recommend read this text to someone else and why.

Key Takeaways

- In reader-response, the reader is essential to the meaning of a text for they bring the text to life.
- The purpose of a reading response is examining, explaining, and defending your personal reaction to a text.
- When writing a reader-response, write as an educated adult addressing other adults or fellow scholars.
- As a beginning scholar, be cautious of criticizing any text as "boring," "crazy," or "dull." If you do criticize, base your criticism on the principles and form of the text itself.
- The challenge of a reader-response is to show how you connected with the text.

Reader-Response Essay Example

> To Misread or to Rebel: A Woman's Reading of "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"
>
> At its simplest, reading is "an activity that is guided by the text; this must be processed by the reader who is then, in turn, affected by what he has processed" (Iser 63). The text is the compass and map, the reader is the explorer. However, the explorer cannot disregard those unexpected boulders in the path which he or she encounters along the journey that are not written on the map. Likewise, the woman reader does not come to the text without outside influences. She comes with her

experiences as a woman—a professional woman, a divorcée, a single mother. Her reading, then, is influenced by her experiences. So when she reads a piece of literature like "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" by James Thurber, which paints a highly negative picture of Mitty's wife, the woman reader is forced to either misread the story and accept Mrs. Mitty as a domineering, mothering wife, or rebel against that picture and become angry at the society which sees her that way.

Due to pre-existing sociosexual standards, women see characters, family structures, even societal structures from the bottom as an oppressed group rather than from a powerful position on the top, as men do. As Louise Rosenblatt states: a reader's "tendency toward identification [with characters or events] will certainly be guided by our preoccupations at the time we read. Our problems and needs may lead us to focus on those characters and situations through which we may achieve the satisfactions, the balanced vision, or perhaps merely the unequivocal motives unattained in our own lives" (38). A woman reader who feels chained by her role as a housewife is more likely to identify with an individual who is oppressed or feels trapped than the reader's executive husband is. Likewise, a woman who is unable to have children might respond to a story of a child's death more emotionally than a woman who does not want children. However, if the perspective of a woman does not match that of the male author whose work she is reading, a woman reader who has been shaped by a male-dominated society is forced to misread the text, reacting to the "words on the page in one way rather than another because she operates according to the same set of rules that the author used to generate them" (Tompkins xvii). By accepting the author's perspective and reading the text as he intended, the woman reader is forced to disregard her own, female perspective. This, in turn, leads to a concept called "asymmetrical contingency," described by Iser as that which occurs "when Partner A gives up trying to implement his own behavioral plan and without resistance follows that of Partner B. He adapts himself to and is absorbed by the behavioral strategy of B" (164). Using this argument, it becomes clear that a woman reader (Partner A) when faced with a text written by a man (Partner B) will most likely succumb to the perspective of the writer and she is thus forced to misread the text. Or, she could rebel against the text and raise an angry, feminist voice in protest.

James Thurber, in the eyes of most literary critics, is one of the foremost American humorists of the 20th century, and his short story "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" is believed to have "ushered in a major [literary] period … where the individual can maintain his self … an appropriate way of assaulting rigid forms" (Elias 432). The rigid form in Thurber's story is Mrs. Mitty, the main character's wife. She is portrayed by Walter Mitty as a horrible, mothering nag. As a way of escaping her constant griping, he imagines fantastic daydreams which carry him away from Mrs. Mitty's voice. Yet she repeatedly interrupts his reveries and Mitty responds to her as though she is "grossly unfamiliar, like a strange woman who had yelled at him in the crowd" (286). Not only is his wife annoying to him, but she is also distant and removed from what he cares about, like a stranger. When she does speak to him, it seems reflective of the way a mother would speak to a child. For example, Mrs. Mitty asks, "'Why don't you wear your gloves? Have you lost your gloves?' Walter Mitty reached in a pocket and brought out the gloves. He put them on, but after she had turned and gone into the building and he had driven on to a red light, he took them off again" (286). Mrs. Mitty's care for her husband's health is seen as nagging to Walter Mitty, and the audience is amused that he responds like a child and does the opposite of what Mrs. Mitty asked of him. Finally, the clearest way in which Mrs. Mitty is portrayed as a burdensome wife is at the end of the piece when Walter, waiting for his wife to exit the store, imagines that he is facing "the firing squad; erect and motionless, proud and disdainful, Walter Mitty the Undefeated, inscrutable to the last" (289). Not only is Mrs. Mitty portrayed as a mothering, bothersome hen, but she is ultimately described as that which will be the death of Walter Mitty.

Mrs. Mitty is a direct literary descendant of the first woman to be stereotyped as a nagging wife, Dame Van Winkle, the creation of the American writer, Washington Irving. Likewise, Walter Mitty is a reflection of his dreaming predecessor, Rip Van Winkle, who falls into a deep sleep for a hundred years and awakes to the relief of finding out that his nagging wife has died. Judith Fetterley explains in her book, The Resisting Reader, how such a portrayal of women forces a woman who reads "Rip Van Winkle" and other such stories "to find herself excluded from the experience of the story" so that she "cannot read the story without being assaulted by the negative images of women it presents" (10). The result, it seems, is for a woman reader of a story like "Rip Van Winkle" or "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" to either be excluded from the text, or accept the negative images of women the story puts forth. As Fetterley points out, "The consequence for the female reader is a divided self. She is asked to identify with Rip and against herself, to scorn the amiable sex and act just like it, to laugh at Dame Van Winkle and accept that she represents 'woman,' to be at once both repressor and repressed, and ultimately to realize that she is neither" (11). Thus, a woman is forced to misread the text and accept "woman as villain." as Fetterley names it, or rebel against both the story and its message.

So how does a woman reader respond to this portrayal of Mrs. Mitty? If she were to follow Iser's claim, she would defer to the male point of view presented by the author. She would sympathize with Mitty, as Thurber wants us to do, and see domineering women in her own life that resemble Mrs. Mitty. She may see her mother and remember all the times that she nagged her about zipping up her coat against the bitter winter wind. Or the female reader might identify Mrs. Mitty with her controlling mother-in-law and chuckle at Mitty's attempts to escape her control, just as her husband tries to escape the criticism and control of his own mother. Iser's ideal female reader would undoubtedly look at her own position as mother and wife and would vow to never become such a domineering person. This reader would probably also agree with a critic who says that "Mitty has a wife who embodies the authority of a society in which the husband cannot function" (Lindner 440). She could see the faults in a relationship that is too controlled by a woman and recognize that a man needs to feel important and dominant in his relationship with his wife. It could be said that the female reader would agree completely with Thurber's portrayal of the domineering wife. The female reader could simply misread the text.

Or, the female reader could rebel against the text. She could see Mrs. Mitty as a woman who is trying to do her best to keep her husband well and cared for. She could see Walter as a man with a fleeting grip on reality who daydreams that he is a fighter pilot, a brilliant surgeon, a gun expert, or a military hero, when he actually is a poor driver with a slow reaction time to a green traffic light. The female reader could read critics of Thurber who say that by allowing his wife to dominate him, Mitty becomes a "non-hero in a civilization in which women are winning the battle of the sexes" (Hasley 533) and become angry that a woman's fight for equality is seen merely as a battle between the sexes. She could read Walter's daydreams as his attempt to dominate his wife, since all of his fantasies center on him in traditional roles of power. This, for most women, would cause anger at Mitty (and indirectly Thurber) for creating and promoting a society which believes that women need to stay subservient to men. From a male point of view, it becomes a battle of the sexes. In a woman's eyes, her reading is simply a struggle for equality within the text and in the world outside that the text reflects.

It is certain that women misread "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty." I did. I found myself initially wishing that Mrs. Mitty would just let Walter daydream in peace. But after reading the story again and paying attention to the portrayal of Mrs. Mitty, I realized that it is imperative that women rebel against the texts that would oppress them. By misreading a text, the woman reader understands it in a way that is conventional and acceptable to the literary world. But in so doing, she is also distancing herself from the text, not fully embracing it or its meaning in her life. By rebelling against the text, the female reader not only has to understand the point of view of the author and the male audience, but she also has to formulate her own opinions and create a sort of dialogue between the text and herself. Rebelling against the text and the stereotypes encourages an active dialogue between the woman and the text which, in turn, guarantees an active and (most likely) angry reader response. I became a resisting reader.

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2.2: Video- Edwards and the Transition to Enlightenment

Edwards and the Transition to Enlightenment

Featuring discussions of Raymond Williams's model of culture; Edward Taylor; Jonathan Edwards; Benjamin Franklin; George Whitefield; and the Great Awakening.



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2.3: Video- American Puritanism (I)

American Puritanism (I)

Featuring discussions of typology; John Calvin; Arminianism; materialism and idealism; phenomenal vs. noumenal; Puritan "plain style"; the form of the Puritan sermons; the Great Migration; William Bradford; and John Winthrop.



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2.4: Video- The American Enlightenment

The American Enlightenment

Featuring discussions of John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress; perfectionism; Deism; Benjamin Franklin; errata; Thomas Jefferson; syllogisms; John Locke; and the Declaration of Independence.



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2.5: Video- American Gothic (I)

American Gothic (I)

Featuring discussions of the transition from Neoclassicism to Romanticism; Alexander Pope's "Windsor-Forest"; pastoralism; the graveyard school; fancy and imagination; Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"; Wordsworth's preface to Lyrical Ballads; William Cullen Bryant; and the Doppelgänger.



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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3.1: How to Analyze a Short Story



Figure **3.1.1**: Old Fence. (CC BY-SA 4.0; lu2shoot, via NDLA).

A short story has a structure and a message. Can you analyze this picture in much the same way as a short story?

What Is a Short Story?

A short story is a work of short, narrative prose that is usually centered around one single event. It is limited in scope and has an introduction, body and conclusion. Although a short story has much in common with a novel (See How to Analyze a Novel), it is written with much greater precision. You will often be asked to write a literary analysis. An analysis of a short story requires basic knowledge of literary elements. The following guide and questions may help you:

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?

Characterization

Characterization deals with how the characters in the story are described. In short stories there are usually fewer characters compared to a novel. 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?
- Are the characters believable?

Plot and structure

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?

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?

Conflict

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?

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?

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. Ask yourself:

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

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.

- 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")?

Your literary analysis of a short story will often be in the form of an essay where you may be asked to give your opinions of the short story at the end. Choose the elements that made the greatest impression on you. Point out which character/characters you liked best or least and always support your arguments.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

3.2: Short Stories

Short Story

Short stories are works of fiction that usually fall between 1,000 to 10,000 words. On the shorter end of the short story classification we have flash fiction (500-1,000 words). On the longer end, we might approach a novella (17,500-40,000 words). Aside from length, there are some other characteristics which qualify a work of fiction as a short story. It is written in prose, meaning sentences and paragraphs rather than the lines and stanzas of poetry. There is usually a clear storyline, or plot, that unfolds over time. In short stories, the plot usually stretches over a relatively short time span, and will involve fewer characters than a novel. Like in drama and novels, a short story will have a certain structure with a turning point or climax which brings the plot in an unexpected direction.

Short Story



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The Novel

A novel is a work of fiction. This means that it is made up and not factual. Unlike the short story, it is NOT short: it usually focuses on many events and places as well as more characters than the short story. Also, the time span depicted in a novel is often longer than that of a short story.

In literary history, the novel is a fairly new form. Scholars count *Don Quixote* by Miguel Cervantes (1605) as the first narrative that fits modern criteria of a novel. Usually a novel is defined by its length, or, more precisely, the extension of its plot, which can span over longer time than, for example, a short story. But that is not always the case; there are many famous (and long) novels where the narrative evolves over a very short span of time, for example a couple of hours or a day. In addition, a novel often has an extensive cast of characters, and the plot may take place in many different settings. There are a number of subgenres that will identify a novel more specifically, such as fantasy, romance, historical, or bildungsroman.

Novel



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3.2.1: Kate Chopin

3.2.1.1: The Story of an Hour

3.2.2: Edgar Allan Poe

3.2.2.1: “The Philosophy of Composition” (1846)

3.2.2.2: “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843)

3.2.3: Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935)

3.2.3.1: “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892)

3.2.4: Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)

3.2.4.1: 3.7.1-“Young Goodman Brown” (1835)

3.2.5: Shirley Jackson (1916-1965)

3.2.5.1: "The Lottery"

3.2.6: William Faulkner (1897-1962)

3.2.6.1: "A Rose for Emily"

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3.2.1: Kate Chopin



Figure **3.2.1.1**: Writer, Kate Chopin (CC0 1.0, via Wikimedia Commons)

Katherine O'Flaherty Chopin was born in 1850 in St. Louis, Missouri, to an affluent family. She was formally educated in a Catholic school for girls. At age twenty, she married Oscar Chopin and moved with him to New Orleans. The couple eventually relocated to Cloutierville in 1879, an area where many members of the Creole community lived. The Chopins lived, worked, and raised their six children together until Oscar died unexpectedly in 1882, leaving his wife in serious debt. Chopin worked and sold the family business to pay off the debt, eventually moving back to St. Louis to be near her mother, who died soon after Chopin returned. After experiencing these losses, Chopin turned to reading and writing to deal with her grief. Her experiences in New Orleans and Cloutierville provided rich writing material, and during the 1890s, she enjoyed success as a writer, publishing a number of stories in the Local Color tradition. By 1899, her style had evolved, and her important work *The Awakening*, published that year, shocked the Victorian audience of the time in its frank depiction of a woman's sexuality. Unprepared for the negative critical reception that ensued, Chopin retreated from the publishing world. She died unexpectedly a few years later in 1904, from a brain hemorrhage.

In her lifetime, Chopin was known primarily as a Local Color writer who produced a number of important short stories, many of which were collected in *Bayou Folk* in 1894. Her ground breaking novel *The Awakening* published in 1899 was ahead of its time in the examination of the rigid cultural and legal boundaries placed on women which limited or prevented them from living authentic, fully self-directed lives. The novel offers a sensuous portrait of a young married woman and mother, Edna Pontellier, who awakens to herself as a dimensional human being with sexual longings and a strong will to live an authentic life, not the repressed half life she is assigned by tradition and culture, through the institutions of marriage and motherhood, to "perform."

Though today it is viewed as an important early feminist work, the novel shocked and offended the turn of the century reading audience. It was all but forgotten until interest in the novel and in Chopin's work in general was revived in the 1960s. During this revival, an unpublished short story was discovered, "The Storm," written in 1898 but not published until 1969. The story, which offers an erotic depiction of sex between a man and a woman who are not married to each other, would have been unpublishable by most, if not all, major literary magazines in late nineteenth-century America. The story's title indicates that it was intended as a sequel to "At the 'Cadian Ball," first published in 1892 and reprinted in *Bayou Folk*. Read together, the linked stories concern two couples, one from the upper class Creoles (Alcée and Clarisse), and the other from the less prominent Acadians or Cajuns (Calixta and Bobinôt). What begins as a strong flirtation in the first story between Calixta and Alcée, both single at the time and from different social classes, culminates in torrid lovemaking years later in the second story, years after Calixta had married Bobinôt and Alcée had married Clarisse. Beyond the candid, natural depiction of sexual intimacy between the lovers during a stormy afternoon, including the scenes of a woman clearly enjoying an afternoon of passion, the story offers a non judgmental ending: no one appears to be hurt by the affair; in fact, after the storm passes, Alcée and Calixta go their separate ways, and everyone, the reader is told, is quite happy.

Content Advisory

Literature involves language, descriptions, and/or topics that may be emotionally disturbing, graphic, or otherwise sensitive in nature. These topics (or materials) are important to the course as these words, attitudes, and biases are part of American literature and provide us with opportunities to better understand our history and society.

Works Cited

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- **5.5: Kate Chopin (1850 - 1904)** by Amy Berke, Jordan Cofer, Robert Bleil is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0.

3.2.1.1: The Story of an Hour

Kate Chopin (1851-1904) was truly a writer ahead of her time. Her work was never critically received as popular until after her death. Her writing dealt with issues about women that were contrary to contemporary cultural norms and values.

Pre-Reading Questions:

1) As a female in the late 19th century, Chopin was writing at a time when literature was dominated by male authors. Why do you think female writers did not have the same recognition as male writers?

2) Some readers have often likened The Story of An Hour to a fable, a short narrative emphasizing a generalized truth. What do know about the difference between and fable and a fairy tale?

"The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin

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

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 keyhole, 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.

Post-Reading Questions for Chopin:

1) What are the significant events unfolding within the “hour?” Does the “hour” seem a brief period of time or significantly longer? Why does Chopin choose such a timeframe?

2) Explain the changes in Louise within the timeframe of the story. How would you describe what she recognizes as having changed for her? How is her transformation ironic given the story’s timeframe?

3) This story is narrated in third-person, so we never really know what Louise Mallard is truly thinking. How does this mode of narration add to the overall understanding of the story? What would change if it were narrated by another character? By Louise herself?

4) In her 1899 novel The Awakening Chopin attacked issues such as women’s rights, female repression, and sexual expression. How might Louise Mallard serve as a tragic hero of these ideals?

Journal Writing: Why might it be difficult for modern readers to understand the impact Chopin’s story when it was first published? Have the general truths about the relationships between men and women changed significantly now over a century later?

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3.2.2: Edgar Allan Poe

Written by Corey Parson. The Edgar Allan Poe biography was reproduced from Wendy Kurant's Becoming America: An Exploration of American Literature from Precolonial to Post-Revolution.

Born in Boston to actors Elizabeth Arnold Poe and David Poe, Jr., Edgar Allan Poe was swiftly abandoned by both parents before the age of four. His father simply picked up and left the family. A year later, Poe's mother unfortunately contracted tuberculosis and passed away, leaving Poe an orphan. He was taken in by John Allan, a tobacco merchant, and his wife, Frances Valentine Allan. The Allans raised Poe as their own, though he was never officially adopted by the couple.

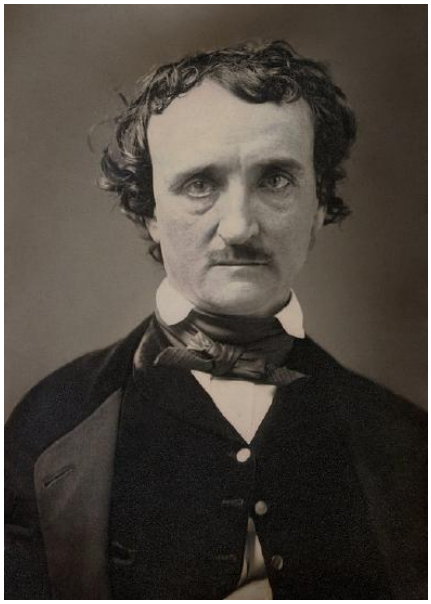


Figure **3.2.2.1**: Edgar Allan Poe, June 1849. (CC0 1.0; via Wikimedia Commons)

Poe took to poetry at a young age, which often caused a clash between himself and his adoptive father. Whereas John Allan wished for Poe to take over the family business, Poe had no such desire and continued to write. As a young man, he attended the University of Virginia with Allan footing the bill. However, this arrangement didn't last long as Allan refused to continue to pay for Poe's secondary education, reportedly due to financial disagreements between the two men. After amounting a mass of debt due to gambling, Poe was forced to leave the university and enlisted in the Army.

It was while in the Army that Poe anonymously published his first collection, Tamerlane and Other Poems (1827). After Frances Valentine Allan, the only mother Poe knew, died of tuberculosis, John Allan and Poe mended their relationship, and Allan helped Poe get accepted into West Point. Though he was a good student, Poe's mind wandered more to prose and poetry and less to his duties at West Point. Worse yet, his relationship with Allan was on the rocks yet again. Poe was kicked out of West Point, though it is unclear if Poe purposefully caused his expulsion to spite his foster father. Allan won the parting shot though; after his death in 1834, he left Poe out of his will completely.

After West Point, Poe traveled extensively, living in poverty as a full-time writer in major cities like New York City, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Richmond. While in Richmond, he fell in love with his cousin, Virginia Clemm, and married her in 1836. Poe was 27, and Clemm was 13.

After winning a short story contest, Poe's writing career picked up and he went on to publish more short stories in literary journals and magazines. He also worked as a critic for the Southern Literary Messenger and was notorious for his biting reviews, earning him the nickname "Tomahawk Man." His position as critic with the magazine proved short-lived as his seething reviews often led to confrontation. It is believed he was fired after his boss found him drunk on the job. Over the years, Poe had developed a liking to alcohol, eventually leading to a dependence on liquor. This dependence evolved into full-blown alcoholism when Virginia fell ill with tuberculosis in 1842. The very disease that killed his birth mother and later his adoptive mother seemed insatiable, targeting the women Poe loved. It was while his wife was sick that Poe wrote the famous poem for which he is known: "The Raven" (1845).

“The Raven” skyrocketed Poe from infamous critic to famous poet. But the literary recognition of his arguably most popular poem did not come with the paycheck one would expect. He only received $9 from The American Review for it, and Poe continued to struggle financially for the rest of his life.

Debt and alcoholism weren’t the only demons haunting Poe. Death soon darkened his door yet again. In 1947, Virginia lost her battle with tuberculosis, devastating Poe. She was only 24 years old. After her death, Poe’s dependency on substances grew until, in 1849, he died at the age of 40 under suspicious circumstances. Some sources say he drank himself to death while others blame his death on drugs or rabies. No one is certain how Poe died, and it remains a mystery to this day, not unlike the gothic endings of some of his most celebrated works.

Poe may have beaten Death in the end; his works are still recognized as an important part of the American Literature canon. Modern day readers have Poe to thank for detective fiction, a genre which some credit him for creating. Best known for his evocative storytelling and his gothic style, Poe continues to influence writers across the centuries from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to Stephen King, who is quoted in a Mystery Scene magazine article as saying of Poe, “He wasn’t just a mystery/suspense writer. He was the first.”

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3.2.2.1: “The Philosophy of Composition” (1846)

Charles Dickens, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of “Barnaby Rudge,” says—”By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his ‘Caleb Williams’ backwards? He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done.”

I cannot think this the precise mode of procedure on the part of Godwin—and indeed what he himself acknowledges, is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens’ idea—but the author of “Caleb Williams” was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its denouement before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the denouement constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis—or one is suggested by an incident of the day—or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative—designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or autorial comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an effect. Keeping originality always in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest—I say to myself, in the first place, “Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?” Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone—whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone—afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would—that is to say, who could—detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say— but, perhaps, the autorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers—poets in especial—prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition—and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought—at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view—at the fully-matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable—at the cautious selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene-shifting—the step-ladders, and demon-traps—the cock’s feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, constitute the properties of the literary histrio.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor, at any time, the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions, and, since the interest of an analysis or reconstruction, such as I have considered a desideratum, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analysed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the modus operandi by which some one of my own works was put together. I select “The Raven“ as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referable either to accident or intuition—that the work proceeded step by step, to its completion, with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem, per se, the circumstance—or say the necessity—which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of composing a poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression—for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and everything like totality is at once destroyed. But since, *ceteris paribus*, no poet can afford to dispense with anything that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones— that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demonstrate that a poem is such only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychal necessity, brief. For this reason, at least, one-half of the *Paradise Lost* is essentially prose—a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, inevitably, with corresponding depressions—the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art—the limit of a single sitting—and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as *Robinson Crusoe* (demanding no unity), this limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit—in other words, to the excitement or elevation—again, in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect—this, with one proviso—that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper length for my intended poem—a length of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed: and here I may as well observe that throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work universally appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration—the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect—they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of soul—not of intellect, or of heart—upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating the “beautiful.” Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes—that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to is most readily attained in the poem. Now the object Truth, or the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable to a certain extent in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion, a homeliness (the truly passionate will comprehend me), which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement or pleasurable elevation of the soul. It by no means follows, from anything here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast—but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the tone of its highest manifestation—and all experience has shown that this tone is one of sadness. Beauty of whatever kind in its supreme development invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem—some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In carefully thinking over all the usual artistic effects—or more properly points, in the theatrical sense—I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the refrain. The universality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the refrain, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone—both in sound and

thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity—of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten the effect, by adhering in general to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation of the application of the refrain—the refrain itself remaining for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the nature of my refrain. Since its application was to be repeatedly varied it was clear that the refrain itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best refrain.

The question now arose as to the character of the word. Having made up my mind to a refrain, the division of the poem into stanzas was of course a corollary, the refrain forming the close to each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt, and these considerations inevitably led me to the long o as the most sonorous vowel in connection with r as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the refrain being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had pre-determined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word “Nevermore.” In fact it was the very first which presented itself.

The next desideratum was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word “nevermore.” In observing the difficulty which I had at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the preassumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by a human being—I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a non-reasoning creature capable of speech, and very naturally, a parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a Raven as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended tone.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven, the bird of ill-omen, monotonously repeating the one word “Nevermore” at the conclusion of each stanza in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object—supremeness or perfection at all points, I asked myself—”Of all melancholy topics what, according to the universal understanding of mankind, is the most melancholy?” Death, was the obvious reply. “And when,” I said, “is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?” From what I have already explained at some length the answer here also is obvious—”When it most closely allies itself to Beauty: the death then of a beautiful woman is unquestionably the most poetical topic in the world, and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover.”

I had now to combine the two ideas of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word “Nevermore.” I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying at every turn the application of the word repeated, but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending, that is to say, the effect of the variation of application. I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover—the first query to which the Raven should reply “Nevermore”—that I could make this first query a commonplace one, the second less so, the third still less, and so on, until at length the lover, startled from his original nonchalance by the melancholy character of the word itself, by its frequent repetition, and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it, is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character—queries whose solution he has passionately at heart—propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture—propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which reason assures him is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote), but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modelling his questions as to receive from the expected “Nevermore” the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrows. Perceiving the opportunity thus afforded me, or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction, I first established in my mind the climax or concluding query—that query to which “Nevermore” should be in the last place an answer—that query in reply to which this word “Nevermore” should involve the utmost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here then the poem may be said to have had its beginning—at the end where all works of art should begin—for it was here at this point of my preconsiderations that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza:

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore,
Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
Quoth the Raven—"Nevermore."

I composed this stanza, at this point, first that, by establishing the climax, I might the better vary and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover, and secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the metre, and the length and general arrangement of the stanza, as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede, so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able in the subsequent composition to construct more vigorous stanzas I should without scruple have purposely enfeebled them so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.

And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected in versification is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere rhythm, it is still clear that the possible varieties of metre and stanza are absolutely infinite, and yet, for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing. The fact is that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition. In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and although a positive merit of the highest class, demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

Of course I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or metre of the "Raven." The former is trochaic—the latter is octametre acatalectic, alternating with heptametre catalectic repeated in the refrain of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrametre catalectic. Less pedantically the feet employed throughout (trochees) consist of a long syllable followed by a short, the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet, the second of seven and a half (in effect two-thirds), the third of eight, the fourth of seven and a half, the fifth the same, the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines taken individually has been employed before, and what originality the "Raven" has, is in their combination into stanza; nothing even remotely approaching this has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual and some altogether novel effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the Raven—and the first branch of this consideration was the locale. For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields—but it has always appeared to me that a close circumscription of space is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident—it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber—in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished—this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.

The locale being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird—and the thought of introducing him through the window was inevitable. The idea of making the lover suppose, in the first instance, that the flapping of the wings of the bird against the shutter, is a "tapping" at the door, originated in a wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader's curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover's throwing open the door, finding all dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked.

I made the night tempestuous, first to account for the Raven's seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber.

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage—it being understood that the bust was absolutely suggested by the bird—the bust of Pallas being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and secondly, for the sonorousness of the word, Pallas, itself.

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast, with a view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic—approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible—is given to the Raven's entrance. He comes in "with many a flirt and flutter."

Not the least obeisance made he—not a moment stopped or stayed he,
But with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door.

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out:—

Then this ebony bird, beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore?"
Quoth the Raven—"Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

The effect of the denouement being thus provided for, I immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most profound seriousness —this tone commencing in the stanza directly following the one last quoted, with the line,

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only, etc.

From this epoch the lover no longer jests—no longer sees anything even of the fantastic in the Raven's demeanour. He speaks of him as a "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," and feels the "fiery eyes" burning into his "bosom's core." This revolution of thought, or fancy, on the lover's part, is intended to induce a similar one on the part of the reader—to bring the mind into a proper frame for the denouement—which is now brought about as rapidly and as directly as possible.

With the denouement proper—with the Raven's reply, "Nevermore," to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world—the poem, in its obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, everything is within the limits of the accountable—of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word "Nevermore," and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm, to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams—the chamberwindow of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming of a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of the bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat out of the immediate reach of the student, who amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's demeanour, demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven addressed, answers with its customary word, "Nevermore"—a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the student, who, giving utterance aloud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl's repetition of "Nevermore." The student now guesses the state of the case, but is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer, "Nevermore." With the indulgence, to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration, in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination, and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skillfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness or nakedness which repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required—first, some amount of complexity, or more properly, adaptation; and, secondly, some amount of suggestiveness—some under-current, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that richness (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term), which we are too fond of confounding with the ideal. It is the excess of the suggested meaning—it is the rendering this the upper instead of the under-current of the theme—which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind), the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem—their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which has preceded them. The under-current of meaning is rendered first apparent in the line—

"Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven "Nevermore!"

It will be observed that the words, "from out my heart," involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with the answer, "Nevermore," dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the Raven as emblematical—but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza that the intention of making him emblematical of Mournful and never ending Remembrance is permitted distinctly to be seen:

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore.

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3.2.2.2: “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843)

"The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allen Poe

TRUE!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed— not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees—very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it—oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly— very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man’s sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha! would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously—oh, so cautiously—cautiously (for the hinges creaked)—I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights—every night just at midnight—but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he has passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch’s minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night had I felt the extent of my own powers—of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back—but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness, (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers,) and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in bed, crying out—“Who’s there?”

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening;—just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief—oh, no!—it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had been saying to himself— “It is nothing but the wind in the chimney—it is only a mouse crossing the floor,” or “It is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp.” Yes, he had been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions: but he had found all in vain. All in vain; because Death, in approaching him had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel—although he neither saw nor heard—to feel the presence of my head within the room.

When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little—a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it—you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily—until, at length a simple dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and fell full upon the vulture eye.

It was open—wide, wide open—and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness—all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.

And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the sense?—now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eve. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment!—do you mark me well I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me—the sound would be heard by a neighbour! The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once—once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye—not even his—could have detected any thing wrong. There was nothing to wash out—no stain of any kind—no blood-spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all—ha! ha!

When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock—still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart,—for what had I now to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbour during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

I smiled,—for what had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search—search well. I led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct:—It continued and became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definiteness—until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears.

No doubt I now grew very pale;—but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased—and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I gasped for breath—and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly—more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be

gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men—but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! what could I do? I foamed—I raved—I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected! —they knew!—they were making a mockery of my horror!-this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!

"Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! I admit the deed!—tear up the planks! here, here!—It is the beating of his hideous heart!"

Works Cited

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3.2.3: Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935)

The Charlotte Perkins Gilman biography was reproduced from Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present



Figure **3.2.3.1**: Charlotte Perkins Gilman c. 1900. (CC0 1.0, via source Wikimedia Commons)

As she writes in her autobiography, Charlotte Perkins Gilman had one overriding goal in her life: "the improvement of the human race." The niece of both the abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe and the suffragist Isabella Beecher Hooker, Gilman was one of the most important feminist writers, editors, and activists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She led an unconventional life that directly inspired her poetry, fiction, and nonfiction alike. At the age of thirty-four, she divorced a husband who sought to "domesticate" her, leaving both him and her daughter to pursue an independent career authoring works of poetry, fiction, and social criticism; editing and publishing her own feminist magazine, *Forerunner*; and lecturing for the **American Woman Suffrage Association** and other organizations on the need for social reform to ensure equality between men and women. In the 1890s, Gilman published three works that solidified her reputation as both a major American writer and a groundbreaking feminist theorist: a well-received collection of feminist poems, *In This Our World* (1893); the groundbreaking work of social theory, *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (1898), in which she criticized the economic dependency of women upon men; and the shocking short story included in this chapter, "The Yellow Wall Paper" (1892). Gilman remarried in 1900 and over the course of the first three decades of the twentieth century continued to edit, lecture, and publish works that advocated for the progressive reform of society. In her utopian novel *Herland* (1915), for example, she imagines a peaceful and ecologically sustainable society comprised solely of women who use technology and not men to reproduce.

While presented in the guise of a gothic tale of terror, "The Yellow Wall Paper" is a fine example of political realism. Through this terrifying story of a woman locked in an ancient manor and haunted by a shadowy figure, Gilman shows that the real relationship between married men and women in her time is not one of equality but of domination and dependency. Gilman based the story on her own life. After giving birth to her daughter, Gilman fell into a state of depression and was sent to a clinic for treatment. Her doctor, a world famous neurologist, advised her to quit all creative and intellectual activity and instead dedicate herself wholly to a private domestic routine. However, this so called "**rest-cure**" only further deepened Gilman's depression and so she sought and found a cure for herself in her true callings: the literary and political work to which she dedicated the rest of her life.

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Berke, Amy, et al. *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present. English Open Textbooks*, 2015.

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3.2.3.1: “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892)

"The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Originally published January 1892, in *The New England Magazine*

It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral halls for the summer.

A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity—but that would be asking too much of fate!

Still I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it.

Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long untenanted?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and PERHAPS—(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)—PERHAPS that is one reason I do not get well faster.

You see he does not believe I am sick!

And what can one do?

If a physician of high standing, and one’s own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do?

My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing.

So I take phosphates or phosphites—whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to “work” until I am well again.

Personally, I disagree with their ideas.

Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

I did write for a while in spite of them; but it DOES exhaust me a good deal—having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad.

So I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The most beautiful place! It is quite alone, standing well back from the road, quite three miles from the village. It makes me think of English places that you read about, for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of separate little houses for the gardeners and people.

There is a DELICIOUS garden! I never saw such a garden—large and shady, full of box-bordered paths, and lined with long grape-covered arbors with seats under them.

There were greenhouses, too, but they are all broken now.

There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and coheirs; anyhow, the place has been empty for years.

That spoils my ghostliness, I am afraid, but I don’t care—there is something strange about the house—I can feel it.

I even said so to John one moonlight evening, but he said what I felt was a DRAUGHT, and shut the window.

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition.

But John says if I feel so, I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains to control myself—before him, at least, and that makes me very tired.

I don't like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings! but John would not hear of it.

He said there was only one window and not room for two beds, and no near room for him if he took another.

He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.

I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more.

He said we came here solely on my account, that I was to have perfect rest and all the air I could get. "Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear," said he, "and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time." So we took the nursery at the top of the house.

It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine galore. It was nursery first and then playroom and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls.

The paint and paper look as if a boys' school had used it. It is stripped off—the paper—in great patches all around the head of my bed, about as far as I can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life.

One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin.

It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate and provoke study, and when you follow the lame uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide—plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions.

The color is repellent, almost revolting; a smouldering unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight.

It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others.

No wonder the children hated it! I should hate it myself if I had to live in this room long.

There comes John, and I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a word.

We have been here two weeks, and I haven't felt like writing before, since that first day.

I am sitting by the window now, up in this atrocious nursery, and there is nothing to hinder my writing as much as I please, save lack of strength.

John is away all day, and even some nights when his cases are serious.

I am glad my case is not serious!

But these nervous troubles are dreadfully depressing.

John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no REASON to suffer, and that satisfies him.

Of course it is only nervousness. It does weigh on me so not to do my duty in any way!

I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already!

Nobody would believe what an effort it is to do what little I am able,—to dress and entertain, and order things.

It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby. Such a dear baby!

And yet I CANNOT be with him, it makes me so nervous.

I suppose John never was nervous in his life. He laughs at me so about this wall-paper!

At first he meant to repaper the room, but afterwards he said that I was letting it get the better of me, and that nothing was worse for a nervous patient than to give way to such fancies.

He said that after the wall-paper was changed it would be the heavy bedstead, and then the barred windows, and then that gate at the head of the stairs, and so on.

“You know the place is doing you good,” he said, “and really, dear, I don’t care to renovate the house just for a three months’ rental.”

“Then do let us go downstairs,” I said, “there are such pretty rooms there.”

Then he took me in his arms and called me a blessed little goose, and said he would go down to the cellar, if I wished, and have it whitewashed into the bargain.

But he is right enough about the beds and windows and things.

It is an airy and comfortable room as any one need wish, and, of course, I would not be so silly as to make him uncomfortable just for a whim.

I’m really getting quite fond of the big room, all but that horrid paper.

Out of one window I can see the garden, those mysterious deepshaded arbors, the riotous old-fashioned flowers, and bushes and gnarly trees.

Out of another I get a lovely view of the bay and a little private wharf belonging to the estate. There is a beautiful shaded lane that runs down there from the house. I always fancy I see people walking in these numerous paths and arbors, but John has cautioned me not to give way to fancy in the least. He says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency. So I try.

I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me.

But I find I get pretty tired when I try.

It is so discouraging not to have any advice and companionship about my work. When I get really well, John says we will ask Cousin Henry and Julia down for a long visit; but he says he would as soon put fireworks in my pillow-case as to let me have those stimulating people about now.

I wish I could get well faster.

But I must not think about that. This paper looks to me as if it KNEW what a vicious influence it had!

There is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside down.

I get positively angry with the impertinence of it and the everlastingness. Up and down and sideways they crawl, and those absurd, unblinking eyes are everywhere. There is one place where two breadths didn’t match, and the eyes go all up and down the line, one a little higher than the other.

I never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before, and we all know how much expression they have! I used to lie awake as a child and get more entertainment and terror out of blank walls and plain furniture than most children could find in a toy store.

I remember what a kindly wink the knobs of our big, old bureau used to have, and there was one chair that always seemed like a strong friend.

I used to feel that if any of the other things looked too fierce I could always hop into that chair and be safe.

The furniture in this room is no worse than inharmonious, however, for we had to bring it all from downstairs. I suppose when this was used as a playroom they had to take the nursery things out, and no wonder! I never saw such ravages as the children have made here.

The wall-paper, as I said before, is torn off in spots, and it sticketh closer than a brother—they must have had perseverance as well as hatred.

Then the floor is scratched and gouged and splintered, the plaster itself is dug out here and there, and this great heavy bed which is all we found in the room, looks as if it had been through the wars.

But I don't mind it a bit—only the paper.

There comes John's sister. Such a dear girl as she is, and so careful of me! I must not let her find me writing.

She is a perfect and enthusiastic housekeeper, and hopes for no better profession. I verily believe she thinks it is the writing which made me sick!

But I can write when she is out, and see her a long way off from these windows.

There is one that commands the road, a lovely shaded winding road, and one that just looks off over the country. A lovely country, too, full of great elms and velvet meadows.

This wall-paper has a kind of sub-pattern in a different shade, a particularly irritating one, for you can only see it in certain lights, and not clearly then.

But in the places where it isn't faded and where the sun is just so—I can see a strange, provoking, formless sort of figure, that seems to skulk about behind that silly and conspicuous front design.

There's sister on the stairs!

Well, the Fourth of July is over! The people are gone and I am tired out. John thought it might do me good to see a little company, so we just had mother and Nellie and the children down for a week.

Of course I didn't do a thing. Jennie sees to everything now.

But it tired me all the same.

John says if I don't pick up faster he shall send me to Weir Mitchell in the fall.

But I don't want to go there at all. I had a friend who was in his hands once, and she says he is just like John and my brother, only more so!

Besides, it is such an undertaking to go so far.

I don't feel as if it was worth while to turn my hand over for anything, and I'm getting dreadfully fretful and querulous.

I cry at nothing, and cry most of the time.

Of course I don't when John is here, or anybody else, but when I am alone.

And I am alone a good deal just now. John is kept in town very often by serious cases, and Jennie is good and lets me alone when I want her to.

So I walk a little in the garden or down that lovely lane, sit on the porch under the roses, and lie down up here a good deal.

I'm getting really fond of the room in spite of the wall-paper. Perhaps BECAUSE of the wall-paper.

It dwells in my mind so!

I lie here on this great immovable bed—it is nailed down, I believe—and follow that pattern about by the hour. It is as good as gymnastics, I assure you. I start, we'll say, at the bottom, down in the corner over there where it has not been touched, and I determine for the thousandth time that I WILL follow that pointless pattern to some sort of a conclusion.

I know a little of the principle of design, and I know this thing was not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else that I ever heard of.

It is repeated, of course, by the breadths, but not otherwise.

Looked at in one way each breadth stands alone, the bloated curves and flourishes—a kind of "debased Romanesque" with delirium tremens—go waddling up and down in isolated columns of fatuity.

But, on the other hand, they connect diagonally, and the sprawling outlines run off in great slanting waves of optic horror, like a lot of wallowing seaweeds in full chase.

The whole thing goes horizontally, too, at least it seems so, and I exhaust myself in trying to distinguish the order of its going in that direction.

They have used a horizontal breadth for a frieze, and that adds wonderfully to the confusion.

There is one end of the room where it is almost intact, and there, when the crosslights fade and the low sun shines directly upon it, I can almost fancy radiation after all,—the interminable grotesques seem to form around a common centre and rush off in headlong plunges of equal distraction.

It makes me tired to follow it. I will take a nap I guess.

I don't know why I should write this.

I don't want to.

I don't feel able.

And I know John would think it absurd. But I MUST say what I feel and think in some way—it is such a relief!

But the effort is getting to be greater than the relief.

Half the time now I am awfully lazy, and lie down ever so much.

John says I musn't lose my strength, and has me take cod liver oil and lots of tonics and things, to say nothing of ale and wine and rare meat.

Dear John! He loves me very dearly, and hates to have me sick. I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him the other day, and tell him how I wish he would let me go and make a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia.

But he said I wasn't able to go, nor able to stand it after I got there; and I did not make out a very good case for myself, for I was crying before I had finished.

It is getting to be a great effort for me to think straight. Just this nervous weakness I suppose.

And dear John gathered me up in his arms, and just carried me upstairs and laid me on the bed, and sat by me and read to me till it tired my head.

He said I was his darling and his comfort and all he had, and that I must take care of myself for his sake, and keep well.

He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me.

There's one comfort, the baby is well and happy, and does not have to occupy this nursery with the horrid wall-paper.

If we had not used it, that blessed child would have! What a fortunate escape! Why, I wouldn't have a child of mine, an impressionable little thing, live in such a room for worlds.

I never thought of it before, but it is lucky that John kept me here after all, I can stand it so much easier than a baby, you see.

Of course I never mention it to them any more—I am too wise,—but I keep watch of it all the same.

There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will.

Behind that outside pattern the dim shapes get clearer every day.

It is always the same shape, only very numerous.

And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don't like it a bit. I wonder—I begin to think—I wish John would take me away from here!

It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so.

But I tried it last night.

It was moonlight. The moon shines in all around just as the sun does.

I hate to see it sometimes, it creeps so slowly, and always comes in by one window or another.

John was asleep and I hated to waken him, so I kept still and watched the moonlight on that undulating wall-paper till I felt creepy.

The faint figure behind seemed to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out.

I got up softly and went to feel and see if the paper DID move, and when I came back John was awake.

“What is it, little girl?” he said. “Don’t go walking about like that—you’ll get cold.”

I though it was a good time to talk, so I told him that I really was not gaining here, and that I wished he would take me away.

“Why darling!” said he, “our lease will be up in three weeks, and I can’t see how to leave before.

“The repairs are not done at home, and I cannot possibly leave town just now. Of course if you were in any danger, I could and would, but you really are better, dear, whether you can see it or not. I am a doctor, dear, and I know. You are gaining flesh and color, your appetite is better, I feel really much easier about you.”

“I don’t weigh a bit more,” said I, “nor as much; and my appetite may be better in the evening when you are here, but it is worse in the morning when you are away!”

“Bless her little heart!” said he with a big hug, “she shall be as sick as she pleases! But now let’s improve the shining hours by going to sleep, and talk about it in the morning!”

“And you won’t go away?” I asked gloomily.

“Why, how can I, dear? It is only three weeks more and then we will take a nice little trip of a few days while Jennie is getting the house ready. Really dear you are better!”

“Better in body perhaps—” I began, and stopped short, for he sat up straight and looked at me with such a stern, reproachful look that I could not say another word.

“My darling,” said he, “I beg of you, for my sake and for our child’s sake, as well as for your own, that you will never for one instant let that idea enter your mind! There is nothing so dangerous, so fascinating, to a temperament like yours. It is a false and foolish fancy. Can you not trust me as a physician when I tell you so?”

So of course I said no more on that score, and we went to sleep before long. He thought I was asleep first, but I wasn’t, and lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately.

On a pattern like this, by daylight, there is a lack of sequence, a defiance of law, that is a constant irritant to a normal mind.

The color is hideous enough, and unreliable enough, and infuriating enough, but the pattern is torturing.

You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well underway in following, it turns a back-somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you. It is like a bad dream.

The outside pattern is a florid arabesque, reminding one of a fungus. If you can imagine a toadstool in joints, an interminable string of toadstools, budding and sprouting in endless convolutions—why, that is something like it.

That is, sometimes!

There is one marked peculiarity about this paper, a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is that it changes as the light changes.

When the sun shoots in through the east window—I always watch for that first long, straight ray—it changes so quickly that I never can quite believe it.

That is why I watch it always.

By moonlight—the moon shines in all night when there is a moon—I wouldn’t know it was the same paper.

At night in any kind of light, in twilight, candle light, lamplight, and worst of all by moonlight, it becomes bars! The outside pattern I mean, and the woman behind it is as plain as can be.

I didn’t realize for a long time what the thing was that showed behind, that dim sub-pattern, but now I am quite sure it is a woman.

By daylight she is subdued, quiet. I fancy it is the pattern that keeps her so still. It is so puzzling. It keeps me quiet by the hour.

I lie down ever so much now. John says it is good for me, and to sleep all I can.

Indeed he started the habit by making me lie down for an hour after each meal.

It is a very bad habit I am convinced, for you see I don't sleep.

And that cultivates deceit, for I don't tell them I'm awake—O no!

The fact is I am getting a little afraid of John.

He seems very queer sometimes, and even Jennie has an inexplicable look.

It strikes me occasionally, just as a scientific hypothesis,—that perhaps it is the paper!

I have watched John when he did not know I was looking, and come into the room suddenly on the most innocent excuses, and I've caught him several times LOOKING AT THE PAPER! And Jennie too. I caught Jennie with her hand on it once.

She didn't know I was in the room, and when I asked her in a quiet, a very quiet voice, with the most restrained manner possible, what she was doing with the paper—she turned around as if she had been caught stealing, and looked quite angry—asked me why I should frighten her so!

Then she said that the paper stained everything it touched, that she had found yellow smooches on all my clothes and John's, and she wished we would be more careful!

Did not that sound innocent? But I know she was studying that pattern, and I am determined that nobody shall find it out but myself!

Life is very much more exciting now than it used to be. You see I have something more to expect, to look forward to, to watch. I really do eat better, and am more quiet than I was.

John is so pleased to see me improve! He laughed a little the other day, and said I seemed to be flourishing in spite of my wall-paper.

I turned it off with a laugh. I had no intention of telling him it was BECAUSE of the wall-paper—he would make fun of me. He might even want to take me away.

I don't want to leave now until I have found it out. There is a week more, and I think that will be enough.

I'm feeling ever so much better! I don't sleep much at night, for it is so interesting to watch developments; but I sleep a good deal in the daytime.

In the daytime it is tiresome and perplexing.

There are always new shoots on the fungus, and new shades of yellow all over it. I cannot keep count of them, though I have tried conscientiously.

It is the strangest yellow, that wall-paper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw—not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things.

But there is something else about that paper—the smell! I noticed it the moment we came into the room, but with so much air and sun it was not bad. Now we have had a week of fog and rain, and whether the windows are open or not, the smell is here.

It creeps all over the house.

I find it hovering in the dining-room, skulking in the parlor, hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs.

It gets into my hair.

Even when I go to ride, if I turn my head suddenly and surprise it—there is that smell!

Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like.

It is not bad—at first, and very gentle, but quite the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met.

In this damp weather it is awful, I wake up in the night and find it hanging over me.

It used to disturb me at first. I thought seriously of burning the house—to reach the smell.

But now I am used to it. The only thing I can think of that it is like is the COLOR of the paper! A yellow smell.

There is a very funny mark on this wall, low down, near the mopboard. A streak that runs round the room. It goes behind every piece of furniture, except the bed, a long, straight, even SMOOCH, as if it had been rubbed over and over.

I wonder how it was done and who did it, and what they did it for. Round and round and round—round and round and round—it makes me dizzy!

I really have discovered something at last.

Through watching so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out.

The front pattern DOES move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!

Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.

Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just takes hold of the bars and shakes them hard.

And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern—it strangles so; I think that is why it has so many heads.

They get through, and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside down, and makes their eyes white!

If those heads were covered or taken off it would not be half so bad.

I think that woman gets out in the daytime!

And I'll tell you why—privately—I've seen her!

I can see her out of every one of my windows!

It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight.

I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes she hides under the blackberry vines.

I don't blame her a bit. It must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight!

I always lock the door when I creep by daylight. I can't do it at night, for I know John would suspect something at once.

And John is so queer now, that I don't want to irritate him. I wish he would take another room! Besides, I don't want anybody to get that woman out at night but myself.

I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once.

But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time.

And though I always see her, she MAY be able to creep faster than I can turn!

I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud shadow in a high wind.

If only that top pattern could be gotten off from the under one! I mean to try it, little by little.

I have found out another funny thing, but I shan't tell it this time! It does not do to trust people too much.

There are only two more days to get this paper off, and I believe John is beginning to notice. I don't like the look in his eyes.

And I heard him ask Jennie a lot of professional questions about me. She had a very good report to give.

She said I slept a good deal in the daytime.

John knows I don't sleep very well at night, for all I'm so quiet!

He asked me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind.

As if I couldn't see through him!

Still, I don't wonder he acts so, sleeping under this paper for three months.

It only interests me, but I feel sure John and Jennie are secretly affected by it.

Hurrah! This is the last day, but it is enough. John is to stay in town over night, and won't be out until this evening.

Jennie wanted to sleep with me—the sly thing! but I told her I should undoubtedly rest better for a night all alone.

That was clever, for really I wasn't alone a bit! As soon as it was moonlight and that poor thing began to crawl and shake the pattern, I got up and ran to help her.

I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper.

A strip about as high as my head and half around the room.

And then when the sun came and that awful pattern began to laugh at me, I declared I would finish it to-day!

We go away to-morrow, and they are moving all my furniture down again to leave things as they were before.

Jennie looked at the wall in amazement, but I told her merrily that I did it out of pure spite at the vicious thing.

She laughed and said she wouldn't mind doing it herself, but I must not get tired.

How she betrayed herself that time!

But I am here, and no person touches this paper but me—not ALIVE!

She tried to get me out of the room—it was too patent! But I said it was so quiet and empty and clean now that I believed I would lie down again and sleep all I could; and not to wake me even for dinner—I would call when I woke.

So now she is gone, and the servants are gone, and the things are gone, and there is nothing left but that great bedstead nailed down, with the canvas mattress we found on it.

We shall sleep downstairs to-night, and take the boat home to-morrow.

I quite enjoy the room, now it is bare again.

How those children did tear about here!

This bedstead is fairly gnawed!

But I must get to work.

I have locked the door and thrown the key down into the front path.

I don't want to go out, and I don't want to have anybody come in, till John comes.

I want to astonish him.

I've got a rope up here that even Jennie did not find. If that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her!

But I forgot I could not reach far without anything to stand on!

This bed will NOT move!

I tried to lift and push it until I was lame, and then I got so angry I bit off a little piece at one corner—but it hurt my teeth.

Then I peeled off all the paper I could reach standing on the floor. It sticks horribly and the pattern just enjoys it! All those strangled heads and bulbous eyes and waddling fungus growths just shriek with derision!

I am getting angry enough to do something desperate. To jump out of the window would be admirable exercise, but the bars are too strong even to try.

Besides I wouldn't do it. Of course not. I know well enough that a step like that is improper and might be misconstrued.

I don't like to LOOK out of the windows even—there are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast.

I wonder if they all come out of that wall-paper as I did?

But I am securely fastened now by my well-hidden rope—you don't get ME out in the road there!

I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!

It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please!

I don’t want to go outside. I won’t, even if Jennie asks me to.

For outside you have to creep on the ground, and everything is green instead of yellow.

But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way.

Why there’s John at the door!

It is no use, young man, you can’t open it!

How he does call and pound!

Now he’s crying for an axe.

It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!

“John dear!” said I in the gentlest voice, “the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!”

That silenced him for a few moments.

Then he said—very quietly indeed, “Open the door, my darling!”

“I can’t,” said I. “The key is down by the front door under a plantain leaf!”

And then I said it again, several times, very gently and slowly, and said it so often that he had to go and see, and he got it of course, and came in. He stopped short by the door.

“What is the matter?” he cried. “For God’s sake, what are you doing!”

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

“I’ve got out at last,” said I, “in spite of you and Jane. And I’ve pulled off most of the paper, so you can’t put me back!”

Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time!

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3.2.4: Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)

The Nathaniel Hawthorne biography was reproduced from Wendy Kurant's Becoming America: An Exploration of American Literature from Precolonial to Post-Revolution.

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in 1804 to Nathaniel Hawthorne, Senior and Elizabeth Manning Hawthorne. His father was a sea-captain who died in 1808 of yellow fever. Hawthorne's mother then moved with her children to her family's home in Salem. Her family had a long history in Salem, and among Harthorne's ancestor was a judge in the Salem witch trials of 1692.

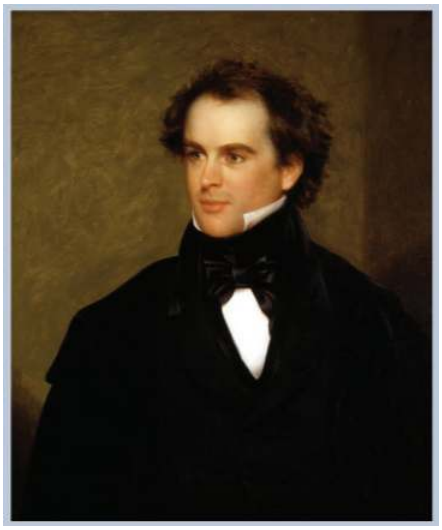


Figure **3.2.4.1**: Nathaniel Hawthorne. (CC0 1.0; Charles Osgood, via Peabody Essex Museum)

During his childhood in Salem, Hawthorne acquired a love of reading, particularly of long prose works and early novels-as-genre by such writers as John Bunyan (1628–1688), Tobias Smollett (1721–1771), and Sir Walter Scott. Intent on becoming a writer, Hawthorne entered Bowdoin College in Maine, where the Manning family had property. Several of his classmates, including Horatio Bridge (1806–1893) and later president Franklin Pierce (1804–1869), would become life-long friends and supporters of both his livelihood and his writing.

After graduating, Hawthorne immersed himself in antiquarian pursuits, studying Puritan and colonial history. Many of his stories would consider Puritanism's effect on the American consciousness, particularly in regards to the place of evil—and its inevitable impact on human life—in the American individual and their context in society. The stories would also give an American slant to universal concerns, concerns such as potential conflicts of individual freedom and destiny and humankind's place (if any) in the wilderness/nature, and, perhaps, in eternity. Sensitive to how Puritans would confuse the concrete and particular with the abstract and spiritual, Hawthorne often used allegory and symbolism in order to give shading to Puritans' apparently clear-cut, black and white certainties. He would link Puritan certainties about human nature with more natural human uncertainties and ambiguities.

His first published novel derived not from his antiquarian studies but from his experiences at Bowdoin. Published at his own expense, Fanshawe (1828) proved such a failure that Hawthorne halted its distribution. Despite this failure, he successfully placed contemporary and historical prose pieces in Christmas annuals, many in The Token, edited by Samuel Griswold Goodrich (1793—1860). His friend Bridge encouraged Hawthorne to publish a collection of this work and, unknown to Hawthorne, offered to defray its publisher, the American Stationers' Company, for any publishing losses. Twice-Told Tales came out in 1837 to much critical, though little financial, success. Hawthorne followed it with historical children's books, including Liberty Tree (1841), and an expanded edition of Twice-Told Tales (1842).

To earn a steady income, Hawthorne worked at the Boston Custom House (1839–1840) and invested money in and lived for a brief stint at the utopian Brook Farm in West Roxbury, an experiment that ultimately failed. In 1842, he married Sophia Peabody. They moved into a house owned by Emerson's family, the Old Manse, in Concord. There, Hawthorne became part of the important literary milieu that included Thoreau, Fuller, and Emerson.

His story collection Mosses from an Old Manse came out in 1846. It also offered little financial success. Hawthorne returned to Salem where he worked in the Salem Custom House (1846—1849), losing this position when the Democrats lost the next election. He used his experiences at the Custom House in the long introduction to The Scarlet Letter (1850), the novel that won Hawthorne longlasting fame. This work dramatizes sin, punishment, and redemption—and their effects not only on its heroine, Hester Prynne, but also on her partner in adultery, her cuckolded husband, and the surrounding Puritan community and government that confuses the internal and external self. Hester Prynne both embodies and transcends the scarlet letter "A" she is forced to wear on her breast as punishment for her adultery. Her lover, the Puritan minister Arthur Dimmesdale, underscores the hidden inner self by continuing his public ministerial activities even while bearing a comparable scarlet letter seared into his chest.

Hawthorne further explored the consequences of inherited sin and the mysteries (and contradictions) of the human spirit in The House of Seven Gables (1851) and The Blithedale Romance (1852). Just preceding these publications, Hawthorne became friends with Herman Melville and perhaps inspired him to turn from writing adventure tales to literary works treating of providence, human will, and all the unknowns in between.

Hawthorne's The Life of Franklin Pierce (1852) led recently-elected President Pierce to appoint Hawthorne as the American consul in Liverpool (1853—1847). His consequent travels in England and on the Continent resulted in The Marble Faun (1860) and a collection of essays, Our Old Home (1863). Set in Rome, The Marble Faun remained popular throughout the nineteenth-century, even being used as a guidebook by American travelers abroad.

In 1860, Hawthorne and his family returned to their home, The Wayside, in Concord. In "Chiefly About War Matters" (1862), he deplored the violence of the Civil War and its terrible transformative effects on America, both the North and South. Even then, he was still using his writing to explore the complexities of the human heart.

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3.2.4.1: 3.7.1-“Young Goodman Brown” (1835)

"Young Goodman Brown" by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Young Goodman Brown came forth at sunset into the street at Salem village; but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap while she called to Goodman Brown.

“Dearest heart,” whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, “prithee put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed to-night. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she’s afeard of herself sometimes. Pray tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year.”

“My love and my Faith,” replied young Goodman Brown, “of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done ‘twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?”

“Then God bless you!” said Faith, with the pink ribbons; “and may you find all well when you come back.”

“Amen!” cried Goodman Brown. “Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee.”

So they parted; and the young man pursued his way until, being about to turn the corner by the meeting-house, he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

“Poor little Faith!” thought he, for his heart smote him. “What a wretch am I to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought as she spoke there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done tonight. But no, no; ‘t would kill her to think it. Well, she’s a blessed angel on earth; and after this one night I’ll cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven.”

With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his present evil purpose. He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely as could be; and there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveller knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that with lonely footsteps he may yet be passing through an unseen multitude.

“There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree,” said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, “What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!”

His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and, looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He arose at Goodman Brown’s approach and walked onward side by side with him.

“You are late, Goodman Brown,” said he. “The clock of the Old South was striking as I came through Boston, and that is full fifteen minutes agone.”

“Faith kept me back a while,” replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected.

It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying. As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveller was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features. Still they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person was as simply clad as the younger, and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and who would not have felt abashed at the governor’s dinner table or in King William’s court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But the only thing about him that could be fixed upon as remarkable was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain light.

"Come, Goodman Brown," cried his fellow-traveller, "this is a dull pace for the beginning of a journey. Take my staff, if you are so soon weary."

"Friend," said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, "having kept covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples touching the matter thou wot'st of."

"Sayest thou so?" replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. "Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go; and if I convince thee not thou shalt turn back. We are but a little way in the forest yet."

"Too far! too far!" exclaimed the goodman, unconsciously resuming his walk. "My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs; and shall I be the first of the name of Brown that ever took this path and kept"

"Such company, thou wouldst say," observed the elder person, interpreting his pause. "Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that's no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem; and it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's war. They were my good friends, both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would fain be friends with you for their sake."

"If it be as thou sayest," replied Goodman Brown, "I marvel they never spoke of these matters; or, verily, I marvel not, seeing that the least rumor of the sort would have driven them from New England. We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness."

"Wickedness or not," said the traveller with the twisted staff, "I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen of divers towns make me their chairman; and a majority of the Great and General Court are firm support ers of my interest. The governor and I, too—But these are state secrets."

"Can this be so?" cried Goodman Brown, with a stare of amazement at his undisturbed companion. "Howbeit, I have nothing to do with the governor and council; they have their own ways, and are no rule for a simple husbandman like me. But, were I to go on with thee, how should I meet the eye of that good old man, our minister, at Salem village? Oh, his voice would make me tremble both Sabbath day and lecture day."

Thus far the elder traveller had listened with due gravity; but now burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently that his snake-like staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy.

"Ha! ha! ha!" shouted he again and again; then composing himself, "Well, go on, Goodman Brown, go on; but, prithee, don't kill me with laughing."

"Well, then, to end the matter at once," said Goodman Brown, considerably nettled, "there is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I'd rather break my own."

"Nay, if that be the case," answered the other, "e'en go thy ways, Goodman Brown. I would not for twenty old women like the one hobbling before us that Faith should come to any harm."

As he spoke he pointed his staff at a female figure on the path, in whom Goodman Brown recognized a very pious and exemplary dame, who had taught him his catechism in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser, jointly with the minister and Deacon Gookin.

"A marvel, truly, that Goody Cloyse should be so far in the wilderness at nightfall," said he. "But with your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Christian woman behin d. Being a stranger to you, she might ask whom I was consorting with and whither I was going."

"Be it so," said his fellow-traveller. "Betake you to the woods, and let me keep the path."

Accordingly the young man turned aside, but took care to watch his companion, who advanced softly along the road until he had come within a staff's length of the old dame. She, meanwhile, was making the best of her way, with singular speed for so

aged a woman, and mumbling some indistinct words—a prayer, doubtless—as she went. The traveller put forth his staff and touched her withered neck with what seemed the serpent's tail.

"The devil!" screamed the pious old lady.

"Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?" observed the traveller, confronting her and leaning on his writhing stick.

"Ah, forsooth, and is it your worship indeed?" cried the good dame. "Yea, truly is it, and in the very image of my old gossip, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that now is. But—would your worship believe it?—my broomstick hath strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unhanged witch, Goody Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinquefoil, and wolf's bane"

"Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born babe," said the shape of old Goodman Brown.

"Ah, your worship knows the recipe," cried the old lady, cackling aloud. "So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to foot it; for they tell me there is a nice young man to be taken into communion to-night. But now your good worship will lend me your arm, and we shall be there in a twinkling."

"That can hardly be," answered her friend. "I may not spare you my arm, Goody Cloyse; but here is my staff, if you will."

So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian magi. Of this fact, however, Goodman Brown could not take cognizance. He had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and, looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveller alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened.

"That old woman taught me my catechism," said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.

They continued to walk onward, while the elder traveller exhorted his companion to make good speed and persevere in the path, discoursing so aptly that his arguments seemed rather to spring up in the bosom of his auditor than to be suggested by himself. As they went, he plucked a branch of maple to serve for a walking stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them they became strangely withered and dried up as with a week's sunshine. Thus the pair proceeded, at a good free pace, until suddenly, in a gloomy hollow of the road, Goodman Brown sat himself down on the stump of a tree and refused to go any farther.

"Friend," said he, stubbornly, "my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand. What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to the devil when I thought she was going to heaven: is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?"

"You will think better of this by and by," said his acquaintance, composedly. "Sit here and rest yourself a while; and when you feel like moving again, there is my staff to help you along."

Without more words, he threw his companion the maple stick, and was as speedily out of sight as if he had vanished into the deepening gloom. The young man sat a few moments by the roadside, applauding himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet the minister in his morning walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his that very night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, but so purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! Amidst these pleasant and praiseworthy meditations, Goodman Brown heard the tramp of horses along the road, and deemed it advisable to conceal himself within the verge of the forest, conscious of the guilty purpose that had brought him thither, though now so happily turned from it.

On came the hoof tramps and the voices of the riders, two grave old voices, conversing soberly as they drew near. These mingled sounds appeared to pass along the road, within a few yards of the young man's hiding-place; but, owing doubtless to the depth of the gloom at that particular spot, neither the travellers nor their steeds were visible. Though their figures brushed the small boughs by the wayside, it could not be seen that they intercepted, even for a moment, the faint gleam from the strip of bright sky athwart which they must have passed. Goodman Brown alternately crouched and stood on tiptoe, pulling aside the branches and thrusting forth his head as far as he durst without discerning so much as a shadow. It vexed him the more, because he could have sworn, were such a thing possible, that he recognized the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, jogging along quietly, as they were wont to do, when bound to some ordination or ecclesiastical council. While yet within hearing, one of the riders stopped to pluck a switch.

"Of the two, reverend sir," said the voice like the deacon's, "I had rather miss an ordination dinner than to-night's meeting. They tell me that some of our community are to be here from Falmouth and beyond, and others from Connecticut and Rhode Island, besides several of the Indian powwows, who, after their fashion, know almost as much deviltry as the best of us. Moreover, there is a goodly young woman to be taken into communion."

"Mighty well, Deacon Gookin!" replied the solemn old tones of the minister. "Spur up, or we shall be late. Nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground."

The hoofs clattered again; and the voices, talking so strangely in the empty air, passed on through the forest, where no church had ever been gathered or solitary Christian prayed. Whither, then, could these holy men be journeying so deep into the heathen wilderness? Young Goodman Brown caught hold of a tree for support, being ready to sink down on the ground, faint and overburdened with the heavy sickness of his heart. He looked up to the sky, doubting whether there really was a heaven above him. Yet there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it.

"With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!" cried Goodman Brown.

While he still gazed upward into the deep arch of the firmament and had lifted his hands to pr ay, a cloud, though no wind was stirring, hurried across the zenith and hid the brightening stars. The blue sky was still visible, except directly overhead, where this black mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward. Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. Once the listener fancied that he could distinguish the accents of townspeople of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion table, and had seen others rioting at the tavern. The next moment, so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had heard aught but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind. Then came a stronger swell of those familiar tones, heard daily in the sunshine at Salem village, but never until now from a cloud of night There was one voice of a young woman, uttering lamentations, yet with an uncertain sorrow, and entreating for some favor, which, perhaps, it would grieve her to obtain; and all the unseen multitude, both saints and sinners, seemed to encourage her onward.

"Faith!" shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying, "Faith! Faith!" as if bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness.

The cry of grief, rage, and terror was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon.

"My Faith is gone!" cried he, after one stupefied moment. "There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, devil; for to thee is this world given."

And, maddened with despair, so that he laughed loud and long, did Goodman Brown grasp his staff and set forth again, at such a rate that he seemed to fly along the forest path rather than to walk or run. The road grew wilder and drearier and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds—the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveller, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn. But he was himself the chief horror of the scene, and shrank not from its other horrors.

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Goodman Brown when the wind laughed at him.

"Let us hear which will laugh loudest. Think not to frighten me with your deviltry. Come witch, come wizard, come Indian powwow, come devil himself, and here comes Goodman Brown. You may as well fear him as he fear you."

In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown. On he flew among the black pines, brandishing his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter as set all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man. Thus sped the demoniac on his course, until, quivering among the trees, he saw a red light before him, as when the felled trunks and branches of a clearing have been set on fire, and throw up their lurid blaze against the sky, at the hour of midnight. He paused, in a lull of the tempest that had driven him onward, and

heard the swell of what seemed a hymn, rolling solemnly from a distance with the weight of many voices. He knew the tune; it was a familiar one in the choir of the village meeting-house. The verse died heavily away, and was lengthened by a chorus, not of human voices, but of all the sounds of the benighted wilderness pealing in awful harmony together. Goodman Brown cried out, and his cry was lost to his own ear by its unison with the cry of the desert.

In the interval of silence he stole forward until the light glared full upon his eyes. At one extremity of an open space, hemmed in by the dark wall of the forest, arose a rock, bearing some rude, natural resemblance either to an alter or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops aflame, their stems untouched, like candles at an evening meeting. The mass of foliage that had overgrown the summit of the rock was all on fire, blazing high into the night and fitfully illuminating the whole field. Each pendent twig and leafy festoon was in a blaze. As the red light arose and fell, a numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of the darkness, peopling the heart of the solitary woods at once.

“A grave and dark-clad company,” quoth Goodman Brown.

In truth they were such. Among them, quivering to and fro between gloom and splendor, appeared faces that would be seen next day at the council board of the province, and others which, Sabbath after Sabbath, looked devoutly heavenward, and benignantly over the crowded pews, from the holiest pulpits in the land. Some affirm that the lady of the governor was there. At least there were high dames well known to her, and wives of honored husbands, and widows, a great multitude, and ancient maidens, all of excellent repute, and fair young girls, who trembled lest their mothers should espy them. Either the sudden gleams of light flashing over the obscure field bedazzled Goodman Brown, or he recognized a score of the church members of Salem village famous for their especial sanctity. Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable saint, his revered pastor. But, irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints. Scattered also among their pale-faced enemies were the Indian priests, or powwows, who had often scared their native forest with more hideous incantations than any known to English witchcraft.

“But where is Faith?” thought Goodman Brown; and, as hope came into his heart, he trembled.

Another verse of the hymn arose, a slow and mournful strain, such as the pious love, but joined to words which expressed all that our nature can conceive of sin, and darkly hinted at far more. Unfathomable to mere mortals is the lore of fiends. Verse after verse was sung; and still the chorus of the desert swelled between like the deepest tone of a mighty organ; and with the final peal of that dreadful anthem there came a sound, as if the roaring wind, the rushing streams, the howling beasts, and every other voice of the unconcerted wilderness were mingling and according with the voice of guilty man in homage to the prince of all. The four blazing pines threw up a loftier flame, and obscurely discovered shapes and visages of horror on the smoke wreaths above the impious assembly. At the same moment the fire on the rock shot redly forth and formed a glowing arch above its base, where now appeared a figure. With reverence be it spoken, the figure bore no slight similitude, both in garb and manner, to some grave divine of the New England churches.

“Bring forth the converts!” cried a voice that echoed through the field and rolled into the forest.

At the word, Goodman Brown stepped forth from the shadow of the trees and approached the congregation, with whom he felt a loathful brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart. He could have well-nigh sworn that the shape of his own dead father beckoned him to advance, looking downward from a smoke wreath, while a woman, with dim features of despair, threw out her hand to warn him back. Was it his mother? But he had no power to retreat one step, nor to resist, even in thought, when the minister and good old Deacon Gookin seized his arms and led him to the blazing rock. Thither came also the slender form of a veiled female, led between Goody Cloyse, that pious teacher of the catechism, and Martha Carrier, who had received the devil’s promise to be queen of hell. A rampant hag was she. And there stood the proselytes beneath the canopy of fire.

“Welcome, my children,” said the dark figure, “to the communion of your race. Ye have found thus young your nature and your destiny. My children, look behind you!”

They turned; and flashing forth, as it were, in a sheet of flame, the fiend worshippers were seen; the smile of welcome gleamed darkly on every visage.

“There,” resumed the sable form, “are all whom ye have reverenced from youth. Ye deemed them holier than yourselves, and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness and prayerful aspirations heavenward. Yet here are they all in my worshipping assembly. This night it shall be granted you to know their secret deeds: how hoary-bearded elders of the church have whispered wanton words to the young maids of their households; how many a woman, eager for widows’ weeds, has given her husband a drink at bedtime and let him sleep his last sleep in her bosom; how beardless youths have made haste to inherit their fathers’ wealth; and how fair damsels—blush not, sweet ones—have dug little graves in the garden, and bidden me, the sole guest to an infant’s funeral. By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin ye shall scent out all the places—whether in church, bedchamber, street, field, or forest—where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood spot. Far more than this. It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which inexhaustibly supplies more evil impulses than human power—than my power at its utmost can make manifest in deeds. And now, my children, look upon each other.”

They did so; and, by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched man beheld his Faith, and the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed altar.

“Lo, there ye stand, my children,” said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad with its despairing awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race. “Depending upon one another’s hearts, ye had still hoped that virtue were not all a dream. Now are ye undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome again, my children, to the communion of your race.”

“Welcome,” repeated the fiend worshippers, in one cry of despair and triumph.

And there they stood, the only pair, as it seemed, who were yet hesitating on the verge of wickedness in this dark world. A basin was hollowed, naturally, in the rock. Did it contain water, reddened by the lurid light? or was it blood? or, perchance, a liquid flame? Herein did the shape of evil dip his hand and prepare to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads, that they might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own. The husband cast one look at his pale wife, and Faith at him. What polluted wretches would the next glance show them to each other, shuddering alike at what they disclosed and what they saw!

“Faith! Faith!” cried the husband, “look up to heaven, and resist the wicked one.”

Whether Faith obeyed he knew not. Hardly had he spoken when he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it chill and damp; while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

The next morning young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard to get an appetite for breakfast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint as if to avoid an anathema. Old Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through the open window. “What God doth the wizard pray to?” quoth Goodman Brown. Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine at her own lattice, catechizing a little girl who had brought her a pint of morning’s milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child as from the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meeting-house, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at sight of him that she skipped along the street and almost kissed her husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.

Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?

Be it so if you will; but, alas! it was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown. A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate man did he become from the night of that fearful dream. On the Sabbath day, when the congregation were singing a holy psalm, he could not listen because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit with power and fervid eloquence, and, with his hand on the open Bible, of the sacred truths of our religion, and of saint-like lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery

unutterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the gray blasphemer and his hearers. Often, waking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down at prayer, he scowled and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and grandchildren, a goodly procession, besides neighbors not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom.

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3.2.5: Shirley Jackson (1916-1965)

The Shirley Jackson biography was written by Kelsey Rigney, a University of Delaware student.

Self-proclaimed “practicing amateur witch,” Shirley Jackson was born on December 14, 1916, in San Francisco, California. She felt like an outcast in her conservative, middle- class family. She was verbally abused by her mother, Geraldine, who belittled her for not being conventionally feminine and told her on more than one occasion that she was the result of a failed abortion. As a result, Jackson turned to writing, where she could express her thoughts.

When Jackson was 17, her family moved East. She started taking classes at the University of Rochester, but left after a year. She devoted her days to writing, averaging an impressive 1,000 words per day. In 1937, she entered Syracuse University and published her first story. While at Syracuse, she met her husband, Stanley Edgar Hyman, who was an aspiring literary critic. The couple moved to New York City after graduating. Jackson continued at her craft, writing every day.

In 1945, Hyman and Jackson moved to Vermont when Hyman took a teaching position at Bennington College. During this time, Jackson raised her four children. 1948 was a momentous year for Jackson: she published her first novel and her most recognized work, “The Lottery,” linked below. The short story was written in under two hours. She submitted it to The New Yorker, who were unanimous in their decision to print the story. Published on June 26, 1948, Jackson and The New Yorker received backlash almost immediately. Hundreds of people called, sent in letters, and even went as far as canceling their subscription. The public was outraged, disgusted, and confused by Jackson’s work. Many even believed that the story was a retelling of a real event. Some even asked where it took place so they could witness it themselves. Jackson refused to comment on what her purpose behind the story was, leaving it up to the reader’s interpretation. “The Lottery” was translated into many different languages and adapted for different types of media.

In 1949, the family moved to Connecticut so Hyman could work for The New Yorker. Jackson entertained many local artists and writers, including Ralph Ellison, who lived with them while he finished Invisible Man. In 1951, the family returned to Vermont. Being married to an unfaithful husband who controlled the finances (even though Jackson out-earned Hyman) affected Jackson’s health, which began to deteriorate at a young age. She was a heavy smoker and drinker and suffered from extreme anxiety and agoraphobia. Jackson began writing stories with the recurring theme of a lonely woman who was trying to escape her surroundings. Release came on August 8, 1965, when Jackson had a heart attack at the age of 48.

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3.2.5.1: "The Lottery"

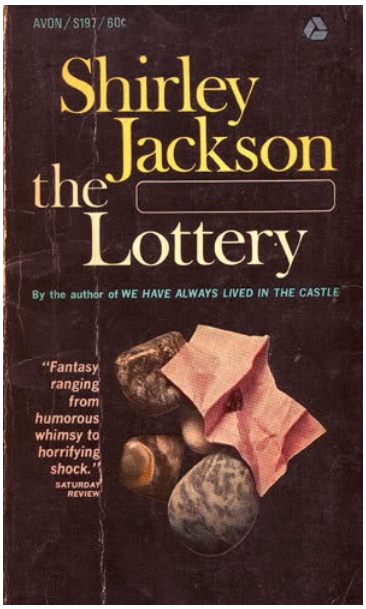


Figure 3.2.5.1.1: "The Lottery", S197 edition (License Unknown; Avon Books, via ISFDB)

First published on June 26, 1948 in *The New Yorker.*

You can read the text online via The New Yorker magazine.

Or you can enjoy the audio version.

Read her obituary from the New York Times.

Author website

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3.2.6: William Faulkner (1897-1962)

Written by Anita Turlington

Considered by many scholars to be the most distinguished writer of the 20th century, Faulkner was born in Oxford, Mississippi in 1897. He is mostly known for his novels and short stories, set in the fictional Yoknapatawpha County in Mississippi. Both his novels and short stories confront the complexities of Southern culture, shaped by its heritage of slavery, the loss of the American Civil War, and continued struggles with racism through Jim Crow laws and the atrocities committed by the Ku Klux Klan. He is also keenly aware of the close ties of Southerners to the land and the ways that the old agrarian values continued to shape ideas about class in the South well into the 20th century. Faulkner draws on family histories as well as aspects of Southern gothic ghost stories in his novels, and most of his works explore the complex and troubled mix of race and sexuality in the South. Most of his works were published in the 1920s and 30s, among which "A Rose for Emily" (1930) and "Barn Burning" (1939) are included here, but he was primarily known in America as a Southern writer until he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1942. His Nobel Prize acceptance speech is often reprinted for his optimistic declaration of the importance of art. After decrying the anxiety and pessimism that he felt characterized the literature of the period, Faulkner declared that humanity would prevail because of the strength of the human spirit: "The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by . . . reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail." Consider while reading:

1. In "A Rose for Emily," the story of Emily's life and death is told through the voice of the townspeople. How does this technique affect the story and what we know and don't know about Emily? How does it affect the timeline of the story, which is not told in chronological order?
2. What elements in the story can be considered "gothic"?
3. What is the significance of the "rose" in the title of the story? What connotations of the word are meaningful in the context of Emily's life?
4. In "Barn Burning," why is burning a barn such a serious crime?
5. How would you characterize Abner? Sarty? What is the primary problem between the two of them?
6. Why does Sarty ultimately betray his father at the end of the story?

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3.2.6.1: "A Rose for Emily"

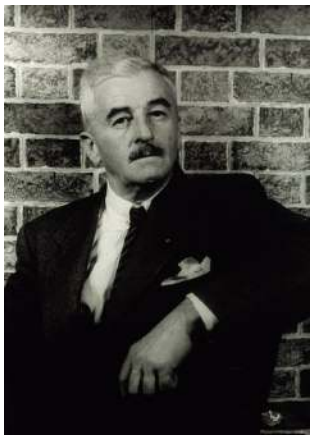


Figure 3.2.6.1.1: Portrait of William Faulkner. (CC0 1.0 (note); Carl Van Vechten, via Carl Van Vechten Collection)

Author's Bio:

William Faulkner is the most important writer of the Southern Renaissance. Flannery O'Connor once compared the overpowering force of his influence to a thundering train, remarking that "nobody wants his mule and wagon stalled on the same track the **Dixie Limited** is roaring down." Faulkner was born in Mississippi and raised on tales of his legendary great-great grandfather the "Old Colonel," who led a group of raiders in the civil war, built his own railroad, served in the state legislature, and was murdered by a political rival and prominent great-grandfather, the "Young Colonel," who was an assistant United States attorney and banker. Dropping out of high school, Faulkner left Mississippi to pursue his interests in drawing and poetry. During World War I, Faulkner pretended to be English and enlisted in the Royal Air Force, although he never saw combat. He picked up his poetic career after the war, ultimately publishing his first book in 1924, a collection of poetry called *The Marble Faun.* Turning his attention to fiction writing, Faulkner then wrote two timely novels. His first novel, *Soldier's Pay* (1926), explores the states of mind of those who did and did not fight in World War I. His second novel, *Mosquitos* (1927), exposes the triviality of the New Orleans art community of which Faulkner was briefly a part. However, it is with his third novel, *Sartoris* (1929), that Faulkner made what he called his "great discovery": the fictional possibilities contained within his home state of Mississippi. Returning to Oxford, MI, with his new wife, Faulkner moved into an antebellum mansion and began turning the tales he heard growing up about his hometown and surrounding area into one of the greatest inventions in American literary history: Yoknapatawpha County.

Faulkner eventually wrote thirteen novels set in Yoknapatawpha County. Beginning with his fourth novel, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), Faulkner began to incorporate modernist literary techniques such as stream-of-consciousness narration and non-linear plotting into his already lofty style. *The Sound and the Fury* describes the fall of the Compson family through four distinct psychological points of view, one of which is that of a young man who commits suicide, and another belonging to an illiterate who is severely mentally handicapped. *As I Lay Dying* (1930) describes the death and burial of a matriarch from the perspective of fifteen different characters in fifty-seven sections of often stream-of-consciousness prose. In *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), four narrators relate the same story yet also change it to arrive at four very different meanings. Modernist techniques such as these enabled Faulkner to show how the particulars of everyday life in the rural American South dramatize what he saw as the universal truths of humanity as a whole. While stylistically modernist, Faulkner's collective epic of Yoknapatawpha County ultimately explores not so much the future of narrative as the human condition itself as lensed through generation-spanning histories of great and low families. Two of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha stories are included here: "Barn Burning," an early story of the Snopes family about whom Faulkner would eventually write a trilogy of novels; and "A Rose for Emily," one of his many tales about the decline of formerly-great Southern families. These short stories are good representatives of both the range of Faulkner's style and his ambition as a storyteller. In deeply regional tales that are at once grotesque, tragic, brilliant, profound, loving, and hilarious, Faulkner leads us to the source, as he once put it, from which drama flows: "the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself."

Directions

Below, you will find William Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily”. While reading the story, keep these questions/ideas in mind:

- While reading this story, please pay close attention to the author's use of mystery or enigma.
- Do you see enigma being used?
- What kinds of enigma are being used?
- Does it enhance/detract from your enjoyment of the text?
- What about the story do you like?
- What about the story do you dislike?
- Why is the discovery of the single grey hair at the end of “A Rose for Emily” significant?
- Did Emily kill Homer? How? Why?
- Faulkner received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950. In his award speech, he lamented that many of America’s young authors had forgotten “the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing.” How does “A Rose for Emily” show the human heart in conflict with itself?

Essay Topic

As a reminder, your essay topic is: "Does the use of enigma enhance or detract from your enjoyment of a text?"

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Figure 3.2.6.1.2: "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner (CC BY-SA 4.0; Berke, Bleil, & Cofer, via University of North Georgia Press)

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SECTION OVERVIEW

3.3: Essays and Speeches

3.3.1: A Model of Christian Charity

3.3.2: Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

3.3.3: The Pilgrim's Progress

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3.3.1: A Model of Christian Charity



Figure **3.3.1.1**: John Winthrop. (CC0 1.0; Artist Unknown, via American Antiquarian Society and Wikimedia Commons)

"**A Model of Christian Charity**" is a 1630 sermon by Puritan layman and leader John Winthrop, who delivered on board the ship *Arbella* while en route to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It is also known as City upon a Hill and denotes the notion of American exceptionalism. Although known by reputation and preserved in contemporary manuscript copy held by the New-York Historical Society, the sermon was not published until the 1830s.

Note: this text retains most of the original spelling.

WRITTEN ON BOARD THE ARBELLA, ON THE ATLANTIC OCEAN.

By the Hon. John Winthrop Esqr. In his passage (with a great company of Religious people, of which Christian tribes he was the Brave Leader and famous Governor;) from the Island of Great Brittaine to New-England in the North America. Anno 1630.

Christian Charitie

A Modell hereof.

God Almighty in his most holy and wise providence, hath soe disposed of the condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich, some poore, some high and eminent in power and dignitie; others mean and in submission.

The Reason hereof.

1
Reason. First to hold conformity with the rest of his world, being delighted to show forth the glory of his wisdom in the variety and difference of the creatures, and the glory of his power in ordering all these differences for the preservation and good of the whole; and the glory of his greatness, that as it is the glory of princes to have many officers, soe this great king will have many stewards, counting himself more honoured in dispensing his gifts to man by man, than if he did it by his owne immediate hands.

2

Reason. Secondly that he might have the more occasion to manifest the work of his Spirit: first upon the wicked in moderating and restraining them: soe that the riche and mighty should not eate upp the poore nor the poore and dispised rise upp against and shake off theire yoake. Secondly, in the regenerate, in exerciseing his graces in them, as in the grate ones, theire love, mercy, gentleness, temperance, etc., in the poore and inferior sorte, theire faithe, patience, obedience, etc.

3

Reason. Thirdly, that every man might have need of others, and from hence they might be all knitt more nearly together in the Bonds of brotherly affection. From hence it appears plainly that noe man is made more honourable than another or more wealthy, etc., out of any particular and singular respect to himselfe, but for the glory of his creator and the common good of the creature, man. Therefore God still reserves the propperty of these gifts to himself as Ezek. 16. 17. he there calls wealthe, *his gold and his silver*, and Prov. 3. 9. he claims theire service as his due, *honor the Lord with thy riches, etc.*—All men being thus (by divine providence) ranked into two sorts, riche and poore; under the first are comprehended all such as are able to live comfortably by their own meanes duely improved; and all others are poore according to the former distribution. There are two rules whereby we are to walk one towards another: Justice and Mercy. These are always distinguished in their act and in their object, yet may they both concurre in the same subject in eache respect; as sometimes there may be an occasion of showing mercy to a rich man in some sudden danger or distresse, and alsoe doeing of meere justice to a poor man in regard of some perticular contract, etc. There is likewise a double Lawe by which wee are regulated in our conversation towardes another; in both the former respects, the lawe of nature and the lawe of grace, or the morrall lawe or the lawe of the gospell, to omitt the rule of justice as not propperly belonging to this purpose otherwise than it may fall into consideration in some perticular cases. By the first of these lawes man as he was enabled soe withall is commanded to love his neighbour as himself. Upon this ground stands all the precepts of the morrall lawe, which concernes our dealings with men. To apply this to the works of mercy; this lawe requires two things. First that every man afford his help to another in every want or distresse. Secondly, that hee performe this out of the same affection which makes him carefull of his owne goods, according to that of our Savior, (Math.) *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you*. This was practised by Abraham and Lot in entertaining the angells and the old man of Gibea. The lawe of Grace or of the Gospell hath some difference from the former; as in these respects, First the lawe of nature was given to man in the estate of innocency; this of the Gospell in the estate of regeneracy. Secondly, the former propounds one man to another, as the same flesh and image of God; this as a brother in Christ allsoe, and in the communion of the same Spirit, and soe teacheth to put a difference between christians and others. *Doe good to all, especially to the household of faith;* upon this ground the Israelites were to putt a difference betweene the brethren of such as were strangers though not of the Canaanites.

Thirdly. The Lawe of nature would give no rules for dealing with enemies, for all are to be considered as friends in the state of innocency, but the Gospell commands love to an enemy. Proofe. *If thine Enemy hunger, feed him; Love your Enemies, doe good to them that hate you.* Math. 5. 44.

This lawe of the Gospell propounds likewise a difference of seasons and occasions. There is a time when a christian must sell all and give to the poor, as they did in the Apostles times. There is a time also when christians (though they give not all yet) must give beyond their ability, as they of Macedonia, Cor. 2, 6. Likewise community of perills calls for extraordinary liberality, and soe doth community in some speciall service for the churche. Lastly, when there is no other means whereby our christian brother may be relieved in his distress, we must help him beyond our ability rather than tempt God in putting him upon help by miraculous or extraordinary meanes.

This duty of mercy is exercised in the kinds, Giving, lending and forgiving.—

Question. What rule shall a man observe in giving in respect of the measure?

Answer. If the time and occasion be ordinary he is to give out of his abundance. *Let him lay aside as God hath blessed him.* If the time and occasion be extraordinary, he must be ruled by them; taking this withall, that then a man cannot likely doe too much, especially if he may leave himselfe and his family under probable means of comfortable subsistence.

Objection. A man must lay upp for posterity, the fathers lay upp for posterity and children, and *he is worse than an infidell that provideth not for his owne.*

Answer. For the first, it is plaine that it being spoken by way of comparison, it must be meant of the ordinary and usuall course of fathers, and cannot extend to times and occasions extraordinary. For the other place the Apostle speaks against such as walked inordinately, and it is without question, that he is worse than an infidell who through his owne sloathe and voluptuousness shall neglect to provide for his family.—

Objection. The wise man's Eies are in his head, saith Solomon, *and foreseeth the plague;* therefore he must forecast and lay upp against evill times when hee or his may stand in need of all he can gather.

Answer. This very Argument Solomon useth to persuade to liberallity, Eccle.: *Cast thy bread upon the waters,* and *for thou knowest not what evill may come upon the land.* Luke 26. *Make you friends of the riches of iniquity;* you will ask how this shall be? very well. For first he that gives to the poore, lends to the lord and he will repay him even in this life an hundredfold to him or his.—*The righteous is ever mercifull and lendeth and his seed enjoyeth the blessing;* and besides wee know what advantage it will be to us in the day of account when many such witnesses shall stand forth for us to witnesse the improvement of our tallent. And I would know of those whoe pleade soe much for laying up for time to come, whether they holde that to be Gospell, Math. 16. 19. *Lay not upp for yourselves Treasures upon Earth* etc. If they acknowledge it, what extent will they allowe it? if only to those primitive times, let them consider the reason whereopon our Saviour groundes it. The first is that they are subject to the moathe, the rust, the theife. Secondly, They will steale away the hearte; *where the treasure is there will ye heart be allsoe.* The reasons are of like force at all times. Therefore the exhortation must be generall and perpetuall, withallwayes in respect of the love and affection to riches and in regard of the things themselves when any speciall service for the churche or perticular Distresse of our brother doe call for the use of them; otherwise it is not only lawfull but necessary to lay upp as Joseph did to have ready upon such occasions, as the Lord (whose stewards wee are of them) shall call for them from us; Christ gives us an Instance of the first, when hee sent his disciples for the Ass, and bidds them answer the owner thus, the Lord hath need of him: soe when the Tabernacle was to be built, he sends to his people to call for their silver and gold, etc.; and yeildes no other reason but that it was for his worke. When Elisha comes to the widow of Sareptah and findes her preparing to make ready her pittance for herselfe and family, he bids her first provide for him, he challengeth first God's parte which she must first give before shee must serve her owne family. All these teache us that the Lord lookes that when hee is pleased to call for his right in any thing wee have, our owne interest wee have, must stand aside till his turne be served. For the other, wee need looke noe further then to that of John 1.*he whoe hath this world's goodes and seeth his brother to neede and shutts upp his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him,* which comes punctually to this conclusion; if thy brother be in want and thou canst help him, thou needst not make doubt, what thou shouldst doe; if thou lovest God thou must help him.

Question. What rule must wee observe in lending?

Answer. Thou must observe whether thy brother hath present or probable or possible means of repaying thee, if there be none of those, thou must give him according to his necessity, rather then lend him as he requires; if he hath present means of repaying thee, thou art to look at him not as an act of mercy, but by way of Commerce, wherein thou arte to walk by the rule of justice; but if his means of repaying thee be only probable or possible, then is hee an object of thy mercy, thou must lend him, though there be danger of losing it, Deut. 15. 7. *If any of thy brethren be poore,* etc., *thou shalt lend him sufficient.* That men might not shift off this duty by the apparent hazzard, he tells them that though the yeare of Jubile were at hand (when he must remitt it, if hee were not able to repay it before) yet he must lend him and that chearefully. *It may not grieve thee to give him* (saith hee) and because some might object, why soe I should soone impoverishe myself and my family, he adds with all thy worke, etc; for our Saviour, Math. 5. 42.*From him that would borrow of thee turne not away.*

Question. What rule must we observe in forgiving?

Answer. Whether thou didst lend by way of commerce or in mercy, if he hath nothing to pay thee, must forgive, (except in cause where thou hast a surety or a lawfull pleadge) Deut. 15. 2. Every seaventh yeare the Creditor was to quitt that which he lent to his brother if he were poore as appears ver. 8.*Save when there shall be no poore with thee.* In all these and like cases, Christ was a generall rule, Math. 7. 22.*Whatsoever ye would that men should doe to you, doe yee the same to them allsoe.*

Question. What rule must wee observe and walke by in cause of community of perill?

Answer. The same as before, but with more enlargement towards others and lesse respect towards ourselves and our owne right. Hence it was that in the primitive Churche they sold all, had all things in common, neither did any man say that which he

possessed was his owne. Likewise in theire returne out of the captivity, because the worke was greate for the restoring of the church and the danger of enemies was common to all, Nehemiah directs the Jews to liberallity and readiness in remitting theire debts to theire brethren, and disposing liberally to such as wanted, and stand not upon their owne dues which they might have demanded of them. Thus did some of our Forefathers in times of persecution in England, and soe did many of the faithful of other churches, whereof wee keepe an honorable remembrance of them; and it is to be observed that both in Scriptures and latter stories of the churches that such as have beene most bountifull to the poore saintes, especially in those extraordinary times and occasions, God hath left them highly commended to posterity, as Zacheus, Cornelius, Dorcas, Bishop Hooper, the Cuttler of Brussells and divers others. Observe againe that the Scripture gives noe caution to restraine any from being over liberall this way; but all men to the liberall and cherefull practise hereof by the sweeter promises; as to instance one for many, Isaiah 58. 6.*Is not this the fast I have chosen to loose the bonds of wickedness, to take off the heavy burdens, to lett the oppressed go free and to breake every yoke, to deale thy bread to the hungry and to bring the poore that wander into thy house, when thou seest the naked to cover them; and then shall thy light brake forth as the morning and thy healthe shall growe speedily, thy righteousness shall goe before God, and the glory of the Lord shall embrace thee; then thou shall call and the Lord shall answer thee,* etc., Ch. 2. 10.*If thou power out thy soule to the hungry, then shall thy light spring out in darkness, and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfie thy soule in draught, and make falt thy bones, thou shalt be like a watered garden, and they shalt be of thee that shall build the old wast places,* etc. On the contrary most heavy cursses are layed upon such as are straightened towards the Lord and his people, Judg. 5.*Cursse the Meroshe because he came not to help the Lord. Hee whoe shutteth his eares from hearing the cry of the poore, he shall cry and shall not be heard;*Math. 25.*Goe ye curssed into everlasting fire,* etc. *I was hungry and ye fed mee not,*Cor. 2. 9. 16. He that soweth sparingly shall reape sparingly. Haveing already sett forth the practice of mercy according to the rule of God's lawe, it will be useful to lay open the groundes of it allsoe, being the other parte of the Commandment and that is the affection from which this exercise of mercy must arise, the Apostle tells us that this *love is the fullfilling of the lawe,* not that it is enough to love our brother and soe noe further; but in regard of the excellency of his partes giving any motion to the other as the soule to the body and the power it hath to sett all the faculties on worke in the outward exercise of this duty; as when wee bid one make the clocke strike, he doth not lay hand on the hammer, which is the immediate instrument of the sound, but setts on worke the first mouer or maine wheele; knoweing that will certainely produce the sound which he intends. Soe the way to drawe men to the workes of mercy, is not by force of Argument from the goodness or necessity of the worke; for though this cause may enforce, a rationall minde to some present act of mercy, as is frequent in experience, yet it cannot worke such a habit in a soule, as shall make it prompt upon all occasions to produce the same effect, but by frameing these affections of love in the hearte which will as naturally bring forthe the other, as any cause doth produce the effect.

The deffinition which the Scripture gives us of love is this. *Love is the bond of perfection,* first it is a bond or ligament. Secondly it makes the worke perfect. There is noe body but consists of partes and that which knitts these partes together, gives the body its perfection, because it makes eache parte soe contiguous to others as thereby they doe mutually participate with each other, both in strengthe and infirmity, in pleasure and paine. To instance in the most perfect of all bodies; Christ and his Church make one body; the severall partes of this body considered a parte before they were united, were as disproportionate and as much disordering as soe many contrary quallities or elements, but when Christ comes, and by his spirit and love knitts all these partes to himselfe and each to other, it is become the most perfect and best proportioned body in the world, Eph. 4. 16.*Christ, by whome all the body being knitt together by every joint for the furniture thereof, according to the effectuall power which is in the measure of every perfection of partes, a glorious body without spott or wrinkle;* the ligaments hereof being Christ, or his love, for Christ is love, 1 John 4. 8. Soe this definition is right. *Love is the bond of perfection.*

From hence we may frame these conclusions. 1. First of all, true Christians are of one body in Christ, 1 Cor. 12. 12. 13. 17.*Ye are the body of Christ and members of their parte.*All the partes of this body being thus united are made soe contiguous in a speciall relation as they must needes partake of each other's strength and infirmity; joy and sorrowe, weale and woe. 1 Cor. 12. 26.*If one member suffers, all suffer with it, if one be in honor, all rejoyce with it.* Secondly. The ligaments of this body which knitt together are love. Thirdly. Noe body can be perfect which wants its propar ligament. Fifthly. This sensibleness and sympathy of each other's conditions will necessarily infuse into each parte a native desire and endeavour, to strengthen, defend, preserve and comfort the other. To insist a little on this conclusion being the product of all the former, the truthe hereof will appeare both by precept and patterne. 1 John 3. 10.*Yee ought to lay doune your lives for the brethren.*Gal. 6. 2.*beare ye one another's burthen's and soe fulfill the lawe of Christ.* For patterns wee have that first of our Saviour whoe out of his good

will in obedience to his father, becomeing a parte of this body and being knitt with it in the bond of love, found such a native sensibleness of our infirmities and sorrowes as he willingly yielded himselfe to deathe to ease the infirmities of the rest of his body, and soe healed theire sorrowes. From the like sympathy of partes did the Apostles and many thousands of the Saintes lay doune theire lives for Christ. Againe the like wee may see in the members of this body among themselves. 1 Rom. 9. Paule could have been contented to have been separated from Christ, that the Jewes might not be cutt off from the body. It is very observable what hee professeth of his affectionate partaking with every member; *whoe is weake* (saith hee) *and I am not weake? whoe is offended and I burne not;* and againe, 2 Cor. 7. 13.*therefore wee are comforted because yee were comforted.* Of Epaphroditus he speaketh, Phil. 2. 30.*that he regarded not his owne life to do him service.* Soe Phebe and others are called *the servants of the churche.* Now it is apparent that they served not for wages, or by constrainte, but out of love. The like we shall finde in the histories of the churche, in all ages; the sweete sympathie of affections which was in the members of this body one towards another; theire chearfullness in serving and suffering together; how liberall they were without repineing, harbourers without grudgeing, and helpfull without reproaching; and all from hence, because they had fervent love amongst them; which onely makes the practise of mercy constant and easie.

The next consideration is how this love comes to be wrought. Adam in his first estate was a perfect modell of mankinde in all their generations, and in him this love was perfected in regard of the habit. But Adam, rent himselfe from his Creator, rent all his posterity also one from another; whence it comes that every man is borne with this principle in him to love and seeke himselfe only, and thus a man continueth till Christ comes and takes possession of the soule and infuseth another principle, love to God and our brother, and this latter having continuall supply from Christ, as the head and roote by which he is united, gets the predomining in the soule, soe by little and little expells the former. 1 John 4. 7.*love cometh of God and every one that loveth is borne of God*, soe that this love is the fruite of the new birthe, and none can have it but the new creature. Now when this quallity is thus formed in the soules of men, it workes like the Spirit upon the drie bones. Ezek. 39.*bone came to bone*. It gathers together the scattered bones, or perfect old man Adam, and knitts them into one body againe in Christ, whereby a man is become againe a living soule.

The third consideration is concerning the exercise of this love, which is twofold, inward or outward. The outward hath beene handled in the former preface of this discourse. From unfolding the other wee must take in our way that maxime of philosophy. *Simile simili gaudet*, or like will to like; for as of things which are turned with disaffection to eache other, the ground of it is from a dissimilitude or ariseing from the contrary or different nature of the things themselves; for the ground of love is an apprehension of some resemblance in the things loved to that which affects it. This is the cause why the Lord loves the creature, soe farre as it hathe any of his Image in it; he loves his elect because they are like himselfe, he beholds them in his beloved sonne. So a mother loves her childe, because shee throughly conceives a resemblance of herselfe in it. Thus it is betweene the members of Christ; eache discernes, by the worke of the Spirit, his oune Image and resemblance in another, and therefore cannot but love him as he loves himself. Now when the soule, which is of a sociable nature, findes anything like to itselfe, it is like Adam when Eve was brought to him. She must be one with himselfe. *This is flesh of my flesh* (saith he) *and bone of my bone*. Soe the soule conceives a greate delighte in it; therefore shee desires nearness and familiarity with it. Shee hath a greate propensity to doe it good and receives such content in it, as fearing the miscarriage of her beloved, she bestows it in the inmost closett of her heart. Shee will not endure that it shall want any good which shee can give it. If by occasion shee be withdrawne from the company of it, shee is still looking towardes the place where shee left her beloved. If shee heard it groane, shee is with it presently. If shee finde it sadd and disconsolate, shee sighes and moanes with it. Shee hath noe such joy as to see her beloved merry and thriving. If shee see it wronged, shee cannot hear it without passion. Shee setts noe boundes to her affections, nor hath any thought of reward. Shee findes recompense enough in the exercise of her love towardes it. Wee may see this acted to life in Jonathan and David. Jonathan a valiant man endued with the spirit of love, soe soone as he discovered the same spirit in David had presently his hearte knitt to him by this ligament of love; soe that it is said he loved him as his owne soule, he takes soe great pleasure in him, that hee stripps himselfe to adorne his beloved. His father's kingdome was not soe precious to him as his beloved David, David shall have it with all his hearte. Himself desires noe more but that hee may be neare to him to rejoyce in his good. Hee chooseth to converse with him in the wildernesse even to the hazzard of his oune life, rather than with the greate Courtiers in his father's Pallace. When hee sees danger towards him, hee spares neither rare paines nor perill to direct it. When injury was offered his beloved David, hee would not beare it, though from his oune father. And when they must parte for a season onely, they thought theire heartes would have broake for sorrowe, had not theire affections found vent by abundance of teares. Other instances might be brought to showe the nature of this

affection; as of Ruthe and Naomi, and many others; but this truthe is cleared enough. If any shall object that it is not possible that love shall be bred or upheld without hope of requitall, it is granted; but that is not our cause; for this love is alluayes under reward. It never gives, but it alluayes receives with advantage; First in regard that among the members of the same body, love and affection are reciprocall in a most equall and sweete kinde of commerce.

Secondly. In regard of the pleasure and content that the exercise of love carries with it, as wee may see in the naturall body. The mouth is at all the paines to receive and mince the foode which serves for the nourishment of all the other partes of the body; yet it hath noe cause to complaine; for first the other partes send backe, by severall passages, a due proportion of the same nourishment, in a better forme for the strengthening and comforting the mouthe. Secondly the laboure of the mouthe is accompanied with such pleasure and content as farre exceedes the paines it takes. Soe is it in all the labour of love among Christians. The partie loving, reapes love again, as was showed before, which the soule covetts more then all the wealthe in the world. Thirdly. Nothing yeildes more pleasure and content to the soule then when it findes that which it may love fervently; for to love and live beloved is the soule's paradise both here and in heaven. In the State of wedlock there be many comforts to learne out of the troubles of that Condition; but let such as have tryed the most, say if there be any sweetness in that Condition comparable to the exercise of mutuall love.

From the former Considerations arise these Conclusions.—1. First, This love among Christians is a reall thing, not imaginarie. Secondly. This love is as absolutely necessary to the being of the body of Christ, as the sinews and other ligaments of a naturall body are to the being of that body. Thirdly. This love is a divine, spirituall, nature; free, active, strong, couragious, permanent; undervaluing all things beneathe its propper object and of all the graces, this makes us nearer to resemble the virtues of our heavenly father. Fourthly, it rests in the love and wellfare of its beloved. For the full certain knowledge of those truthes concerning the nature, use, and excellency of this grace, that which the holy ghost hath left recorded,
1 Cor. 13, may give full satisfaction, which is needful for every true member of this lovely body of the Lord Jesus, to worke upon theire heartes by prayer, meditation continuall exercise at least of the speciall [influence] of this grace, till Christ be formed in them and they in him, all in eache other, knitt together by this bond of love.

It rests now to make some application of this discourse, by the present designe, which gave the occasion of writing of it. Herein are 4 things to he propounded;
first the persons, secondly the worke, thirdly the end, fourthly the meanes. 1. For *the persons*. Wee are a company professing ourselves fellow members of Christ, in which respect onely though wee were absent from each other many miles, and had our imployments as farre distant, yet wee ought to account ourselves knitt together by this bond of love, and, live in the exercise of it, if wee would have comforte of our being in Christ. This was notorious in the practise of the Christians in former times; as is testified of the Waldenses, from the mouth of one of the adversaries *Æneas Sylvius* "mutuo ament pere antequam norunt," they use to love any of theire owne religion even before they were acquainted with them. Secondly for the *worke* wee have in hand. It is by a mutuall consent, through a speciall overvaluing providence and a more than an ordinary approbation of the Churches of Christ, to seeke out a place of cohabitation and Consorteshipp under a due forme of Government both civill and ecclesiasticall. In such cases as this, the care of the publique must oversway all private respects, by which, not only conscience, but meare civill pollicy, dothe binde us. For it is a true rule that particular Estates cannot subsist in the ruin of the publique. Fourthly the *end* is to improve our lives to doe more service to the Lord; the comforte and encrease of the body of Christe, whereof we are members; that ourselves and posterity may be the better preserved from the common corruptions of this evill world, to serve the Lord and worke out our Salvation under the power and purity of his holy ordinances. Fourthly for the *meanes* whereby this must be effected. They are twofold, a conformity with the worke and end wee aime at. These wee see are extraordinary, therefore wee must not content ourselves with usuall ordinary meanes. Whatsoever wee did, or ought to have, done, when wee lived in England, the same must wee doe, and more allsoe, where wee goe. That which the most in theire churches mainetaine as truthe in profession onely, wee must bring into familiar and constant practise; as in this duty of love, wee must love brotherly without dissimulation, wee must love one another with a pure hearte fervently. Wee must beare one anothers burthens. We must not looke onely on our owne things, but allsoe on the things of our brethren. Neither must wee thinke that the Lord will beare with such faileings at our hands as he dothe from those among whome wee have lived; and that for these 3 Reasons; 1. In regard of the more neare bond of mariage between him and us, wherein hee hath taken us to be his, after a most strickt and peculiar manner, which will make them the more jealous of our love and obedience. Soe he tells the people of Israell, *you onely have I knowne of all the families of the Earthe, therefore will I punishe you for your Transgressions.* Secondly, because *the Lord will be sanctified in them that come neare him.* We know that there were many that

corrupted the service of the Lord; some setting upp altars before his owne; others offering both strange fire and strange sacrifices allsoe; yet there came noe fire from heaven, or other sudden judgement upon them, as did upon Nadab and Abihu, whoe yet wee may think did not sinne presumptuously. Thirdly when God gives a speciall commission he lookes to have it strictly observed in every article, When he gave Saule a commission to destroy Amaleck, Hee indented with him upon certain articles, and because hee failed in one of the least, and that upon a faire pretense, it lost him the kingdom, which should have beene his reward, if hee had observed his commission. Thus stands the cause betweene God and us. We are entered into Covenant with Him for this worke. Wee have taken out a commission. The Lord hath given us leave to drawe our own articles. Wee have professed to enterprise these and those accounts, upon these and those ends. Wee have hereupon besought Him of favour and blessing. Now if the Lord shall please to heare us, and bring us in peace to the place we desire, then hath hee ratified this covenant and sealed our Commission, and will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it; but if wee shall neglect the observation of these articles which are the ends wee have propounded, and, dissembling with our God, shall fall to embrace this present world and prosecute our carnall intentions, seeking greate things for ourselves and our posterity, the Lord will surely breake out in wrathe against us; be revenged of such a [sinful] people and make us knowe the price of the breache of such a covenant.

Now the onely way to avoyde this shipwracke, and to provide for our posterity, is to followe the counsell of Micah, *to doe justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God.* For this end, wee must be knitt together, in this worke, as one man. Wee must entertaine each other in brotherly affection. Wee must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of other's necessities. Wee must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekeness, gentlenes, patience and liberality. Wee must delight in eache other; make other's conditions our oune; rejoice together, mourne together, labour and suffer together, allwayes having before our eyes our commission and community in the worke, as members of the same body. Soe shall wee *keepe the unitie of the spirit in the bond of peace.* The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us, as his oune people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our wayes. Soe that wee shall see much more of his wisdome, power, goodness and truthe, than formerly wee have been acquainted with. Wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when hee shall make us a prayse and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, "the Lord make it likely that of *New England*." For wee must consider that wee shall be as a citty upon a hill. The eies of all people are uppon us. Soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our God in this worke wee have undertaken, and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. Wee shall open the mouthes of enemies to speake evill of the wayes of God, and all professors for God's sake. Wee shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause theire prayers to be turned into curses upon us till wee be consumed out of the good land whither wee are a goeing.

I shall shutt upp this discourse with that exhortation of Moses, that faithfull servant of the Lord, in his last farewell to Israell, Deut. 30.*Beloved there is now sett before us life and good, Death and evill, in that wee are commanded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another, to walke in his wayes and to keepe his Commandements and his Ordinance and his lawes*, and the articles of our Covenant with him, that *wee may live and be multiplied, and that the Lord our God may blesse us in the land whither wee goe to possesse it. But if our heartes shall turne away, soe that wee will not obey, but shall be seduced, and worshipp and serue other Gods*, our pleasure and proffitts, *and serue them;* it is propounded unto us this day, *wee shall surely perishe out of the good land whither wee passe over this vast sea to possesse it;*

Therefore lett us choose life

that wee, and our seede

may live, by obeyeing His

voyce and cleaveing to Him,

for Hee is our life and

our prosperity.

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3.3.2: Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

Introduction

"**Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God**" is a sermon written by British Colonial Christian theologian Jonathan Edwards, preached to his own congregation in Northampton, Massachusetts to unknown effect, and again on July 8, 1741 in Enfield, Connecticut. Like Edwards' other works, it combines vivid imagery of Hell with observations of the world and citations of the scripture. It is Edwards' most famous written work, is a fitting representation of his preaching style, and is widely studied by Christians and historians, providing a glimpse into the theology of the Great Awakening of c. 1730–1755.

This is a typical sermon of the Great Awakening, emphasizing the belief that Hell is a real place. Edwards hoped that the imagery and message of his sermon would awaken his audience to the horrific reality that awaited them should they continue without Christ. The underlying point is that God has given humanity a chance to rectify their sins. Edwards says that it is the will of God that keeps wicked men from the depths of Hell. This act of restraint has given humanity a chance to mend their ways and return to Christ.

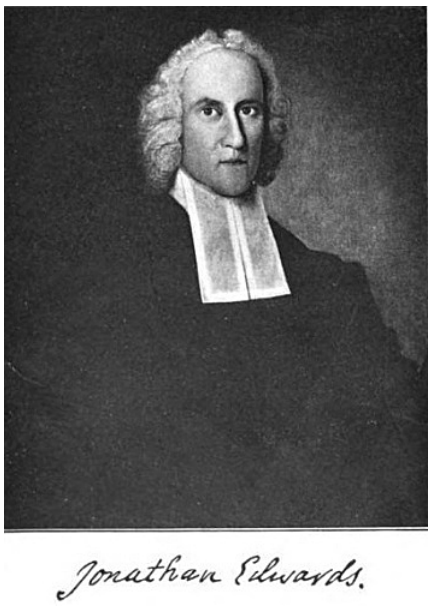


Figure 3.3.2.1: Jonathan Edwards. (CC0 1.0; Artist Unknown, via Project Gutenberg)

Sermon

Deuteronomy xxxii. 35.—Their foot shall slide in due time.

In this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked unbelieving Israelites, that were God's visible people, and lived under means of grace; and that notwithstanding all God's wonderful works that he had wrought towards that people, yet remained, as is expressed verse 28, void of counsel, having no understanding in them; and that, under all the cultivations of heaven, brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit; as in the two verses next preceding the text.

The expression that I have chosen for my text, *their foot shall slide in due time*, seems to imply the following things relating to the punishment and destruction that these wicked Israelites were exposed to.

1. That they were *always* exposed to destruction; as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction's coming upon them, being represented by their foot's sliding. The same is expressed, Psalm lxxiii. 18: "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction."

2. It implies that they were always exposed to *sudden*, unexpected destruction; as he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he can't foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at

once, without warning, which is also expressed in that Psalm lxxiii. 18, 19: “Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as *in a moment*!”

3. Another thing implied is, that they are liable to fall of *themselves*, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

4. That the reason why they are not fallen already, and don’t fall now, is only that God’s appointed time is not come. For it is said that when that due time, or appointed time comes, *their foot shall slide*. Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined by their own weight. God won’t hold them up in these slippery places any longer, but will let them go; and then, at that very instant, they shall fall to destruction; as he that stands in such slippery declining ground on the edge of a pit that he can’t stand alone, when he is let go he immediately falls and is lost.

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this,

> *There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God.*

By the mere pleasure of God, I mean his sovereign pleasure, his arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty, any more than if nothing else but God’s mere will had in the least degree or in any respect whatsoever any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment.

The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations.

1. There is no want of *power* in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. Men’s hands can’t be strong when God rises up: the strongest have no power to resist him, nor can any deliver out of his hands.

He is not only able to cast wicked men into hell, but he can most easily do it. Sometimes an earthly prince meets with a great deal of difficulty to subdue a rebel that has found means to fortify himself, and has made himself strong by the number of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress that is any defence against the power of God. Though hand join in hand, and vast multitudes of God’s enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in pieces: they are as great heaps of light chaff before the whirlwind; or large quantities of dry stubble before devouring flames. We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth; so ’tis easy for us to cut or singe a slender thread that any thing hangs by; thus easy is it for God, when he pleases, to cast his enemies down to hell. What are we, that we should think to stand before him, at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down!

2. They *deserve* to be cast into hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God’s using his power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings forth such grapes of Sodom, “Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?” Luke xiii. 7. The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and ’tis nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God’s mere will, that holds it back.

3. They are *already* under a sentence of condemnation to hell. They don’t only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to hell: John iii. 18, “He that believeth not is condemned already.” So that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell; that is his place; from thence he is: John viii. 23, “Ye are from beneath:” and thither he is bound; ’tis the place that justice, and God’s word, and the sentence of his unchangeable law, assigns to him.

They are now the objects of that very *same* anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell: and the reason why they don’t go down to hell at each moment is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as angry as he is with many of those miserable creatures that he is now tormenting in hell, and do there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth, yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, that, it may be, are at ease and quiet, than he is with many of those that are now in the flames of hell.

So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and don’t resent it, that he don’t let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such a one as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them; their damnation don’t slumber; the pit is prepared; the fire is made ready; the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them;

the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened her mouth under them.

5. The *devil* stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession, and under his dominion. The Scripture represents them as his *goods*, Luke xi. 21. The devils watch them; they are ever by them, at their right hand; they stand waiting for them, like greedy hungry lions that see their prey, and expect to have it, but are for the present kept back; if God should withdraw his hand by which they are restrained, they would in one moment fly upon their poor souls. The old serpent is gaping for them; hell opens its mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost.

6. There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish *principles* reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell-fire, if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid in[Pg 82] the very nature of carnal men a foundation for the torments of hell: there are those corrupt principles, in reigning power in them, and in full possession of them, that are seeds of hell-fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same corruptions, the same enmity does in the heart of damned souls, and would beget the same torments in 'em as they do in them. The souls of the wicked are in Scripture compared to the troubled sea, Isaiah lvii. 20. For the present God restrains their wickedness by his mighty power, as he does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;" but if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all afore it. Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul; it is destructive in its nature; and if God should leave it without restraint, there would need nothing else to make the soul perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is a thing that is immoderate and boundless in its fury; and while wicked men live here, it is like fire pent up by God's restraints, whenas if it were let loose, it would set on fire the course of nature; and as the heart is now a sink of sin, so, if sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven, or a furnace of fire and brimstone.

7. It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no *visible means of death* at hand. 'Tis no security to a natural man, that he is now in health, and that he don't see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident, and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages shows that this is no evidence that a man is not on the very brink of eternity, and that the next step won't be into another world. The unseen, unthought of ways and means of persons' going suddenly out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they won't bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noonday; the sharpest sight can't discern them. God has so many different, unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending 'em to hell, that there is nothing to make it appear that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment. All the means that there are of sinners' going out of the world are so in God's hands, and so absolutely subject to his power and determination, that it don't depend at all less on the mere will of God, whether sinners shall at any moment go to hell, than if means were never made use of, or at all concerned in the case.

8. Natural men's *prudence* and *care* to preserve their own *lives*, or the care of others to preserve them, don't secure 'em a moment. This, divine providence and universal experience does also bear testimony to. There is this clear evidence that men's own wisdom is no security to them from death; that if it were otherwise we should see some difference between the wise and politic men of the world and others, with regard to their liableness to early and unexpected death; but how is it in fact? Eccles. ii. 16, "How dieth the wise man? As the fool."

9. All wicked men's *pains* and *contrivance* they use to escape *hell*, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, don't secure 'em from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security, he flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do; every one lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters [Pg 84]himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes won't fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the bigger part of men that have died heretofore are gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done: he don't intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take care that shall be effectual, and to order matters so for himself as not to fail.

But the foolish children of men do miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in their confidence in their own strength and wisdom; they trust to nothing but a shadow. The bigger part of those that heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to hell; and it was not because they were not as wise as those that are now alive; it was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. If it were so that we could come to speak with them, and could inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected, when alive, and when they used to hear about hell, ever to be subjects of that misery, we, doubtless, should hear one and another reply, "No, I never intended to come here: I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind; I thought I should contrive well for myself: I thought my scheme good: I intended to take effectual care; but it came upon me unexpected; I did not look for it at that time, and in that manner; it came as a thief: death outwitted me: God's wrath was too quick for me. O my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter; and when I was saying peace and safety, then sudden destruction came upon me."

10. God has laid himself under *no obligation*, by any promise, to keep any natural man out of hell one moment. God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given[Pg 85] in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the covenant of grace that are not the children of the covenant, and that do not believe in any of the promises of the covenant, and have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant.

So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, 'tis plain and manifest, that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.

So that thus it is, that natural men are held in the hand of God over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold 'em up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out; and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

Application

The use may be of *awakening* to unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. *There* is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of. There is nothing between you and hell but the air; 'tis only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but don't see the hand of God in it, but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not that so is the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun don't willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth don't willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air don't willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with, and don't willingly subserve to any other purpose, and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to

their nature and end. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who hath subjected it in hope. There are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. 'Tis true, that judgment against your evil work has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean time is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are continually rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the floodgate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

Thus are all you that never passed under a great change of heart by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin to a state of new and before altogether unexperienced light and life, (however you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the house of God, and may be strict in it), you are thus in the hands of an angry God; 'tis nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction.

However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you see that it was so with them; for destruction came suddenly upon most of them; when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, Peace and safety: now they see, that those things that they depended on for peace and safety were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes, as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince: and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. 'Tis ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world after you closed your eyes to sleep; and there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you han't gone to hell since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you don't this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in. 'Tis a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

And consider here more particularly several things concerning that wrath that you are in such danger of.

1. *Whose* wrath it is. It is the wrath of the infinite God. If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute

monarchs, that have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will. Prov. xx. 2, “The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.” The subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince is liable to suffer the most extreme torments that human art can invent, or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly potentates, in their greatest majesty and strength, and when clothed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust, in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth: it is but little that they can do when most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth before God are as grasshoppers; they are nothing, and less than nothing: both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings is as much more terrible than theirs, as his majesty is greater. Luke xii. 4, 5, “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”

2. ’Tis the *fierceness* of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the *fury* of God; as in Isaiah lix. 18: “According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries.” So Isaiah lxvi. 15, “For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.” And so in many other places. So we read of God’s *fierceness*, Rev. xix. 15. There we read of “the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” The words are exceeding terrible: if it had only been said, “the wrath of God,” the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: but ’tis not only said so, but “the fierceness and wrath of God.” The fury of God! The fierceness of Jehovah! Oh, how dreadful must that be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is not only said so, but “the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh! then, what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worm that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong! And whose heart endure! To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger implies that he will inflict wrath without any pity. When God beholds the ineffable extremity of your case, and sees your torment so vastly disproportioned to your strength, and sees how your poor soul is crushed, and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom; he will have no compassion upon you, he will not forbear the executions of his wrath, or in the least lighten his hand; there shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God then at all stay his rough wind; he will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense, than only that you should not suffer beyond what strict justice requires: nothing shall be withheld because it is so hard for you to bear. Ezek. viii. 18, “Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.” Now God stands ready to pity you; this is a day of mercy; you may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy: but when once the day of mercy is past, your most lamentable and dolorous cries and shrieks will be in vain; you will be wholly lost and thrown away of God, as to any regard to your welfare; God will have no other use to put you to, but only to suffer misery; you shall be continued in being to no other end; for you will be a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction; and there will be no other use of this vessel, but only to be filled full of wrath: God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to him, that ’tis said he will only “laugh and mock,” Prov. i. 25, 26, &c.

How awful are those words, Isaiah lxiii. 3, which are the words of the great God: “I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.” ’Tis perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things, viz., contempt and hatred and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favor, that instead of that he’ll only tread you under foot: and though he will know that you can’t bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet he won’t regard that, but he will crush you under his feet without mercy; he’ll crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost contempt; no place shall be thought fit for you but under his feet, to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

3. The misery you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that he might *show* what that *wrath* of *Jehovah* is. God hath had it on his heart to show to angels and men, both how excellent his love is, and also how terrible his wrath is.

Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that provoke 'em. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and haughty monarch of the Chaldean empire, was willing to show his wrath when enraged with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego; and accordingly gave order that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before; doubtless, it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that human art could raise it; but the great God is also willing to show his wrath, and magnify his awful Majesty and mighty power in the extreme sufferings of his enemies. Rom. ix. 22, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" And seeing this is his design, and what he has determined, to show how terrible the unmixed, unrestrained wrath, the fury and fierceness of Jehovah is, he will do it to effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be dreadful with a witness. When the great and angry God hath risen up and executed his awful vengeance on the poor sinner, and the wretch is actually suffering the infinite weight and power of his indignation, then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it. Isa. xxxiii. 12, 13, 14, "And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire. Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites," etc.

Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted state, if you continue in it; the infinite might, and majesty, and terribleness, of the Omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you in the ineffable strength of your torments. You shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and when you shall be in this state of suffering, the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on the awful spectacle, that they may see what the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty is; and when they have seen it, they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty. Isa. lxvi. 23, 24, "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

4. It is *everlasting* wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity: there will be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all; you will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty, merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: for "who knows the power of God's anger?"

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh, that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing it would be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell! And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, before this year is out. And it would be no wonder[Pg 95] if some persons that now sit here in some seats of this meeting-house in health, and quiet and secure, should be there before to-morrow morning. Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition, that shall keep out of hell longest, will be there in a little time! Your damnation don't slumber; it will come swiftly and, in all probability, very suddenly upon many of you. You have reason to wonder that you are not already in hell. 'Tis doubtless the case of some that heretofore you have seen and known, that never deserved hell more than you and that heretofore appeared as likely to have been now alive as you. Their case is past all hope; they are crying in extreme misery and perfect despair. But here you are in the land of the living and in the house of God, and have an opportunity to obtain salvation. What would not those poor, damned, hopeless souls give for one day's such opportunity as you now enjoy!

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has flung the door of mercy wide open, and stands in the door calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him and pressing into the Kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were very likely in the same miserable condition that you are in are in now a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him that has loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest for one moment in such a condition? Are not your souls as precious as the souls of the people at Suffield,[15] where they are flocking from day to day to Christ?

[Pg 96]Are there not many here that have lived long in the world that are not to this day born again, and so are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and have done nothing ever since they have lived but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? Oh, sirs, your case in an especial manner is extremely dangerous; your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great. Don't you see how generally persons of your years are passed over and left in the present remarkable and wonderful dispensation of God's mercy? You had need to consider yourselves and wake thoroughly out of sleep; you cannot bear the fierceness and the wrath of the infinite God.

And you that are young men and young women, will you neglect this precious season that you now enjoy, when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities and flocking to Christ? You especially have now an extraordinary opportunity; but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as it is with those persons that spent away all the precious days of youth in sin and are now come to such a dreadful pass in blindness and hardness.

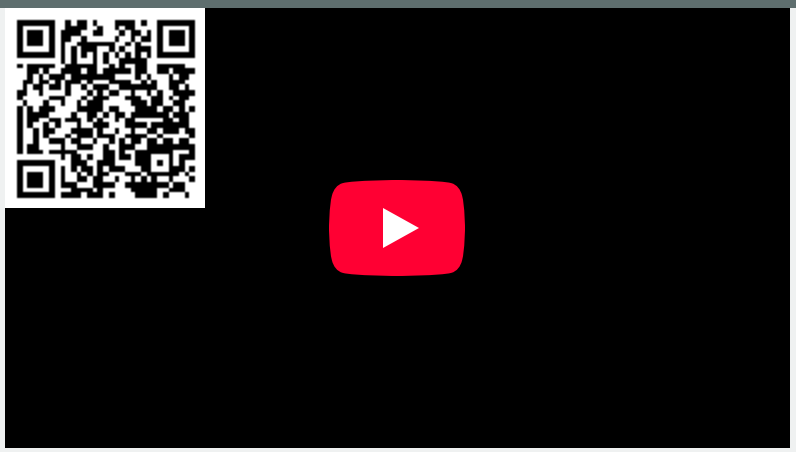
And you children that are unconverted, don't you know that you are going down to hell to bear the dreadful wrath of that God that is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be the children of the devil, when so many other children in the land are converted and are become the holy and happy children of the King of kings?

And let every one that is yet out of Christ and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women or middle-aged or young people or little children, now hearken to the loud calls of God's word and providence. This acceptable year of the Lord that is a day of such great favor to some will doubtless be a day of as remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts harden and their guilt increases apace at such a day as this, if they neglect their souls. And never was there so great danger of such persons being given up to hardness of heart and[Pg 97] blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his elect in all parts of the land; and probably the bigger part of adult persons that ever shall be saved will be brought in now in a little time, and that it will be as it was on that great outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jews in the Apostles' days, the election will obtain and the rest will be blinded. If this should be the case with you, you will eternally curse this day, and will curse the day that ever you was born to see such a season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, and will wish that you had died and gone to hell before you had seen it. Now undoubtedly it is as it was in the days of John the Baptist, the axe is in an extraordinary manner laid at the root of the trees, that every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit may be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Therefore let every one that is out of Christ now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom. "*Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest ye be consumed.*"

Audio Recording

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God - Classic Audio Sermon by Puritan Theologian Jonathan Edwards



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3.3.3: The Pilgrim’s Progress



Figure 3.3.3.1: Image of John Bunyan. (CC0 1.0; via Wikimedia Commons)

The Pilgrim’s Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come; Delivered under the Similitude of a Dream is a Christian allegory written by John Bunyan(1628–1688) and published in February, 1678. It is regarded as one of the most significant works of religious English literature, has been translated into more than 200 languages, and has never been out of print. Bunyan began his work while in the Bedfordshire county prison for violations of the Conventicle Act, which prohibited the holding of religious services outside the auspices of the established Church of England. Early Bunyan scholars like John Brown believed *The Pilgrim’s Progress* was begun in Bunyan’s second, shorter imprisonment for six months in 1675, but more recent scholars like Roger Sharrock believe that it was begun during Bunyan’s initial, more lengthy imprisonment from 1660–72 right after he had written his spiritual autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.

The English text comprises 108,260 words and is divided into two parts, each reading as a continuous narrative with no chapter divisions. The first part was completed in 1677 and entered into the stationers’ register on 22 December 1677. It was licensed and entered in the “Term Catalogue” on 18 February 1678, which is looked upon as the date of first publication. After the first edition of the first part in 1678, an expanded edition, with additions written after Bunyan was freed, appeared in 1679. The Second Part appeared in 1684. There were eleven editions of the first part in John Bunyan’s lifetime, published in successive years from 1678 to 1685 and in 1688, and there were two editions of the second part, published in 1684 and 1686.

Read *The Pilgrim’s Progress*

Alternatively, audio files of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* are available here.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Poetry

4.1: The Art of Poetry

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SECTION OVERVIEW

4.1: The Art of Poetry

4.1.1: Introduction

4.1.2: Poetic Forms and Language

4.1.3: Elements of Poetry

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4.1.1: Introduction

The Art of Poetry

A key skill to develop in reading literature is the ability to perform what is known as a “close reading.” Beyond reading for basic understanding of the main ideas, “close reading” demands attention to detail and an appreciation for how a piece of writing is constructed. Upon completing a “close reading,” you will be able to answer not only the more obvious “what” questions

“What was that poem about?”

- “What does it mean?”

You also will be able to answer the more complex “how” questions …

- “How did the writer use language in a unique or challenging way?”
- “How does the reader respond to the writer’s unique use of language?”

and more challenging “why” questions, such as

- “Why did the writer use that metaphor?” and
- “Why did the author risk confusing the reader with ambiguous language?”

An effective way to practice close reading is to focus our attention on the precise use of language and the structure of a poem. Perhaps you may feel less experienced or less confident in reading poetry in comparison to reading a short story. (Or perhaps you are very experienced and can help guide your classmates.) Wherever you are on the spectrum of novice to expert, learning to actively read poetry will ensure that whatever genre we read we will have the skill set to notice detail, appreciate the use of language, and to discern subtlety in literary craftsmanship.

This chapter contains a variety of types of poetry from different time periods and different literary traditions. The selections are not meant to be inclusive of every tradition of poetry; rather, these poems offer good opportunities to practice active reading and complex reasoning skills and to build a strong foundation in “close reading” that will serve us well for the duration of the course.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this chapter, the student will be able to:

- Recognize literary elements and formal structures of poetry
- Describe themes and major ideas of selected poems
- Interpret selected poems for meaning and significance
- Analyze poetry in writing
- Develop a full-length analysis of a specific poem [1]

Optional Further Reading

- Hirsch, Edward. *How to Read a Poem: And Fall in Love with Poetry* . New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1999.
- Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* . London; New York: Routledge, 1982.

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4.1.2: Poetic Forms and Language

What does poetry do?

In the introductory module, it was suggested that all literature is basically metaphorical in nature. We also explored the important role that **metaphors** play in everyday life — in short, we use metaphors each day to make comparisons between the concrete world that we inhabit and the abstract world of ideas and human experience. In this module, we will explore the art of poetry and, once again, we will develop an understanding of how metaphors, in addition to other types of literary and figurative language, are used in poems to give shape and meaning to a wide range of human experiences.

In his book *How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love with Poetry* , Edward Hirsch suggests that "Poetry is made of metaphor. It is a collision, a collusion, a compression of two unlike things: A is B." Therefore, reading poetry helps to broaden our understanding of power of language to provide more than just literal meaning — the sort of meaning that can be obtained from a dictionary. Instead, as Hirsch argues, "Poetry evokes a language that moves beyond the literal and, consequently, a mode of thinking that moves beyond the literal." Because poets use language in unique and often challenging ways, reading poetry, like reading fiction, is an ideal way of developing complex reasoning and proficiency in active reading.

Poetry invites the reader to actively participate in the process of making meaning through language. The basic structure of metaphors consists of drawing comparisons between unlike things, and when we strive to understand, or infer, the connections that may exist between these unlike things, we begin to build our ability to think critically and creatively about language. From a literary standpoint, poetry is an essentially oral art form. It is meant to be read aloud. When we participate in constructing meaning by reading actively and making inferences, we participate in a kind of performance that is very similar to the dynamic between a singer and her audience. The poet will often even rely on the reader to fill-in the gaps or spaces in a poem with our own thoughts and emotions. The very best poetry is, therefore, deeply participatory.

Metaphors are essential to this participatory dynamic. Oftentimes, an entire poem can function as a kind of metaphor that attempts to make an abstract, or less clearly defined, concept more accessible for the reader. Poems do this by employing vivid **imagery** and **similes** (the comparison of two unlike things using *like* or *as*). For example, in his poem "Dulce et Decorum est," the British poet Wilfred Owen challenges a romantic understanding of the "glories" of war by offering the reader a vivid portrayal of the suffering that he witnessed on the battlefield during World War I. In this poem, Owen contradicts the ancient, patriotic motto, "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country," by portraying war as a kind of twisted nightmare.

Read and listen to the poem, and pay particular attention to how the poem uses imagery and similes to make the experience of war accessible to readers.

"Dulce et Decorum est"

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.
Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime…
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori .

Listen to Dulce et Decorum read by Ben Smith.

Dulce et Decorum Est by Wilfred Owen (read by Ben W Smith)



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Poetic Forms

The earliest recorded poems are part of **oral tradition** and often are musical. In his book *Orality and Literacy* , Walter Ong suggests that "language is nested in sound," and scholars who study the origin of language have theorized that music and language developed alongside of one another in our evolutionary past. Reflecting on the relationship between poetry and African American musical traditions, such as the blues and work songs, Edward Hirsh suggests that "all these forms model a particular kind of participatory relationship between the poet and the community." Many modern poetic forms are also clearly influenced by musical forms. For example, Langston Hughes's "The Weary Blues" borrows heavily from jazz and blues rhythms, yet does not follow classical metrical patterns. Like songs, poems are meant to be performed, recited, and perhaps in their own, sung.

Most traditional forms of poetry have their origins in forms of popular music. Longer poetic artifacts such as the great **epics** of the Greeks (Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*), the Romans (Virgil's *Aeneid*), and from India (the *Vedas* , written in Sanskrit) are well-known. Ancient Babylonian hymns, like the **Enûma Eliš** , written in cuneiform, are widely regarded as the earliest known poems; likewise, the Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh* is one of the earliest popular epic. Many scholars have observed the similarities the Babylonia flood myth in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the biblical story of the flood in the book of Genesis.

An **epic poem** is a lengthy narrative poem (a poem that tells a story, often an adventure) written in verse. Similar to music, in poetry, **verse** refers to a piece of writing composed in meter or rhyme. The word verse may appear in some contexts as a synonym for poetry of any meter (or non-meter); this is not precise usage of the word and usually aims to distinguish the form of literature from **prose** , which is structured without the same attention to the meter and length of **line** in poetry.

One of the earliest known works of English poetry is *Caedmon's Hymn* , composed sometime between 658 and 680 A.D. According to accounts by an English monk and scholar known as St. Bede or the Venerable Bede, the poem was originally composed by an illiterate herdsman who had miraculously acquired the gift of poetry and song from an angel. Its lyrics are composed in a form of early English that originated in a form of ancient German.

Listen to a recording of the poem in West Saxon, a dialect of Old English.

Cædmon's Hymn (Spoken in Old English)



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Cædmon's Hymn

Nú scylun hergan hefaenrîcaes Uard,
metudæs maecti end his módgidanc,
uerc Uuldurfadur, suéh é uundra gihwaes,
éci dryctin ór ástelidæ
hé ærist scōp aelda barnum
heben til hrófe,& háleg scepen.
Thá middungeard moncynnæs Uard,
eci Dryctin, æfter tíadæ
firum foldu, Fréa allmectig.

A **ballad** is another type of narrative poem that contains repeated phrasing and is intended to be sung. Ballads often relate the deeds, and sometimes suffering, of a protagonist whose life serves as a metaphor for the day-to-day trials of the average person. (An example of a ballad in this module is "The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver" by Edna St. Vincent Millay). Ballads are typically arranged into **quatrains** , four-line stanzas, with usually only the second and fourth lines rhyming.

In contrast to narrative poetry (poetry that tells a story), **lyric** poetry focuses primarily on conveying emotion through melody and imagery. **Sonnets** fall under the category of lyric poetry; a sonnet is a poem consisting of fourteen lines with a metric pattern and variable rhyme scheme. Elegies (lamentations), haiku, and **odes** (praise poems) are other examples of lyric poetry. (Examples of lyric verse in our course readings include John Milton's Sonnet 19, Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," and Wilfred Owen's "Dulce et Decorum est").

Blank verse is the term for poetry that *does* have a set metrical pattern, yet does *not* rhyme. John Milton's epic poem, *Paradise Lost* , is a masterful work of blank verse poetry that was highly influential as a work of English literature. However, many modern and contemporary poets write blank verse poetry, such as Robert Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man" and Amy Beeder's "Dear Drought," **Free verse** , which did not develop until the 19 th century, follows no metrical pattern or rhyme scheme; much of modern poetry is free verse, although many modern poets who usually write in free verse will produce patterned verse on occasion. (Examples of free verse in this module include H.D.'s "Oread" and William Carlos Williams's "Blizzard.") [(1)]

Poetic language

All writing makes use of **figurative language** . Yet, the language of poetry focuses specifically on discovering meaning based on the way that certain combinations of words sound, as well as the way that groups of words appear on the page. Poetic language is fundamentally figurative; figurative language is language used in a nonliteral manner, as in words or phrases that convey meaning beyond or in addition to the dictionary definition of those words. For example, the statement “The town judge is intelligent” is a direct description. However, the sentence “The town judge holds the keys to the kingdom of knowledge” offers a similar description yet with added layers of creative images and associative meaning that connects with other symbols of power (keys, kingdom); it also uses **alliteration** (repetition of consonants) to create **rhythm** and **pattern** .

Below are the types of figurative language and a full description of common forms of poetic language.

Common Type of Figurative Language:

Apostrophe — A direct address to a person or object not literally listening; ex: “Oh, Great Mother Nature how you test our spirit…”

Allusion — Reference to a well-known object, character, or event, sometimes from another literary work.

Hyperbole — Exaggeration used for emphasis.

Imagery — Words and phrases that appeal to the senses, particularly sight.

Metaphor — A direct comparison of two seemingly dissimilar items (does not use the words *like* or *as*).

Onomatopoeia — A word that imitates the sound of the object the word represents.

Personification — The attribution of human characteristics to nonhuman places or things.

Simile — A comparison of two seemingly dissimilar items using *like* or *as* . (1)

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4.1.3: Elements of Poetry

Formal Elements of Poetry

Learning to read how a poem is **lineated** is an important skill to develop for understanding poetry. **Lineation** controls where lines of verse begin and end in a poem. These artistic choices can significantly impact the rhythm of a poem and in some cases can be used to create dramatic or thematic tension, as in the use of an **enjambed line** . **Enjambment** is a French word that means 'to step over.' In poetry, the shifting from one line to the next without concluding a thought or without the use of closing punctuation creates a sense of connection and movement that can increase the pacing of the meter of a poem and/or can productively complicate the meaning of the ideas or images between one line and another.

The grouping of lines into organizational units in poetry is known as a **stanza** . Some poetic forms, such as the **couplet** , are identified by how many lines constitute a stanza. (A couplet has two lines per stanza; many poems are composed of a series of couplets rather than a single couplet.)

Rhythm is the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. Everyday speech has rhythm, yet poets make conscious choices to arrange and highlight particular rhythms and rhythm patterns to create meter. Meter refers to specific syllabic patterns in the rhythm of a line of poetry. Learning to **scan** the rhythm and meter of a poem, a process referred to as **scansion** , focuses analysis on the line-by-line structure. A **foot** is the basic unit of rhythm, usually composed of two or three syllables, used in scansion. Four major types of feet are found in most verse: **anapest** , **dactyl** , **iamb** , and **trochee** :

Foot Names	Syllable Arrangements	Examples
Anapest	X X /	X X / X X / X X /
dactyl	/ X X	/ X X / X X Take her up tenderly
iamb	X /	X / X / X / X / The falling out of faithful friends. X / X / X / renewing is of love
trochee	/ X	/ X / X / X / X

Less frequently occurring types of feet in poetry are: **pyrrhic** and **spondee** .

Foot Names	Syllable Arrangements	Examples
pyrrhic	X X	/ / X X // X X X / X My way is to begin with the beginning
spondee	/ /	X X / / X X / /

The number of feet in a line of poetry determine its length. Although a line may be of any length, common line lengths in verse include: **tetrameter** , **pentameter** and **octameter** .

Line Length Names	Number of Feet	Number of Syllables	Examples
tetrameter	four	eight	How dreary to be somebody! How drear | y to | be some | body
pentameter	five	ten	Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Shall I | compare | thee to | a sum | mer's day?
octameter	eight	sixteen	And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain. And the | silken | sad un | certain | rustling | of each | purple | curtain.

William Shakespeare is renowned for his use of iambic pentameter. Read and listen to his poem "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day (Sonnet 18)" and pay close attention to how his rhythm and meter enhance the auditory effects of his poetry. As a famous playwright, Shakespeare was especially concerned with the verbal performance of poetic language. Some scholars have even argued that Shakespeare's use of iambic pentameter resembles the *lub-dub* rhythm of the human heartbeat. (1)

"Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day (Sonnet 18)"

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 dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Rhyme is created when two words are similar in sound, as found in the words 'dog' and 'fog.' **End rhyme** occurs when the last words in two lines of poetry rhyme. Rhyming between two words within the same line is called **internal rhyme** . **Slant rhyme** (or approximate rhyme) is the term used to refer to the suggestion of a rhyme that is not exact, as found in the words 'laugh' and 'taught.'

The larger pattern of rhyme in a poem is referred to as the **rhyme scheme** . Rhyme schemes are commonly indicated by a letter pattern where a different represents a new rhyme, as in *abab cdcd efef gg* . The effectiveness of a poem's rhyme scheme is shaped not only by the **repetition** of, but the **variation** between, the types of rhyme and meter. Analysis of poetry frequently looks at the occurrence of 'repetition and variation' as a linked literary device.

Besides rhyme, poets also may make use of other sound patterns including **assonance** , **consonance** , and **alliteration** . Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds, usually two or more times in short succession, whereas consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds. Alliteration is the repetition of the identical initial consonant in neighboring or consecutive words. (1)

Reading in Context

While it is important to ground our analysis of poetry in a **close reading** based on a detailed understanding of formal elements and poetic structure, we should not become so carried away that we neglect the roles history and cultural circumstance can play in shaping a poem. Likewise, as Edward Hirsch suggests, it is also important to recognize the contribution that you make as a reader to the construction of a poem's meaning.

Consider, once more, "Dulce et Decorum est" by Wilfred Owen. The content of the poem is moving enough, yet the added emotional weight of understanding the poem's **context** — the mass casualties in Europe during World War I — lends a potent specificity to the imagery in Owen's poem. The poem's effect is made all the more palpable by the knowledge that he was killed in action one week before the Armistice that ended the fighting in Western Europe. With this historical context in mind, it might be possible then to consider what your own experience or views on war might be. What is your response to Owen's portrayal of the battlefield? What knowledge or insight can be gained from the way that the poem attempts to make the violence of war intelligible to its reader?

The context of a poem can play a major role in what gives it a lasting literary value. However, when a powerful historical context meets masterful formal execution, it can be tempting to assume everything in the poem is a direct line to the poet's heart and mind. But when analyzing a poem, the **speaker** of the poem, the "I" voice, should not be conflated with the author of the poem. In written analysis we refer to "the author" when speaking of his or her craftsmanship and authorial choices, as in "the author repeats the symbol of the bird at the beginning and the end of the poem." We use "the speaker" when discussing the point-of-view of the "I" speaking in the poem, as in "the speaker longs to be free" or "the speaker bemoans the impending loss of her child." In our analysis we can suggest that "the poet" is closely aligned with "the speaker," but we should not assume they are one in the same. The conventions of poetry veil a direct connection in contrast to a literary form, such as autobiography.

Even more than historical periods, we can connect the analysis of one particular poem to a wider literary movement. In our course readings, for example, are two writers whose poems exemplify the modernist movement known as Imagism: H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) and William Carlos Williams. **Imagism** valued precision and clarity of both image and language; it rejected the sentimentality of the previous generation of poets and sought to create poems around single, powerful images that might speak of the essential nature of a thing, person, or place. Understanding a poem's historical and literary context is important, but it is equally important to acknowledge the active role that the reader plays in the construction of meaning, as Edward Hirsch suggests. [1]

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4.2: Approaching Poetry

Introduction

This reading is designed to develop the analytical skills you need for a more in-depth study of literary texts. You will learn about rhythm, alliteration, rhyme, poetic inversion, voice and line lengths and endings. You will examine poems that do not rhyme and learn how to compare and contrast poetry.

By the end of this reading you should be able to:

- have an awareness of the role of analysis to inform appreciation and understanding of poetry;
- be able to identify and discuss the main analytical concepts used in analyzing poetry.



What is the point of analyzing poetry? One simple answer is that the more we know about anything the more interesting it becomes: listening to music or looking at paintings with someone who can tell us a little about what we hear or see – or what we're reading – is one way of increasing our understanding and pleasure. That may mean learning something about the people who produced the writing, music, painting that we are interested in, and why they produced it. But it may also mean understanding why one particular form was chosen rather than another: why, for example, did the poet choose to write a sonnet rather than an ode, a ballad, or a villanelle? To appreciate the appropriateness of one form, we need to be aware of a range of options available to that particular writer at that particular time. In the same way, we also need to pay attention to word choice. Why was this particular word chosen from a whole range of words that might have said much the same? Looking at manuscript drafts can be really enlightening, showing how much effort was expended in order to find the most appropriate or most evocative expression.

? Activity 1

Click on William Blake's "Tyger" to read and compare the two versions of the poem. The one on the left is a draft; the other is the final published version.

Discussion

The most obvious difference between the two is that stanza 4 of the draft does not survive in the published version, and an entirely new stanza, "When the stars threw down their spears," appears in the finished poem. Significantly, this introduces the idea of "the Lamb," a dramatic contrast to the tiger, as well as the idea of a "he" who made the lamb. One similarity between the draft and final version is that each is made up entirely of unanswered questions. But if you look at the manuscript stanza 5, you can see revisions from "What" to "Where," and the struggle with the third line, where Blake eventually decided that the idea of an arm was redundant, subsumed in the notions of grasping and clasping. The two rhyme words are decided—grasp/clasp—but in which order should they come? 'Clasp' is a less aggressive word than 'grasp'; 'clasp' is not quite as gentle as an embrace, but it is closer to embracing than 'grasp' is – so it must be for deliberate effect that we end up with 'What dread grasp/Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

It is rare to have manuscript drafts to examine in this way, but I hope that this convinces you of the kind of attention writers pay to word choice. Let us take one more example. Think about this first stanza of Thomas Hardy's 'Neutral Tones' (1867):

> We stood by a pond that winter day,
>
> And the sun was white, as though chidden of God,

> And a few leaves lay on the starving sod;
>
> —They had fallen from an ash, and were gray. (Gibson, 1976, p. 12)

Notice that, in the last line, ‘oak’ or ‘elm’ would work just as well as far as the rhythm or music of the line is concerned, but ‘ash’ has extra connotations of grayness, of something burnt out, dead, finished (‘ashes to ashes’, too, perhaps?), all of which contribute to the mood that Hardy conveys in a way that ‘oak’ or ‘elm’ wouldn’t.

To return to my original question then, ‘what is the point of analyzing poetry?’, one answer is that only an analytical approach can help us arrive at an informed appreciation and understanding of the poem. Whether we like a poem or not, we should be able to recognize the craftsmanship that has gone into making it, the ways in which stylistic techniques and devices have worked to create meaning. General readers may be entirely happy to find a poem pleasing, or unsatisfactory, without stopping to ask why. But *studying* poetry is a different matter and requires some background understanding of what those stylistic techniques might be, as well as an awareness of constraints and conventions within which poets have written throughout different periods of history.

You may write poetry yourself. If so, you probably know only too well how difficult it is to produce something you feel really expresses what you want to convey. Writing an essay presents enough problems – a poem is a different matter, but certainly no easier. Thinking of poetry as a discipline and a craft which, to some extent, can be learned, is another useful way of approaching analysis. After all, how successful are emotional outpourings on paper? Words one might scribble down in the heat of an intense moment may have some validity in conveying that intensity, but in general might they not be more satisfactory if they were later revised? My own feeling is that a remark Wordsworth made 200 years ago has become responsible for a number of misconceptions about what poetry should do. In the Preface to a volume of poems called *Lyrical Ballads* (1802) he wrote that ‘all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings’ (Owens and Johnson, 1998, p.85,11.105–6). The second time he uses the same phrase he says something that I think is often forgotten today: ‘poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion *recollected in tranquillity*’ (my italics) (ibid., p. 95, ll.557–8). Notice the significant time lapse implied there – the idea that, however powerful or spontaneous the emotion, it needs to be carefully considered before you start writing. He goes on:

The emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation is gradually reproduced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins.

You don’t have to agree with Wordsworth about what poetry is or how best to achieve it. (Would you always want a poem to express powerful emotion, for example? I referred to Hardy’s ‘Neutral Tones’ above, where the whole point is that neither of the two characters described feels anything much at all.) But the idea of contemplation is a useful and important one: it implies distance, perhaps detachment, but above all re-creation, not the thing itself. And if we try to re-create something, we must choose our methods and our words carefully in order to convey what we experienced as closely as possible. A word of warning though: writers do not always aim to express personal experiences; often a persona is created.

The poet Ezra Pound offered this advice to other poets in an essay written in 1913: ‘Use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something’ (Gray, 1990, p. 56). And in the 1950s William Carlos Williams advised, ‘cut and cut again whatever you write’. In his opinion, the ‘test of the artist is to be able to revise without showing a seam’ (loc. cit.). That sewing image he uses appeals to me particularly because it stresses the notion of skilled craftsmanship. Pound and Williams were American, writing long after Wordsworth, but, as you can see, like countless other poets they too reflected very seriously on their own poetic practice. I hope this helps convince you that as students we owe it to the poems we read to give them close analytical attention.

Note About Organization

In what follows, section headings like ‘Rhyme’, ‘Rhythm’, ‘Line lengths and line endings’, ‘Alliteration’, and so on, are intended to act as signposts to help you (if terms are unfamiliar, look them up in the glossary at the end). But these headings indicate only the *main* technique being discussed. While it is something we need to attempt, it is very difficult to try to isolate devices in this way – to separate out, for example, the effects of rhythm from rhyme. This doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t look for particular techniques at work in a poem, but we need to be aware that they will be interdependent and the end product effective or not because of the way such elements work together.

As you work through this reading, don't be discouraged if your response to exercises differs from mine. Remember that I had the advantage of choosing my own examples and that I've long been familiar with the poems I've used. On a daily basis, we probably read much less poetry than we do prose. This is perhaps one reason why many people say they find poetry difficult – unfamiliarity and lack of practice. But, like anything else, the more effort we put in, the wider the range of experiences we have to draw on. I hope that when you come across an unfamiliar extract in the discussions that follow you might decide to look up the whole poem on your own account, widening your own experience and enjoying it too.

Remember that language changes over the years. I've deliberately chosen to discuss poems from different periods, and given dates of first publication. Do keep this in mind, especially as you may find some examples more accessible than others. The idiom and register of a poem written in the eighteenth century will usually be quite different from one written in the twentieth. Different verse forms are popular at different times: while sonnets have been written for centuries, they were especially fashionable in Elizabethan times, for example. Don't expect to find free verse written much before the twentieth century.



If you are working on a poem, it can be a good idea to print it, maybe even enlarge it, and then write anything you find particularly striking in the margins. Use highlighters or colored pens to underline repetitions and link rhyme words. Patterns may well emerge that will help you understand the way the poem develops. Make the poems your own in this way, and then, if you are the kind of person who doesn't mind writing in books, you can insert notes in a more restrained way in the margins of your book.

If you prefer to work on your computer, you can do a similar thing by using an annotation tool on your word processor.

Whatever you do, always ask yourself what the effect of a particular technique that you identify is. Noticing an unusual choice of words, a particular rhyme scheme or use of alliteration is an important first step, but you need to take another one. Unless you go on to say why what you have noticed is effective, what it contributes to the rest of the poem, how it endorses or changes things, then you are doing less than half the job. Get into the habit of asking yourself questions, even if you can't always answer them satisfactorily.

Rhythm

All speech has rhythm because we naturally stress some words or syllables more than others. The rhythm can sometimes be very regular and pronounced, as in a children's nursery rhyme – 'JACK and JILL went UP the HILL' – but even in the most ordinary sentence the important words are given more stress. In poetry, rhythm is extremely important: patterns are deliberately created and repeated for varying effects. The rhythmical pattern of a poem is called its meter, and we can analyze, or 'scan' lines of poetry to identify stressed and unstressed syllables. In marking the text to show this, the mark '/' is used to indicate a stressed syllable, and 'x' to indicate an unstressed syllable. Each complete unit of stressed and unstressed syllables is called a 'foot', which usually has one stressed and one or two unstressed syllables.

The most common foot in English is known as the iamb, which is an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one (x /). Many words in English are iambic: a simple example is the word 'forgot'. When we say this, the stresses naturally fall in the sequence:

x /
'forgot'.

Iambic rhythm is in fact the basic sound pattern in ordinary English speech. If you say the following line aloud you will hear what I mean:

x / x / x / x / x / x /
I went across the road and bought a pair of shoes.

The next most common foot is the trochee, a stressed syllable (or 'beat', if you like) followed by an unstressed one (/x), as in the word

/ x
'mountain'.

Both the iamb and the trochee have two syllables, the iamb being a ‘rising’ rhythm and the trochee a ‘falling’ rhythm. Another two-syllable foot known as the spondee has two equally stressed beats (/ /), as in

/ /
‘blue spurt’.

Other important feet have three syllables. The most common are the anapest (x x /) and the dactyl (/ x x), which are triple rhythms, rising and falling respectively, as in the words

x x / / x x
‘unimpressed’ and ‘probably’.

Here are some fairly regular examples of the four main kinds of meter used in poetry. (I have separated the feet by using a vertical slash.) You should say the lines aloud, listening for the stress patterns and noting how the ‘beats’ fall on particular syllables or words.

Iambic meter

x / x / x / x / x /
The cur- | few tolls | the knell | of part- | ing day

Trochaic meter

/ x / x / x /
Tiger | tiger | burning | bright

Anapestic meter

x x / x x / x x / x x /
She is far | from the land | where her young | hero sleeps

Dactylic meter

/ x x / x x / x x / x x
Woman much | missed how you | call to me, | call to me

The other technical point that you need to know about is the way the lengths of lines of verse are described. This is done according to the number of feet they contain, and the names given to different lengths of lines are as follows:

monometer	a line of one foot
dimeter	a line of two feet
trimeter	a line of three feet
tetrameter	a line of four feet
pentameter	a line of five feet
hexameter	a line of six feet
heptameter	a line of seven feet
octameter	a line of eight feet.

By far the most widely used of these are the tetrameter and the pentameter. If you look back at the four lines of poetry given as examples above, you can count the feet. You will see that the first one has five feet, so it is an iambic pentameter line; the second one has four feet, so it is a trochaic tetrameter line; the fourth and fifth also have four feet, so are anapestic and dactylic tetrameter lines respectively. Lines do not always have exactly the ‘right’ number of beats. Sometimes a pentameter line will have an extra ‘beat’, as in the famous line from *Hamlet*, ‘To be or not to be: that is the question’, where the ‘tion’ of question is an eleventh, unstressed beat. (It is worth asking yourself why Shakespeare wrote the line like this. Why did he not write what would have been a perfectly regular ten-syllable line, such as ‘The question is, to be or not to be’?)

Having outlined some of the basic meters of English poetry, it is important to say at once that very few poems would ever conform to a perfectly regular metrical pattern. The effect of that would be very boring indeed: imagine being restricted to using only iambic words, or trying to keep up a regular trochaic rhythm. Poets therefore often include trochaic or anapestic or dactylic words or

phrases within what are basically iambic lines, in order to make them more interesting and suggestive, and to retain normal pronunciation. Here is a brief example from Shakespeare to show you what I mean. I have chosen a couple of lines spoken by Rosalind in

As You Like It, Act 1, scene 2, and have marked this first version to show you the basic iambic meter:

x / x / x / x / x /
My fa- | ther loved | Sir Row- | land as | his soul,
x / x / x / x / x /
And all | the world | was of | my fa | ther's mind.

If you say the lines out loud in this regular way you can hear that the effect is very unnatural. Here is one way the lines might be scanned to show how the stresses would fall in speech (though there are other ways of scanning them):

/ / x / x x x x x /
My father loved Sir Rowland as his soul,
x / x / x x x / x /
And all the world was of my father's mind.

It must be emphasized that there is no need to feel that you must try to remember all the technical terms I have been introducing here. The purpose has been to help you to become aware of the importance of rhythmic effects in poetry, and it can be just as effective to try to describe these in your own words. The thing to hang on to when writing about the rhythm of a poem is that, as Ezra Pound put it, 'Rhythm MUST have meaning': 'It can't be merely a careless dash off with no grip and no real hold to the words and sense, a tumty tum tumpty tum tum ta' (quoted in Gray, 1990, p. 56). There are occasions, of course, when a tum-ty-ty-tum rhythm may be appropriate, and 'have meaning'. When Tennyson wrote 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', he recreated the sound, pace, and movement of horses thundering along with the emphatic dactyls of 'Half a league, half a league, half a league onward / Into the valley of death rode the six hundred'. But for a very different example we might take a short two-line poem by Pound himself. This time there is no fixed meter: like much twentieth-century poetry, this poem is in 'free verse'. Its title is 'In a Station of the Metro' (the Metro being the Paris underground railway), and it was written in 1916:

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

Here you can see that the rhythm plays a subtle part in conveying the meaning. The poem is comparing the faces of people in a crowded underground to petals that have fallen on to a wet bough. The rhythm not only highlights the key words in each line, but produces much of the emotional feeling of the poem by slowing down the middle words of the first line and the final three words of the second.

For our final example of rhythm I've chosen a passage from Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Criticism* (1711).

Activity 2

Take a look at this excerpt from An Essay on Criticism. Read it aloud if you can. Listen to the rhythm, and identify why the rhythm is appropriate to the meaning.

Discussion

Pope here uses a basic structure of iambic pentameters with variations, so that the lines sound as if they have a different pace, faster or slower, depending on what is being described. It is not just rhythm that contributes to the effect here: rhyme and alliteration (successive words beginning with the same sound) recreate smooth, rough, slow and swift movement. Rhythm is entirely dependent on word choice, but is also influenced by other interdependent stylistic devices. Pope's lines enact what they describe simply because of the care that has gone into choosing the right words. It doesn't matter if you don't recognise the classical allusions: from the descriptions it is clear that Ajax is a strong man and Camilla is quick and light. If you count the beats of each line, you'll notice that, in spite of the variety of sound and effect, all have five stresses, except the last, which has six. Strangely enough it is the last and longest line that creates an impression of speed. How is this achieved? Try to hear the lines by reading them again out loud.

There is really only one way, and that is through the words chosen to represent movement: the repeated 's' sounds associated with Camilla trip swiftly off the tip of the tongue, whereas Ajax's lines demand real physical effort from mouth, lips, and tongue. You

will get a much stronger sense of this if you form the words in this way, even if you are unable to say them out loud. In an exam, for instance, silent articulation of a poem will help you grasp many poetic techniques and effects that may otherwise be missed.

This extract from Pope's *An Essay on Criticism*, like the whole poem, is written in rhyming couplets (lines rhyming in pairs). They confer a formal, regular quality to the verse. The punctuation helps to control the way in which we read: notice that there is a pause at the end of each line, either a comma, a semi-colon, or a full stop. This use of the end-stopped line is characteristic of eighteenth-century heroic couplets (iambic pentameter lines rhyming in pairs), where the aim was to reproduce classical qualities of balance, harmony, and proportion.

Get into the habit of looking at rhyme words. Are any of Pope's rhymes particularly interesting here? One thing I noticed was what is known as poetic inversion. The rhyme 'shore'/'roar' is clearly important to the sound sense of the verse, but the more natural word order (were this ordinary speech) would be 'The hoarse rough verse should roar like the torrent'. Had he written this, Pope would have lost the sound qualities of the rhyme 'shore'/'roar'. He would have had to find a word such as 'abhorrent' to rhyme with 'torrent' and the couplet would have had a very different meaning. He would also have lost the rhythm of the line, in spite of the fact that the words are exactly the same.

Before we leave *An Essay on Criticism*, did you notice that Pope's subject in this poem is really poetry itself? Like Wordsworth, Pound, and William Carlos Williams, all of whom I've quoted earlier, Pope too was concerned with poetry as a craft.

Alliteration

Alliteration is the term used to describe successive words beginning with the same sound – usually, then, with the same letter.



To illustrate this I would like to use a stanza from Arthur Hugh Clough's poem, 'Natura naturans'. There is not enough space to quote the whole poem, but to give you some idea of the context of this stanza so that you can more fully appreciate what Clough is doing, it is worth explaining that 'Natura naturans' describes the sexual tension between a young man and woman who sit next to each other in a railway carriage. They have not been introduced, and they neither speak nor exchange so much as a glance. The subject matter and its treatment is unusual and also extraordinarily frank for the time of writing (about 1849), but you need to know what is being described in order to appreciate the physicality of the lines I quote.

? Activity 3

Read the attached stanza from Arthur Hugh Clough's poem "Natura Naturans" and consider the following questions:

1. What is the single most striking technique used, and what are the effects?
2. How would you describe the imagery, and what does it contribute to the overall effect?

Discussion

1. Visually the use of alliteration is striking, particularly in the first line and almost equally so in the second. If you took the advice above about paying attention to the physical business of articulating the words too, you should be in a good position to discriminate between the rapidity of the flies and the heavier movement of the bees, and to notice how tactile the language is. The effect is actually to create sensuality in the stanza.
2. Notice that though we begin with flies, bees and rooks, all of which are fairly common flying creatures, we move to the more romantic lark with its 'wild' song, and then to the positively exotic gazelle, leopard, and dolphin. From the rather homely English air (flies, bees, birds), we move to foreign locations 'Libyan dell' and 'Indian glade', and from there to 'tropic seas'. (Cod in the North Sea would have very different connotations from dolphins in the tropics.) Air, earth, and sea are all invoked to help express the variety of changing highly charged erotic feelings that the speaker remembers. The images are playful and

preposterous, joyfully expressing the familiar poetic subject of sexual attraction and arousal in a way that makes it strange and new. Notice that in each case the image is more effective because the alliteration emphasizes it.

Rhyme

If a poem rhymes, then considering how the rhyme works is always important.

Rhyme schemes can be simple or highly intricate and complex; it will always be worth considering why a particular rhyme pattern was chosen and trying to assess its effects.

? Activity 4

Read "Love from the North" (1862) by Christina Rossetti. What is the poem about, and how does the rhyme contribute to the meaning and overall effect?

Discussion

'Love From the North' tells a simple story. A woman about to marry one man is whisked away by another, just as she is about to exchange vows. The form of the poem is very simple: the second and fourth lines of each of the eight 4-line stanzas rhyme. More significantly, because the last word of each stanza is 'nay', there is only one rhyme sound throughout. There are more internal rhymes relying on the same repeated sound, however, aren't there? Look at the last lines of stanzas 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8 where 'say' 'nay'; 'nay' 'nay'; 'say' 'nay'; 'yea' 'nay'; and 'say' 'nay' appear. In the second stanza, 'gay' occurs twice in line 2; stanza five and six both have 'yea' in line 3. What is the effect of this?

Do you think the effect might be to help over-simplify the story? Clearly the woman has doubts about the man from the south's devotion: he 'never dared' to say no to her. He seems to have no will of his own: he 'saddens' when she does, is 'gay' when she is, wants only what she does. On her wedding day she thinks: 'It's quite too late to think of nay'. But is she any happier with the strong man from the north? Who is he? Has he carried her off against her will? And what exactly do you make of the last stanza? Do the 'links of love' imply a chain? This strong-minded woman who imposed her will on the man from the south has 'neither heart nor power/Nor will nor wish' to say no to the man from the north. Is that good, or bad? And what do you make of the 'book and bell' with which she's made to stay? Certainly they imply something different from the conventional Christian marriage she was about to embark on in the middle of the poem – witchcraft, perhaps, or magic? And are the words 'Till now' particularly significant at the beginning of line 3 in the last stanza? Might they suggest a new resolve to break free?

How important is it to resolve such questions? It is very useful to ask them, but not at all easy to find answers. In fact, that is one of the reasons I like the poem so much. The language is very simple and so is the form – eight quatrains (or four-line stanzas) – and yet the more I think about the poem, the more interesting and ambiguous it seems. In my opinion, that is its strength. After all, do we always know exactly what we want or how we feel about relationships? Even if we do, is it always possible to put such feelings into words? Aren't feelings often ambivalent rather than straightforward?

It is also worth bearing in mind the fact that the poem is written in ballad form. A ballad tells a story, but it does only recount events – part of the convention is that ballads don't go into psychological complexities. It is likely that Rossetti chose this ancient oral verse form because she was interested in raising ambiguities. But perhaps the point of the word 'nay' chiming throughout 'Love From the North' is to indicate the female speaker saying no to both men – the compliant lover and his opposite, the demon lover, alike? After all, 'nay' is the sound which gives the poem striking unity and coherence.

Keats's 'Eve of St Agnes' (1820) also tells a tale of lovers, but it isn't a ballad, even though the rhyme scheme of the first four lines is the same as Rossetti's quatrains. The stanzas are longer, and the form more complex and sophisticated. The rhyme pattern is the same throughout all 42 stanzas, the first two of which are reproduced for the following activity:

? Activity 5

Read the first two stanzas of Keats's "Eve of St Agnes." How would you describe the rhyme scheme, and does it seem appropriate for the subject matter?

Discussion

In comparison to the Rossetti poem the rhyme sounds form complex patterns, don't they? While 'was'/'grass' in the first stanza and 'man'/'wan' in the second do not quite produce a full rhyme (depending on your accent), the first and third lines do rhyme in subsequent stanzas. Using a letter of the alphabet to describe each new rhyme sound, we could describe the pattern like this: a b a b b c b c c (imagine sustaining that intricate patterning for 42 stanzas). This kind of formula is useful up to a point for showing how often the same sounds recur, and it does show how complicated the interweaving of echoing sounds is. But it says nothing about how the sounds relate to what is being said – and, as I have been arguing all along, it is the relationship between meaning and word choice that is of particular interest. To give a full answer to my own question, I'd really need to consider the function of rhyme throughout the poem. It would not be necessary to describe what happens in each stanza, but picking out particular pertinent examples would help me argue a case. With only the first two stanzas to work with, I could say that, if nothing else, the intricate rhyme pattern seems appropriate not only for the detailed descriptions but also for the medieval, slightly gothic setting of the chapel where the holy man prays.

? Activity 6

Read the extract from Tennyson's "Mariana" (1830). Again, this comes from a longer poem, so it would be useful to look it up and read the rest if you have the opportunity.

Read the extract and consider the following questions:

1. Describe the rhyme in the stanza from Tennyson's 'Mariana'.
2. What is the first stanza about?

Discussion

1. As with the Keats poem, the rhyme scheme here is quite complicated. Using the same diagrammatic formula of a letter for each new rhyme sound, we could describe this as 'a b a b c d d c e f e f. You might notice too that indentations at the beginning of each line emphasise lines that rhyme with each other: usually the indentations are alternate, except for lines 6 and 7, which form a couplet in the middle of the stanza. It is worth telling you too that each of the stanzas ends with a variation of the line 'I would that I were dead' (this is known as a refrain) so – as in Christina Rossetti's 'Love From the North' – a dominant sound or series of sounds throughout helps to control the mood of the poem.
2. We may not know who Mariana is, or why she is in the lonely, crumbling grange, but she is obviously waiting for a man who is slow in arriving. The 'dreary'/'aweary' and 'dead'/'said' rhymes, which, if you read the rest of the poem, you will see are repeated in each stanza, convey her dejection and express the boredom of endless waiting. As with the stanzas from Keats's 'Eve of St Agnes', there is plenty of carefully observed detail – black moss on the flower-plots, rusty nails, a clinking latch on a gate or door – all of which description contributes to the desolation of the scene and Mariana's mood. Were the moated grange a lively, sociable household, the poem would be very different. Either Mariana would be cheerful, or her suicidal misery would be in sharp contrast to her surroundings. It is always worth considering what settings contribute to the overall mood of a poem.

Poetic Inversion

Poetic inversion, or changing the usual word order of speech, is often linked to the need to maintain a rhythm or to find a rhyme. We noticed Pope's poetic inversion in *An Essay on Criticism* and saw how the rhyme was intimately linked to the rhythm of the verse. The song 'Dancing in the Street', first recorded by Martha and the Vandellas in the 1960s, does violence to word order in the interests of rhyme – 'There'll be dancing in the street/ A chance new folk to meet' – but, because the words are sung to a driving rhythm, we are unlikely to notice how awkward they are. There's a convention that we recognise, however unconsciously, that prevents us from mentally re-writing the line as 'a chance to meet new people'. ('People' rather than 'folk' would be more usual usage for me, but, as with the Pope example, this would mean that the rhythm too would be lost.)

Poems That Don't Rhyme

Are poems that don't rhyme prose? Not necessarily. Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), a novelist rather than a poet, and T.S. Eliot (1888–1965), known particularly for his poetry, both wrote descriptive pieces best described as 'prose poems'. These look like short prose passages since there is no attention to line lengths or layout on the page, as there was, for example, in 'Mariana'. When

you study Shakespeare you will come across blank verse. ‘Blank’ here means ‘not rhyming’, but the term ‘blank verse’ is used specifically to describe verse in unrhyming iambic pentameters.

Although iambic pentameters resemble our normal speech patterns, in ordinary life we speak in prose. You’ll notice if you look through Shakespeare’s plays that blank verse is reserved for kings, nobles, heroes and heroines. They may *also* speak in prose, as lesser characters do, but commoners don’t ever have speeches in blank verse. Shakespeare – and other playwrights like him – used the form to indicate status. It is important to recognise this convention, which would have been understood by his contemporaries – writers, readers, and audiences alike. So choosing to write a poem in blank verse is an important decision: it will elevate the subject. One such example is Milton’s epic *Paradise Lost*(1667), a long poem in twelve Books describing Creation, Adam and Eve’s temptation, disobedience and expulsion from Paradise. It sets out to justify the ways of God to man, so blank verse is entirely appropriate. This great epic was in Wordsworth’s mind when he chose the same form for his autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*.

? Activity 7

Read and compare these extracts. One is from Book XIII of *The Prelude*, where Wordsworth is walking up Mount Snowdon; the other is from “The Idiot Boy,” one of his *Lyrical Ballads*. What effects are achieved by the different forms?

Discussion

Both poems use iambic meter – an unstressed followed by a stressed syllable. The extract from *The Prelude* uses iambic pentameters, five metrical feet in each line, whereas ‘The Idiot Boy’ (like the ballad, ‘Love From the North’) is in tetrameters, only four, establishing a more sing-song rhythm. Other stylistic techniques contribute to the difference in tone too: the language of *The Prelude* is formal (Wordsworth’s ‘Ascending’ rather than ‘going up’), whereas ‘The Idiot Boy’ uses deliberately homely diction, and rhyme. Three simple rhyme words ring out throughout the 92 stanzas of the latter: ‘Foy’, ‘boy’ and ‘joy’ stand at the heart of the poem, expressing the mother’s pride in her son. The moon features in each extract. In *The Prelude*, as Wordsworth climbs, the ground lightens, as it does in The Old Testament before a prophet appears. Far from being a meaningless syllable to fill the rhythm of a line, ‘lo’ heightens the religious parallel, recalling the biblical ‘Lo, I bring you tidings of great joy’: this episode from *The Prelude* describes a moment of spiritual illumination. Wordsworth’s intentions in these two poems were quite different, and the techniques reflect that.

Other poems that don’t use rhyme are discussed later (‘Wherever I Hang’; ‘Mona Lisa’; ‘Poem’). Notice that they use a variety of rhythms, and because of that none can be described as blank verse.

Voice

Is the speaker in a poem one and the same as the writer? Stop and consider this for a few moments. Can you think of any poems you have read where a writer has created a character, or persona, whose voice we hear when we read?



Wordsworth’s *The Prelude* was written as an autobiographical poem, but there are many instances where it is obvious that poet and persona are different. Charlotte Mew’s poem, ‘The Farmer’s Bride’ (1916) begins like this:

> *Three summers since I chose a maid,*
> *Too young maybe – but more’s to do*
> *At harvest-time than bide and woo.*
> *When us was wed she turned afraid*
> *Of love and me and all things human;*
>
> (Warner, 1981, pp. 1–2)

Mew invents a male character here, and clearly separates herself as a writer from the voice in her poem. Some of the most well-known created characters – or personae – in poetry are Browning's dramatic monologues.

? Activity 8

Consider the opening lines from three Robert Browning poems. Who do you think is speaking?

Discussion

Well, the first speaker isn't named, but we can infer that, like Brother Lawrence whom he hates, he's a monk. The second must be a Duke since he refers to his 'last Duchess' and, if we read to the end of the third poem, we discover that the speaker is a man consumed with such jealousy that he strangles his beloved Porphyria with her own hair. Each of the poems is written in the first person ('
my heart's abhorrence'; 'That's *my* last Duchess'; *I* listened with heart fit to break'). None of the characters Browning created in these poems bears any resemblance to him: the whole point of a dramatic monologue is the creation of a character who is most definitely not the poet. Charlotte Mew's poem can be described in the same way.

Line Lengths and Line Endings

Read the following prose extract taken from Walter Pater's discussion of the *Mona Lisa*, written in 1893, and then complete the activity:

She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas, and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants: and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and, as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands.

? Activity 9

When W.B. Yeats was asked to edit *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse 1892–1935* (1936), he chose to begin with this passage from Pater, but he set it out quite differently on the page. Before you read his version, write out the extract as a poem yourself. The exercise is designed to make you think about line lengths, where to start a new line and where to end it when there is no rhyme to give you a clue. There is no *regular* rhythm either, though I'm sure you will discover rhythms in the words, as well as repeated patterns. How can you best bring out these poetic features?

Discussion

Of course, there is no right answer to this exercise, but you should compare your version to Yeats's, printed below, to see if you made similar decisions.

She is older than the rocks among which she sits;
Like the Vampire,
She has been dead many times,
And learned the secrets of the grave;
And has been a diver in deep seas,
And keeps their fallen day about her;
And trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants;
And, as Leda,
Was the mother of Helen of Troy,
And, as St Anne,
Was the mother of Mary;
And all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes,
And lives
Only in the delicacy

With which it has moulded the changing lineaments,
And tinged the eyelids and the hands.

View the document as a PDF.

I wonder whether you used upper case letters for the first word of each line, as Yeats did? You may have changed the punctuation, or perhaps have left it out altogether. Like Yeats, you may have used 'And' at the beginnings of lines to draw attention to the repetitions: nine of the lines begin in this way, emphasising the way the clauses pile up, defining and redefining the mysterious Mona Lisa. Two lines begin with 'She': while there was no choice about the first, beginning the third in the same way focuses attention on her right at the start of the poem. Yeats has used Pater's punctuation to guide his line endings in all but two places: lines 13 and 14 run on – a stylistic device known as enjambment. The effect is an interesting interaction between eyes and ears. While we may be tempted to read on without pausing to find the sense, the line endings and white space of the page impose pauses on our reading, less than the commas and semi-colons that mark off the other lines, but significant nevertheless.

Yeats's arrangement of the words makes the structure and movement of Pater's long sentence clearer than it appears when written as prose. The poem begins with age – she is 'older than the rocks' – and refers to 'Vampire', death, and 'grave' in the first lines. The decision to single out the two words 'And lives' in a line by themselves towards the end of the poem sets them in direct opposition to the opening; we have moved from great age and living death to life. The arrangement of lines 8–11 highlights her links with both pagan and Christian religions: the Mona Lisa was the mother of Helen of Troy and the Virgin Mary. The wisdom and knowledge she has acquired is worn lightly, nothing more than 'the sound of lyres and flutes', apparent only in the 'delicacy' of colour on 'eyelids and hands'.

The aim of the preceding exercise was to encourage you to think about form and structure even when a poem does not appear to follow a conventional pattern. Because you have now 'written' a poem and had the opportunity to compare it with someone else's version of the same words, you should begin to realise the importance of decisions about where exactly to place a word for maximum effect, and how patterns can emerge which will control our reading when, for example, successive lines begin with repetitions. It should have made you think about the importance of the beginnings of lines, as well as line endings. What has been achieved by using a short line here, a longer one there? How do these decisions relate to what is being said? These are questions that can usefully be asked of any poem.

Earlier, discussing the extract from Pope's *An Essay on Criticism*, I asked you to concentrate on the sound qualities of the poetry. Here, I want you to consider the visual impact of the poem on the page. It is a good thing to be aware of what a complex task reading is, and to be alive to the visual as well as the aural qualities of the verse.

? Activity 10

When W.B. Yeats was asked to edit *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse 1892–1935* (1936), he chose to begin with this passage from Pater, but he set it out quite differently on the page. Before you read his version, write out the extract as a poem yourself. The exercise is designed to make you think about line lengths, where to start a new line and where to end it when there is no rhyme to give you a clue. There is no *regular* rhythm either, though I'm sure you will discover rhythms in the words, as well as repeated patterns. How can you best bring out these poetic features?

Further exercise: taking Grace Nichols's 'Wherever I Hang', discussed in Activity 10, you could reverse the process carried out in the previous exercise by writing out the poem as prose. Then, covering up the original, you could rewrite it as verse and compare your version with the original.

Comparing and Contrasting

Often you will find that an assignment asks you to 'compare and contrast' poems. There's a very good reason for this, for often it is only by considering different treatments of similar subjects that we become aware of a range of possibilities, and begin to understand why particular choices have been made. You will have realised that often in the previous discussions I've used a similar strategy, showing, for example, how we can describe the rhyme scheme of 'Love From the North' as simple once we have looked at the more intricate patterning of Keats's 'The Eve of St Agnes' or Tennyson's 'Mariana'. Anne Brontë's 'Home' and Grace Nichols's 'Wherever I Hang' treat the subject of exile in quite different ways, and looking at one can sharpen our understanding of what the other does.

Activity 11

Read the opening lines from these two poems commemorating deaths. What can you explain why they sound so very different?

Discussion

If I had to identify one thing, I would say that the first begins more elaborately and with a more formal tone than the second. ‘Felix Randal’ tends to use language in an unusual way, but you would probably agree that the first sentence is quite straightforward and sounds colloquial (or informal), as if the speaker has just overheard someone talking about Randal’s death and wants to confirm his impression. ‘Lycidas’ opens quite differently. It is not immediately apparent what evergreens have to do with anything (in fact they work to establish an appropriately melancholy atmosphere or tone), and it isn’t until line 8 that we learn of a death. The word ‘dead’ is repeated, and the following line tells us that Lycidas was a young man. While ‘Felix Randal’ has an immediacy, the speaker of ‘Lycidas’ seems to find it hard to get going.

Both poems are elegies – poems written to commemorate death – and both poets are aware of writing within this convention, although they treat it differently.

Activity 12

What do the titles of the poems used in Activity 13 tell us about each poem, and how might they help us understand the different uses of the elegiac convention?

Discussion

I think it would be apparent to most readers that ‘Felix Randall’ is simply a man’s name, while ‘Lycidas’ is more mysterious. In fact Lycidas is a traditional pastoral name, but unless you know something about the classical pastoral tradition it might mean very little to you. The young man whose death Milton was commemorating was actually called Edward King, but, at the time he was writing, elegies were formal, public and impersonal poems rather than private expressions of grief. ‘Lycidas’ commemorates a member of a prominent family rather than a close friend of the poet’s. Over two hundred years later, Hopkins, while working loosely within the same elegiac convention, adapts it. Felix Randal is an ordinary working man, not a public figure. In the seventeenth century it would have been unlikely that he would have been considered worthy of a poem like this.



If you were making a special study of elegies, there would be a great deal more to say. That’s not the idea here, though. The point is that by comparing and contrasting the tone of the opening lines and the titles, and considering when the poems were written, we have come up with a number of significant differences.

Activity 13

Read this poem by Robert Browning carefully. Who is speaking, and who is being addressed?

Discussion

From the evidence of the poem we know that the speaker once walked across a moor, found an eagle’s feather, and has a high regard for the poet Shelley (1792–1822). The person being addressed is not named, but we discover that he (or she) once met

Shelley, and this alone confers status by association. The word ‘you’ (‘your’ in one instance) is repeated in 6 out of the first 8 lines. ‘You’ becomes a rhyme word at the end of the second line, so when we reach the word ‘new’ in line four – one of the two lines in the first stanzas that doesn’t contain ‘you’ – the echo supplies the deficiency. ‘You’ clearly represents an important focus in the first half of the poem, but who exactly is ‘you’ ?

Thinking about this apparently straightforward question of who is being addressed takes us into an important area of critical debate: for each one of us who has just read the poem has, in one sense, become a person who not only knows who Shelley is (which may not necessarily be the case) but lived when he did, met him, listened to him, and indeed exchanged at least a couple of words with him. Each of us reads the poem as an individual, but the poem itself constructs a reader who is not identical to any of us. We are so used to adopting ‘reading’ roles dictated by texts like this that often we don’t even notice the way in which the text has manipulated us.

? Activity 14

Now read the Robert Browning poem again, this time asking yourself if the speaking voice changes in the last two stanzas, and if the person who is being addressed remains the same.

Discussion

If the first half of the poem is characterised by the repetition of ‘you’ and the sense of an audience that pronoun creates, then the second half seems quite different in content and tone. The speaker is trying to find a parallel in his experience to make sense of and explain his feeling of awe; the change of tone is subtle. Whereas someone is undoubtedly being addressed directly in the first stanza, in the third and fourth, readers overhear – as if the speaker is talking to himself.

At first the connection between the man who met Shelley and the memory of finding an eagle’s feather may not be obvious, but there is a point of comparison. As stanza 2 explains, part of the speaker’s sense of wonder stems from the fact that time did not stand still: ‘you were living before that, / And also you are living after’. The moor in stanza 3, like the listener, is anonymous – it has ‘a name of its own … no doubt’ – but where it is or what it is called is unimportant: only one ‘hand’s-breadth’ is memorable, the spot that ‘shines alone’ where the feather was found. The poem is about moments that stand out in our memories while the ordinary daily stuff of life fades. It also acknowledges that we don’t all value the same things.

✓ Activity 15

Take another look at the poem. How would you describe its form?

Discussion

The structure of the poem is perfectly balanced: of the four quatrains, two deal with each memory, so, although the nature of each seems quite different, implicitly the form invites us to compare them. Think about the way in which Browning introduces the eagle feather. How does he convince us that this is a rare find?

To begin with, the third and fourth stanzas make up one complete sentence, with a colon at the end of the third announcing the fourth; this helps to achieve a sense of building up to something important. Then we move from the visual image of a large space of moor to the very circumscribed place where the feather is found, but the reason why this ‘hand’s-breadth’ shines out is delayed for the next two lines ‘For there I picked up on the heather’ – yes? what? – ‘And there I put inside my breast’ – well? – ‘A moulted feather’, ah (and notice the internal rhyme there of ‘feather’ with ‘heather’ which draws attention to and emphasises the harmony of the moment), and then the word ‘feather’ is repeated and expanded: ‘an eagle-feather’ Clearly the feather of no other bird would do, for ultimately the comparison is of eagle to the poet; Browning knows Shelley through his poetry as he knows the eagle through its feather, and that feather presents a striking visual image.

There is an immediacy about the conversational opening of the poem which, I have suggested, deliberately moves into a more contemplative tone, possibly in the second stanza (think about it), but certainly by the third. We have considered some of the poetic techniques that Browning employs to convince us of the rarity of his find in the third and fourth stanzas. You might like to think more analytically about the word sounds, not just the rhyme but, for example, the repeated ‘ae’ sound in ‘breadth’ ‘heather’ ‘breast’ and ‘feather’. What, however, do you make of the tone of the last line? Try saying the last lines of each stanza out loud. Whether

you can identify the meter with technical language or not is beside the point. The important thing is that ‘Well, I forget the rest’ sounds deliberately lame. After the intensity of two extraordinary memories, everything else pales into insignificance and, to reiterate this, the rhythm tails off. While the tone throughout is informal, the last remark is deliberately casual.

Glossary

Alliteration	repetition of sounds, usually the first letters of successive words, or words that are close together. Alliteration usually applies only to consonants.
Anapest	*see under* foot.
Assonance	repetition of identical or similar vowel sounds.
Ballad	originally a song which tells a story, often involving dialogue. Characteristically, the storyteller's own feelings are not expressed.
Caesura	strong pause in a line of verse, usually appearing in the middle of a line and marked with a comma, semi-colon, or a full stop.
Couplet	pair of rhymed lines, often used as a way of rounding off a sonnet; hence the term 'closing couplet'.
Dactyl	*see under* foot.
Dialogue	spoken exchange between characters, usually in drama and fiction but also sometimes in poetry.
Diction	writer's choice of words. Poetic diction might be described, for instance, as formal or informal, elevated or colloquial.
Elegy	poem of loss, usually mourning the death of a public figure, or someone close to the poet.
Ellipsis	omission of words from a sentence to achieve brevity and compression.
Enjambment	the use of run-on lines in poetry. Instead of stopping or pausing at the end of a line of poetry, we have to carry on reading until we complete the meaning in a later line. The term comes from the French for 'striding'.
Epic	a long narrative poem dealing with events on a grand scale, often with a hero above average in qualities and exploits.
Epigram	witty, condensed expression. The closing couplet in some of Shakepeare's sonnets is often described as an epigram.
Foot	a unit of meter with a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. In the examples that follow, a stressed syllable is indicated by '/', and an unstressed syllable by 'x': anapest: xx/; dactyl: /xx; iamb: x/; spondee: //; trochee: /x
Heroic couplet	iambic pentameter lines rhyming in pairs, most commonly used for satiric or didactic poetry, and particularly favoured in the eighteenth century.
Iamb	*see under* foot.
Iambic pentameter	a line consisting of five iambs.
Imagery	special use of language in a way that evokes sense impressions (usually visual). Many poetic images function as mental pictures that give shape and appeal to something otherwise vague and abstract; for example, 'yonder before us lie/Deserts of vast Eternity'. Simile and metaphor are two types of imagery.

Metaphor	image in which one thing is substituted for another, or the quality of one object is identified with another. The sun, for Shakespeare, becomes ‘the eye of heaven’.
Meter	(from the Greek *metron*, ‘measure’) measurement of a line of poetry, including its length and its pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. There are different meter in poetry. Most sonnets, for example, written in English are divided into lines of ten syllables with five stresses – a measure known as pentameter (from the Greek *pente* for ‘five’). The sonnet also tends to use a line (known as the iambic line) in which an unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed one, as in this line: ‘If I should die, think only this of me’. Most sonnets, then are written in iambic pentameters.
Narrative	the telling of a series of events (either true or fictitious). The person relating these events is the narrator. However, it is often more usual in poetry to refer to ‘the speaker’.
Octave	group of eight lines of poetry, often forming the first part of a sonnet.
Ode	a poem on a serious subject, usually written in an elevated formal style; often written to commemorate public events.
Onomatopoeia	a word that seems to imitate the sound or sounds associated with the object or action, for example, ‘cuckoo’.
Ottava rima	a poem in eight-line stanzas, rhyming a b a b a b c c.
Personification	writing about something not human as if it were a person, for example ‘Busy old fool, unruly Sun,/Why dost thou thus,/Through windows and through curtains call onus?’.
Poetic inversion	reversing the order of normal speech in order to make the words fit a particular rhythm, or rhyme, or both.
Pun	double meaning or ambiguity in a word, often employed in a witty way. Puns are often associated with wordplay.
Quatrain	group of four lines of poetry, usually rhymed.
Refrain	a line or phrase repeated throughout a poem, sometimes with variations, often at the end of each stanza.
Rhyme	echo of a similar sound, usually at the end of a line of poetry. Occasionally, internal rhymes can be found, as in: ‘Sister, my sister, O *fleet*, *sweet* swallow’.
Rhyme scheme	pattern of rhymes established in a poem. The pattern of rhymes in a quatrain, for instance, might be ‘a b a b’ or ‘a b b a’.
Rhythm	the pattern of beats or stresses in a line creating a sense of movement. Sestet: group of six lines of poetry, often forming the second part of a sonnet.
Simile	image in which one thing is likened to another. The similarity is usually pointed out with the word ‘like’ or ‘as’: ‘My love is like a red, red rose’.

Sonnet	fourteen iambic pentameter lines with varying rhyme schemes.
Spondee	*see under* foot.
Syllable	single unit of pronunciation. ‘Sun’ is one syllable; ‘sunshine’ is two syllables.
Tercet	group of three lines in poetry, sometimes referred to as a triplet. Trochee: *see under* foot.
Turn	distinctive movement of change in mood or thought or feeling. In the sonnet, the turn usually occurs between the octave and the sestet, though the closing couplet in Shakespeare’s sonnets often constitutes the turn.
Villanelle	an intricate French verse form with some lines repeated, and only two rhyme sounds throughout the five three-line stanzas and the final four-line stanza.

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4.3: Free Verse

Free verse refers to poetry that does not follow standard or regularized meter (the organization of stressed and unstressed syllables) or rhyme scheme. As opposed to more traditional poetry, which tends to use recurring line lengths, metrical patterns, and rhyme to unify individual lines of verse and tie them to other lines within the same poem, free verse can, at times, seem to be random, having no pattern or organization at all. Yet in the hands of many poets, free verse enables a different kind of organization, as they balance free verse's openness, its ability to provide elements of the poem with a different amount of emphasis, with the use of repeated imagery or syntactic patterns (parallel organization of grammatical elements) to maintain coherence and create a sense of connection among lines. Even as it eschews regular meter and rhyme schemes, free verse does, at times, draw on metrical patterns and occasional rhyme to tie lines together. What distinguishes free verse from other traditional forms of verse is that it only uses these elements occasionally—for a few lines here and there in a longer poem—and does not use them to structure the poem as a whole. A poem in free verse, then, does not lack structure—or, in many cases, some instances of metrical organization or rhyme—it simply does not maintain or use a regular pattern of meter or rhyme to structure the poem as a whole. Instead, free verse relies more on thematic, syntactic, or semantic repetition and development to create coherence.



Figure **4.3.1**: Grass (CC BY 2.0; Gilberto Taccar, via Flickr)

Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* is often credited as introducing free verse into English-language poetry. While not quite true (other experiments and uses preceded his), Whitman's poetry helped to establish free verse's potential for exploring a broad range of topics and its ability to embrace an extensive number of ways of organizing verse lines. Later-nineteenth-century poets, such as Matthew Arnold in England, further explored the use of free verse, but it was the French symbolists (Jules Laforgue, Gustave Kahn, and Arthur Rimbaud) who practiced what they called vers libre most fully during this period. In the twentieth century, free verse came to dominate much poetic production in English, beginning with the modernists (such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams) who saw the open form as allowing for the more nimble representation of a modern fragmented and accelerated world.

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4.4: Verses upon the Burning of Our House



Figure **4.4.1**: Anne Bradstreet. (*CC0 1.0*; Artist Unknown, via Wikimedia)

"Verses upon the Burning of our House" (full title: "**Here Follow Some Verses Upon the Burning of our House", July 10, 1666**) is a poem by Anne Bradstreet. She wrote it to express the traumatic loss of her home and most of her material. However, she expands the understanding that God had taken them away in order for her family to live a more pious life.

The poem has a couplet-based rhyme scheme. It has many lines with an inverted syntax, making lines sound “odd”.

In silent night when rest I took,
For sorrow near I did not look,
I waken’d was with thund’ring noise
And piteous shrieks of dreadful voice.
That fearful sound of “Fire” and “Fire,”
Let no man know is my Desire.
I starting up, the light did spy,
And to my God my heart did cry
To straighten me in my Distress
And not to leave me succourless.
Then coming out, behold a space
The flame consume my dwelling place.
And when I could no longer look,
I blest his grace that gave and took,
That laid my goods now in the dust.
Yea, so it was, and so ‘twas just.
It was his own; it was not mine.
Far be it that I should repine,
He might of all justly bereft
But yet sufficient for us left.
When by the Ruins oft I past
My sorrowing eyes aside did cast
And here and there the places spy
Where oft I sate and long did lie.
Here stood that Trunk, and there that chest,
There lay that store I counted best,
My pleasant things in ashes lie
And them behold no more shall I.
Under the roof no guest shall sit,
Nor at thy Table eat a bit.
No pleasant talk shall ‘ere be told
Nor things recounted done of old.

No Candle ‘ere shall shine in Thee,
Nor bridegroom’s voice ere heard shall bee.
In silence ever shalt thou lie.
Adieu, Adieu, All’s Vanity.
Then straight I ‘gin my heart to chide:
And did thy wealth on earth abide,
Didst fix thy hope on mouldring dust,
The arm of flesh didst make thy trust?
Raise up thy thoughts above the sky
That dunghill mists away may fly.
Thou hast a house on high erect
Fram’d by that mighty Architect,
With glory richly furnished
Stands permanent, though this be fled.
It’s purchased and paid for too
By him who hath enough to do.
A price so vast as is unknown,
Yet by his gift is made thine own.
There’s wealth enough; I need no more.
Farewell, my pelf; farewell, my store.
The world no longer let me love;
My hope and Treasure lies above.

Verses Upon The Burning Of Our House, July 18th, 1666 by Anne Bradstreet - Poetry Reading

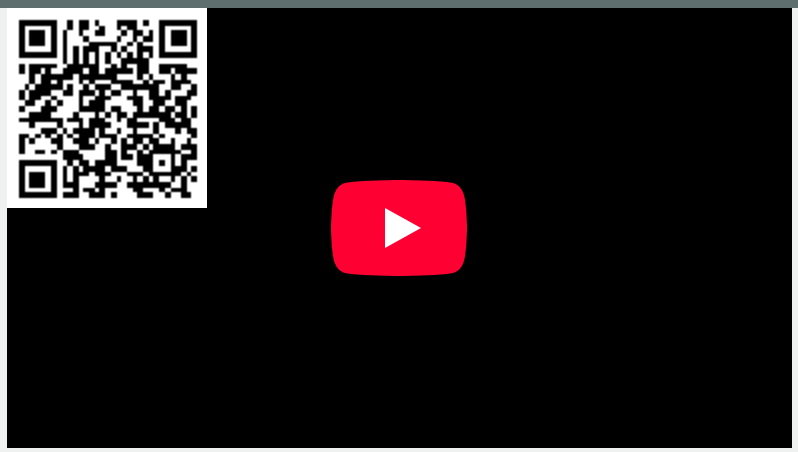


Figure 4.4.2: Video produced by Pearl of Wisdom, all rights reserved. It is not openly licensed but freely available to all.

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4.5: John Donne (1572–1631)

Learning Objectives

- List characteristics of metaphysical poetry and apply them to the poetry of John Donne.
- Define metaphysical conceit, paradox, apostrophe, and allusion, and identify examples in Donne's poetry.

Biography

Born into a Catholic family at a time when it was illegal to openly practice the Roman Catholic faith, John Donne is the chief figure in a group that has come to be known as the Metaphysical Poets. Donne held a series of clerical positions and enjoyed a prosperous life until he secretly married a relative of his employer. Fired from his position and imprisoned, Donne pleaded with his father-in-law not to punish him and his new wife, but to no avail. Because of his father-in-law's influence and because of his Catholic background, Donne and his wife lived in poverty for many years until reconciled with his father-in-law.



Figure **4.5.1**: Donne's effigy in St. Paul's Cathedral. (CC BY 2.0; Victor Keegan, via Flickr)

Donne began to question his faith after his brother died while in prison for harboring a Roman Catholic priest, and he continued his struggle with his religious beliefs until he renounced his Roman Catholic faith. Two works in which Donne denounced Roman Catholicism caught the attention of King James I. Donne became an Anglican clergyman at the King's insistence, later becoming the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, a prestigious and well-paying position, but one in which Donne was never completely comfortable.

Video Clip 1

John Donne



Figure 4.5.1: Video produced by Dr. Carol Lowe with McLennan Community College, licensed CC BY 4.0

Characteristics of Metaphysical Poetry

As previously noted, John Donne is the most noted member of a group of poets known as the **Metaphysical Poets**, poets whose work explores subjects beyond the physical world, including emotional and spiritual matters. They were not recognized as a group or given that name until Samuel Johnson applied it to them in the 18th century. Their poetry shares the following characteristics:

- abrupt, dramatic openings, often with a vivid image or an exclamation
- an argumentative construction
- an introspective quality; an element of self-analysis
- use of the **metaphysical conceit**, an unusual, elaborate, and unexpected comparison. For example, in his poem "The Bait" the speaker compares the woman he loves to fish bait. We might expect a comparison to a rose or a beautiful summer's day but not to fish bait.)
- use of literary devices
  - **paradox**—an apparently self-contradictory statement
  - **apostrophe**—an address to an inanimate object or abstract quality, for example speaking to the moon or to death
  - **allusion**—a reference to something from history, literature, or any other field that the writer assumes the reader will know; for example, when Donne refers to those destroyed by "the flood," he assumes the reader will recognize the biblical allusion to Noah's flood

“A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”

AS virtuous men pass mildly away,	
And whisper to their souls to go,	
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,	
“Now his breath goes,” and some say, “No.”	
So let us melt, and make no noise,	5
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move ;	
‘Twere profanation of our joys	
To tell the laity our love.	
Moving of th’ earth brings harms and fears ;	
Men reckon what it did, and meant ;	10
But trepidation of the spheres,	
Though greater far, is innocent.	
Dull sublunary lovers’ love	
—Whose soul is sense—cannot admit	
Of absence, ‘cause it doth remove	15
The thing which elemented it.	
But we by a love so much refined,	
That ourselves know not what it is,	
Inter-assurèd of the mind,	
Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss.	20
Our two souls therefore, which are one,	
Though I must go, endure not yet	
A breach, but an expansion,	
Like gold to aery thinness beat.	
If they be two, they are two so	25
As stiff twin compasses are two ;	
Thy soul, the fix’d foot, makes no show	

To move, but doth, if th’ other do.	
And though it in the centre sit,	
Yet, when the other far doth roam,	30
It leans, and hearkens after it,	
And grows erect, as that comes home.	
Such wilt thou be to me, who must,	
Like th’ other foot, obliquely run ;	
Thy firmness makes my circle just,	35
And makes me end where I begun.	

According to tradition, this poem has an autobiographical significance: that Donne wrote the poem to comfort his wife when he was planning to be away on a business trip for an extended time.

The word *valediction* means farewell. It shares the same Latin root as the term *valedictorian*, the person who traditionally gives a “farewell to high school” speech at graduation ceremonies. The title states that this is a farewell that forbids mourning—that the speaker does not want his beloved to mourn when he leaves.

The poem begins with a vivid image: a virtuous man dying so peacefully that the friends gathered around his bed aren’t sure when his breath ceases.

The entire poem is a series of images describing the lovers’ parting:

- In stanza two the lovers part as silently and gently as ice melts; the speaker states there will be no floods of tears or storms of sighing; the sanctity of their love is compared to religious devotion which “laity” (those who don’t have the same degree of sanctified love) do not understand.
- Stanza three pictures the fear caused by earthquakes. Then the speaker notes that the movement of the planets (“trepidation of the spheres”) is a far larger, more significant movement, but no one pays attention to the movement of the earth on its axis or around the sun. By implication, the speaker compares the significance of their parting to the movement of the planets but also wants their leave taking to be as calm.
- Stanza four compares the couple to “sublunary” lovers. *Sublunary* (sub-lunar) means beneath the moon, suggesting normal, everyday lovers rather than those like the speaker and his beloved who have an elevated, sanctified level of love. Sublunary love can’t withstand parting.
- In stanza five, the speaker claims that sublunary love depends on physical presence. His love, however, is not just a physical passion and therefore does not depend on “eyes, lips, and hands” to exist.
- Stanza six begins with a biblical allusion, a reference to the biblical statement that in marriage, two become one. Even though the speaker is leaving, the bond of their souls will not be broken; instead it will expand as gold can be stretched so thinly that it becomes translucent. Comparing their love to gold also suggests a high value, compressing more meaning into the stanza by using an image rather than a direct statement.
- The last three stanzas include one of the most famous of metaphysical conceits. The speaker compares the couple’s two souls to the two legs of a drafting compass. The speaker compares himself to the leg of the compass that moves to draw a circle and the wife to the stationary leg in the middle that brings the other leg back to the same spot where it began, thus suggesting that the speaker will return home.



Figure 4.5.2: God as Architect/Builder/Geometer/Craftsman, The Frontispiece of Bible Moralisee. (CC0 1.0; Anonymous, via Wikimedia Commons)

"Holy Sonnet V"

I am a little world made cunningly
Of elements, and an angelic sprite ;
But black sin hath betray'd to endless night
My world's both parts, and, O, both parts must die.
You which beyond that heaven which was most high
Have found new spheres, and of new land can write,
Pour new seas in mine eyes, that so I might
Drown my world with my weeping earnestly,
Or wash it if it must be drown'd no more.
But O, it must be burnt ; alas ! the fire
Of lust and envy burnt it heretofore,
And made it fouler ; let their flames retire,
And burn me, O Lord, with a fiery zeal
Of Thee and Thy house, which doth in eating heal.

In the first two lines, the speaker compares himself to a “little world” made of the physical (“elements”) and the spiritual (“sprite”). Both parts, however, have been betrayed by sin, and the speaker will therefore die both physically and spiritually. In line 5, the speaker addresses God, asking him to pour “seas” of tears into his eyes that will drown or wash away his sin. In the last six lines, the speaker, addressing God, suggests an alternative to washing away his sin: to burn his sin away. The fires of lust and envy made his soul dirty, as smoke and flames leave stains, but paradoxically God’s fire will cleanse and heal his soul.

“Holy Sonnet VII”

At the round earth’s imagined corners blow

Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise

From death, you numberless infinities

Of souls, and to your scattered bodies go ;

All whom the flood did, and fire shall o’erthrow,

All whom war, dea[r]th, age, agues, tyrannies,

Despair, law, chance hath slain, and you, whose eyes

Shall behold God, and never taste death’s woe.

But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space ;

For, if above all these my sins abound,

‘Tis late to ask abundance of Thy grace,

When we are there. Here on this lowly ground,

Teach me how to repent, for that’s as good

As if Thou hadst seal’d my pardon with Thy blood.

This sonnet begins with a biblical image, angels blowing their trumpets at the four corners of the world to announce the last judgment. The speaker pictures the souls of the dead throughout the ages rising and returning to their bodies. In the next four lines, the speaker recounts numerous ways in which these souls may have met their death: flood, fire, war, dearth (famine), age, sickness, tyrants (executions by tyrants), despair (a word which in the 16th and 17th centuries suggested suicide), law (executions ordered by the legal courts), and chance (accidents). Line 7 addresses one last group of people who will hear the trumpets: those who are still alive, whose “eyes shall behold God” even though they have never experienced death. In the last six lines, the speaker asks God to let the dead sleep awhile longer. His reason for this request is that he needs time to repent.

“Holy Sonnet X”

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so ;

For those, whom thou think’st thou dost overthrow,

Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

From rest and sleep, which but thy picture[s] be,

Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

Rest of their bones, and soul’s delivery.

Thou’rt slave to Fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,

> And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,
>
> And better than thy stroke ; why swell'st thou then ?
>
> One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
>
> And Death shall be no more ; Death, thou shalt die.

Perhaps the most well-known of the *Holy Sonnets*, "Holy Sonnet X" begins with a statement to death personified, a forceful statement ordering death not to be proud. The speaker continues to address death, claiming that those death thinks it has conquered have not really died. Death, the speaker asserts, is subject to a list of causes: fate, chance, kings, suicide, poison, war, and sickness. In the last two lines, the speaker makes his final statement of victory over death. In line 2—"for thou art not so"—and in the final sentence—"Death, thou shalt die" the use of one-syllable words emphasizes the power of the words with an accent on each word.

Key Takeaways

- John Donne is the chief figure of the Metaphysical Poets.
- Metaphysical poetry is characterized by dramatic openings, argumentative construction, self-analysis, metaphysical conceits, and literary devices such as paradox, apostrophe, and allusion.

Exercises

1. The titles of metaphysical poems are often important indications of the content and main idea of the poem. What is a valediction? What does the title reveal about the attitude the speaker has toward his leave-taking?
2. John Donne's poem "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," like most metaphysical poems, is a series of comparisons (metaphysical conceits). The poem begins with an image—a comparison—as signaled by the word "As." Assuming the biographical interpretation—that the speaker of the poem is addressing his wife—to what does the speaker compare their leave-taking?
3. Why, according to stanza 4, does physical absence destroy some people's love? How is this different from the speaker's love (stanza 5)? Which type of love do you think was portrayed in Sidney's sonnets?
4. Unlike the usual Elizabethan sonnet sequences about human love, Donne's *Holy Sonnets* trace his spiritual relationship with God. How would you describe the relationship in each of the sonnets discussed?
5. Identify each of the *Holy Sonnets* discussed as English or Italian. What characteristics of structure and content affect your classification?
6. Review the list of characteristics of metaphysical poetry. Identify characteristics in each of the sonnets discussed.

Resources

Texts

- "Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions." *Project Gutenberg*.
- DigitalDonne: the Online *Variorum*. Gary A. Stringer, General Editor. Department of English. Texas A&M University. digital images of manuscripts, text of some poems, concordance.
- "John Donne Sermons." Brigham Young University. Harold B. Lee Library.
- "Selected Poetry of John Donne (1572–1631)." *Representative Poetry Online*. Ian Lancashire. Department of English, University of Toronto. University of Toronto Libraries.
- "The Works of John Donne." Anniina Jokinen. *Luminarium*.

Audio

- "Death Be Not Proud." *Project Gutenberg*.
- "The Holy Sonnets." *Books Should Be Free*.
- "John Donne." *LibriVox*.
- "The Metaphysical Poets." BBC Radio 4 Programmes. In Our Time. recording of panel of British university professors discussing metaphysical poetry.
- "The Works of John Donne." Anniina Jokinen. *Luminarium*. audio of selected works.

Metaphysical Poetry

- "1633 John Donne Poetry." *English Language & Literature Timeline*. British Library.

Works Cited

Jokinen, Anniina. "The Life of John Donne." *Luminarium*, 22 Jun. 2006, www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/donne/donnebio.htm. Accessed 16 Jan 2026.

"John Donne's Marriage Letters." *Folger Shakespeare Library*, web.archive.org/web/20100528100044/http://www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=1617. Accessed 16 Jan. 2026.

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4.5.1: The Flea

The Flea

MARKE but this flea, and marke in this,
How little that which thou deny'st me is;
It suck'd me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea, our two bloods mingled bee;
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sinne, nor shame, nor losse of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoyes before it wooe,
And pamper'd swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more then wee would doe.
Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where wee almost, yea more then maryed are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our mariage bed, and mariage temple is;
Though parents grudge, and you, w'are met,
And cloysterd in these living walls of Jet.
Though use make you apt to kill mee,
Let not to that, selfe murder added bee,
And sacrilege, three sinnes in killing three.
Cruell and sodaine, hast thou since
Purpled thy naile, in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty bee,
Except in that drop which it suckt from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and saist that thou
Find'st not thy selfe, nor mee the weaker now;
'Tis true, then learne how false, feares bee;
Just so much honor, when thou yeeld'st to mee,
Will wast, as this flea's death tooke life from thee.

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4.5.2: Death Be Not Proud

Death be Not Proud

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadfull, for, thou art not soe,
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill mee.
From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee doe goe,
Rest of their bones, and soules deliverie.
Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poyson, warre, and sicknesse dwell,
And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe as well,
And better then thy stroake; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

Works Cited

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4.6: Edgar Allan Poe's “The Raven” (1845)

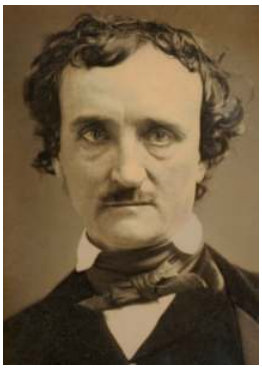


Figure 4.6.1: Edgar Allan Poe, June 1849. (CC0 1.0; via Wikimedia Commons)

Directions

Here, you will find the "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe, a Video Lecture on the text, and a Video of the Reading from The Simpsons.

Author's Bio:

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Within a year, his alcoholic father deserted his mother and three infant children. When his mother died of tuberculosis in Richmond, Virginia, three-year-old Edgar was adopted by John Allan and his wife. Allan, a prosperous businessperson, spent time in England, where Poe began his education at private schools.

Back in the United States, Allan forced Poe to leave the University of Virginia in 1826 when Poe incurred gambling debts he could not pay. He served in the U.S. Army from 1827 to 1829, eventually attaining the rank of sergeant major. Poe next attended West Point, hoping for further military advancement.

Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Allan died of tuberculosis. Poe angrily confronted his foster father about his extramarital affairs; for this candour, he was disowned. Believing that Allan would never reinstate him as heir, Poe deliberately violated rules to provoke his dismissal from the Academy. In 1835, Poe began his career as editor, columnist, and reviewer, earning a living he could not make as a writer of stories and poems. That same year, he married his thirteen-year-old cousin, Virginia Clemm, and lived with her and her mother during a period marked by illness and poverty. Virginia died of tuberculosis in 1847. Poe died, delirious, under mysterious circumstances, in 1849.

He perfected the Gothic horror story with “The Fall of the House of Usher” and originated the modern detective story in “The Gold-Bug” and “The Murders in the Rue Morgue.”

While going over the reading , keep these questions/ideas in mind:

- What are some themes/ messages that you see in the text?
- What does this speech make you feel/think of?
- What does a raven represent to you?
- Do you see examples of Ethos (credibility), Pathos (emotion), Logos (Logic), and Kairos (Rhetorical Situation)?
- Do you see examples of the rhetorical strategies from the Rhetorical Strategies PowerPoint?
- What are some ways this text is convincing?
- Can you begin to connect to the words in the text. What about these word choices, imagery, allusion, makes you feel a particular way? Explain.

Essay 1 Prompt

What does it mean?

How does the text use specific rhetorical strategies to deliver its intended theme/message?

TITLE/AUTHOR+THEME +STRATEGIES=Thesis

Requirements:

- Proper MLA Format
- 3-5 pages (Full pages)
- Works Cited Page

Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven"

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
“’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more.”
Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.
And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
“’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—
This it is and nothing more.”
Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you”—here I opened wide the door;—
Darkness there and nothing more.
Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, “Lenore?”
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, “Lenore!”—
Merely this and nothing more.
Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,

Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.

“Surely,” said I, “surely that is something at my window lattice;

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—

Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;—

’Tis the wind and nothing more!”

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,

In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;

Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;

But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—

Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,

By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,

“Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,” I said, “art sure no craven,

Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night’s Plutonian shore!”

Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,

Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;

For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being

Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—

Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,

With such name as “Nevermore.”

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only

That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.

Nothing farther then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—

Till I scarcely more than muttered “Other friends have flown before—

On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before.”

Then the bird said “Nevermore.”

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,

“Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and store

Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster

Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—

Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore

Of ‘Never—nevermore’.”

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,

Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;

Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”
This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o’er,
But whose velvet-violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o’er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!
Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
“Wretch,” I cried, “thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore;
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!”
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”
“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—
Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!”
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”
“Prophet!” said I, “thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore.”
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”
“Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!” I shrieked, upstarting—
“Get thee back into the tempest and the Night’s Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!”
Quoth the Raven “Nevermore.”
And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,

And the lamp-light o’er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor

Shall be lifted—nevermore!

Lecture-Rhetoric- "The Raven" by Poe



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The Simpsons - Edgar Allan Poe: The Raven



Figure **4.6.3**: Video produced by Fox Broadcasting company, all rights reserved. It is not openly licensed but freely available to all.

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4.7: Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997)

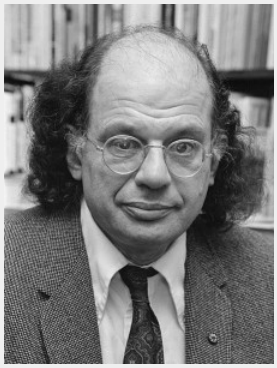
Irwin Allen Ginsberg (June 3, 1926 – April 5, 1997) was an American poet and one of the leading figures of both the Beat Generation of the 1950s and the counterculture that soon would follow. He vigorously opposed militarism, economic materialism and sexual repression. Ginsberg is best known for his epic poem “Howl,” in which he denounced what he saw as the destructive forces of capitalism and conformity in the United States.

In 1957, “Howl” attracted widespread publicity when it became the subject of an obscenity trial, as it depicted heterosexual and homosexual sex at a time when sodomy laws made homosexual acts a crime in every U.S. state. “Howl” reflected Ginsberg’s own homosexuality and his relationships with a number of men, including Peter Orlovsky, his lifelong partner. Judge Clayton W. Horn ruled that “Howl” was not obscene, adding, “Would there be any freedom of press or speech if one must reduce his vocabulary to vapid innocuous euphemisms?”

Ginsberg was a practicing Buddhist who studied Eastern religious disciplines extensively. He lived modestly, buying his clothing in second-hand stores and residing in downscale apartments in New York’s East Village. One of his most influential teachers was the Tibetan Buddhist, the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa, founder of the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado. At Trungpa’s urging, Ginsberg and poet Anne Waldman started The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics there in 1974.

Ginsberg took part in decades of non-violent political protest against everything from the Vietnam War to the War on Drugs. His poem “September on Jessore Road,” calling attention to the plight of Bangladeshi refugees, exemplifies what the literary critic Helen Vendler described as Ginsberg’s tireless persistence in protesting against “imperial politics, and persecution of the powerless.”

His collection *The Fall of America* shared the annual U.S. National Book Award for Poetry in 1974. In 1979 he received the National Arts Club gold medal and was inducted into the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. In 1986 he was awarded the Golden Wreath of the Struga Poetry Evenings in Struga, Macedonia. Ginsberg was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in 1995 for his book *Cosmopolitan Greetings: Poems 1986–1992*.

Allen Ginsberg	
	
Figure 4.7.1: Allen Ginsberg in 1979. (CC0 1.0; Hans van Dijk, Anefo, via Wikimedia Commons)	
Born	Irwin Allen Ginsberg June 3, 1926 Newark, New Jersey, United States
Died	April 5, 1997 (aged 70) New York City, United States
Occupation	Writer, poet
Nationality	American
Alma mater	Montclair State College, Columbia University
Literary movement	Beat literature, Hippie
Notable awards	National Book Award {1974} Robert Frost Medal (1986)
Partner	Peter Orlovsky 1954–1997 (Ginsberg's death)
Signature	

View Allen Ginsberg's full biography on Wikipedia.

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4.7.1: “Howl” (1956)

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4.8: Adrienne Rich (1929-2012)



Figure 4.8.1: Adrienne Rich 1980. (CC BY 2.0; K. Kendall, via Flickr)

Adrienne Rich is one of the most important poets and feminists of the middle to late twentieth century. Taken together, the twenty-five collections of poetry and numerous essays she published in her lifetime are a powerful literary expression of this period's radical politics. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Rich was encouraged to write poetry at an early age by her father, a pathologist at Johns Hopkins Medical School with a passion for English verse. She distinguished herself as a poet early in life, publishing her first book of poems, *A Change of World*, in 1951 while still a senior at Radcliffe College. The renowned poet W. H. Auden selected Rich's work for publication in the prestigious Yale Younger Poets Series based on what he perceived as the delicacy and restraint of her style. In 1952, Rich won her first of two coveted Guggenheim Fellowships, which funded a year-long trip to England and Italy. In 1953, she married an economics professor from Harvard, giving birth to three children before the end of the decade. In this formative decade, Rich faced a dilemma still familiar to women today: how to maintain her career while shouldering full responsibility for her children and home. In the volumes of poetry she published in the early 1960s, Rich turns an increasingly critical eye on an American society that subordinates women to the will of men and that asks only women to choose between family and career. Rich's delicate and restrained poetry became radicalized over the course of the 1960s as she realized that her personal situation was also political, an expression of social forces and institutions that the poet herself could change. From then on, as she writes in her 1968 poem "Implosions," "I wanted to choose words that even you/ would have to be changed by."

From the 1960s until she published her final collection in 2010, Rich used poetry to criticize war, sexism, and environmental destruction and to imagine a world free of gender divisions and male domination. Beginning in the 1970s, Rich became an outspoken advocate for lesbian rights in her poetry as well. As she describes in her book Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution (1976), over the course of the 1960s Rich came to realize that she had been living as a "suppressed lesbian" her entire life. She separated from her husband in 1970 and entered into a relationship with the novelist Michelle Cliff in 1974, with whom she remained partners until her death 2012. Rich's National Book Award winning collection of 1973, Diving into the Wreck, exemplifies her poetry of political conviction. Published during the second wave feminist movement, the poems in this volume describe women as a vast global sisterhood that has been written out of history. Rich optimistically imagines that this oppressive situation can change as society itself changes, in part through the force of the poet's voice. The history of Western civilization, as Rich writes in in the closing lines of the titular poem presented here, "Diving into the Wreck," is "a book of myths / in which / our names do not appear." The wreck in this poem is the wreck of western civilization itself, containing the ruins of both patriarchy and poetry. The poem's narrator is a personunimaginable in traditional Western society: someone who identifies with both genders at once and who transforms the decline of one civilization into the art of its successor. This hybrid narrator takes the reader on a dramatic journey into this dangerous wreck so that the reader, too, can imagine the end of a divisive civilization in which men dominate women.

“Diving into The Wreck”

Read this poem on the Academy of American Poets website: Diving into the Wreck by Adrienne Rich.

Reading and Review Questions

1. The book of myths is a metaphor for all the writings of Western civilization. Why does the poem’s narrator “first [have] to read the books of myths” before making this metaphoric dive into the wreck of Western civilization?
2. In the final stanza, Rich contradictorily writes that the narrator finds her way “by cowardice or courage...back to this scene.” If cowardice, then what fear is she succumbing to? If courage, then what fear is she facing?
3. Rich’s narrator worries in stanza five that “it is easy to forget / what I came for.” What does the narrator come to the wreck for? Why is it so easy to forget this goal?

Work Cited

Berke, Amy, et al. *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. *English Open Textbooks*, 2015. pp. 739-740.

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4.9: Sylvia Plath (1932-1963)



Figure 4.9.1: Sylvia Plath, in July 1961, at her Chalcot Square flat, in London. (CC BY 2.0; Giovanni Giovannetti/Grazia Neri, by Victor Soto via Flickr)

Sylvia Plath was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Plath's father, a professor of biology at Boston University and an authoritarian figure within the family, died when Plath was eight years old, and Plath struggled for the rest of her life to come to terms with her complicated feelings for him. Plath's mother went to work to provide for Plath and her brother. From a young age, Plath was a high achiever, showing an early talent as a writer and poet. She received a scholarship to Smith College and, after graduating, was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to Cambridge University. In spite of a history of depression and one suicide attempt, Plath excelled at academics and worked diligently on her writing, periodically publishing her work. At Cambridge, Plath met the young, upcoming British poet Ted Hughes; the two shared an intense and immediate attraction, marrying only a few months later. Plath and Hughes enjoyed their first years together as writing partners, encouraging each other as poets. The two lived for a time in America, travelled broadly, and eventually returned to England to live. Plath gave birth to two children and engaged in domestic routines while still working on poems that would eventually be included in her posthumous collection, *Ariel* (1965). She continued to struggle with depression, and after discovering Ted Hughes's affair with a mutual friend, Assia Wevill, Plath's depression worsened. She eventually separated from Hughes and moved to London with her children in an attempt to start over on her own. Most of the poems that comprise *Ariel* were written while she lived in London. During a particularly difficult winter where she saw her novel *The Bell Jar* published to less than enthusiastic reviews in January 1963, Plath's mental state deteriorated. She committed suicide in February 1963, leaving her children behind, as well as the new collection of poems that would eventually make her famous after her death.

Plath's most critically acclaimed poems are those that appeared in her posthumous collection, *Ariel*. In these last poems composed before her suicide, Plath appears to have reached a new level of creative complexity in imagery and theme. Her poems exhibit a raw power and anger, as she battles with despair and attempts to find the fortitude to endure her psychic pain. Within the postmodern milieu and contributing to its innovations, Plath does not create a distinct persona through which she filters these intense, private emotions. Poetic form and tradition become less significant with postmodern poets, and the poet's voice achieves primacy, especially in the school of poetry termed "Confessional." Poets such as Allen Ginsberg, Anne Sexton, and Plath in the 1950s were willing to probe their psyches in very private, personal ways, "confessing" their deepest, most private, even disturbing feelings. In the time period, this kind of psychological probing of the self was new and provocative. From a feminist perspective, Plath in the *Ariel* poems openly explores her feelings of rage against the men in her life and against patriarchal authority in general. Plath also explores her feelings of ambivalence about being a mother, the cultural pressures she experienced of becoming a wife and mother, the pain she endured as a result of her husband's infidelity, and her battle with depression that culminated in suicide attempts.

In "Daddy," the prevalent Nazi imagery is not autobiographical but is used to depict the extreme emotions at work in the narrative voice's desperate, raging attempt to cut the cord of paternalistic domination. The narrative voice urgently and angrily wants to break from daddy's control, domination, and influence in order to forge her own identity as a woman and as a person. In "Fever

103°," the narrative voice offers hallucinogenic images of a fevered self, burned pure of fleshly needs and desires into an acetylene virgin, a bodiless entity that is almost invisible but nevertheless combustible. In her virginal state, untouched by the "lecherous" patriarchy, she is most volatile and powerful.

Analysis of "Daddy"

On the next page you will find the full-text of this poem along with videos of "Daddy" read by Sylvia Plath and a lecture on the poem. You are asked to consume these resources to prepare for your essay assignment.

Questions to Consider:

While reading the poem, keep these questions/ideas in mind:

- Reflect on what type of theme or message that jumps out to you?
- List the themes
- Then, begin to note and list the different use of poetic and literary devices in the poem
- What about these devices makes you feel this way?
- What does the poem mean to you?
- This poem uses the line "I know why the caged bird sings" a lot. Is this an allusion? A symbol? All of the above?
- How did the use of rhyme contribute/not contribute to the overall theme of the piece?
- Did you like the poem? Why or why not?

Essay Topic

As a reminder, your essay topic is:

After reading and analyzing the poem, hat is one overall theme/message that you see in the text? What are the literary/poetic devices that you see that are enhancing said theme/message?

Works Cited

Berke, Amy, et al. *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present. English Open Textbooks*, 2015. pp. 744-745.

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4.9.1: “Daddy” (1965)

This section can also be viewed full screen from the Poetry Foundation Website: Daddy.

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https://human.libretexts.org/@go/page/376902

Daddy--Read By Sylvia Plath



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Lecture on Sylvia Plath's Daddy-00:06:33

Sylvia Plath's "Daddy"



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4.10: Emily Dickinson

Born into an influential and socially prominent New England family in 1830, Emily Dickinson benefited from a level of education and mobility that most of her contemporaries, female and male, could not comprehend. The middle child of Edward Dickinson and Emily Norcross, Dickinson, along with her older brother Austin and younger sister Lavinia, received both an extensive formal education and the informal education that came by way of countless visitors to the family homestead during Edward Dickinson's political career. Contrary to popular depictions of her life, Dickinson did travel outside of Amherst but ultimately chose to remain at home in the close company of family and friends. An intensely private person, Dickinson exerted almost singular control over the distribution of her poetry during her lifetime. That control, coupled with early portrayals of her as reclusive, has led many readers to assume that Dickinson was a fragile and timid figure whose formal, mysterious, concise, and clever poetry revealed the mind of a writer trapped in the rigid gender confines of the nineteenth century. More recent scholarship demonstrates not only the fallacy of Dickinson's depiction as the ghostly "Belle of Amherst," but also reveals the technical complexity of her poetry that predates the Modernism of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, and Marianne Moore by almost three-quarters of a century. In the selections that follow, Dickinson's poetry displays both her technical proficiency and her embrace of techniques that were new to the nineteenth century. Like her contemporary Walt Whitman, Dickinson used poetry to show her readers familiar landscapes from a fresh perspective.



Figure **4.10.1**: Emily Dickinson. (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0; Artist Unknown,by Amherst College Archives & Special Collections via Flickr)

The selections that follow, from Dickinson's most prolific years (1861-1865), illustrate the poet's mastery of the **lyric**—a short poem that often expresses a single theme such as the speaker's mood or feeling. "I taste a liquor never brewed –" . . . celebrates the poet's relationship to the natural world in both its wordplay (note the use of liquor in line one to indicate both an alcoholic beverage in the first stanza and a rich nectar in the third) and its natural **imagery**. Here, as in many of her poems, Dickinson's vibrant language demonstrates a vital spark in contrast to her reclusive image. . . . "The Soul selects her own Society –," shows Dickinson using well-known images of power and authority to celebrate the independence of the soul in the face of expectations. In both of these first two poems, readers will note the celebrations of the individual will that engages fully with life without becoming either intoxicated or enslaved. . . . "Because I could not stop for Death –," one of the most famous poems in the Dickinson canon, forms an important bookend to "The Soul" in that both poems show Dickinson's precise control over the speaker's relationship to not only the natural world but also the divine. While death cannot be avoided, neither is it to be feared; the speaker of this poem reminds readers that the omnipresence of death does not mean that death is immanent. This idea of death as always present and potential comes full circle in . . . "My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –." Here Dickinson plays with our preconceptions not only of death, but also of energy which appears always to be waiting for someone to unleash it. Considered carefully, these four poems demonstrate the range of Dickinson's reach as a poet. In these lyrics, mortality and desire combine in precise lyrics that awaken both our imagination and our awareness of the natural world.

Work Cited

Berke, Amy, et al. *Writing the Nation: A Concise Introduction to American Literature 1865 to Present*. *English Open Textbooks*, 2015.

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- **4.25: Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)** has no license indicated.

4.10.1: Because I Could Not Stop For Death

"Because I Could Not Stop For Death" by Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death,

He kindly stopped for me;

The carriage held but just ourselves

And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,

And I had put away

My labor, and my leisure too,

For his civility.

We passed the school where children played,

Their lessons scarcely done;

We passed the fields of gazing grain,

We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed

A swelling of the ground;

The roof was scarcely visible,

The cornice but a mound.

Since then 't is centuries; but each

Feels shorter than the day

I first surmised the horses' heads

Were toward eternity.

Work Cited

Dickinson, Emily. “Because I Could Not Stop for Death”. *Poems: Three Series, Complete*. 2004. *Project Gutenberg*, gutenberg.org/files/12242/12242-h/12242-h.htm. This poem is in the public domain. Visit the Poetry Foundation website to access the audio version along with the text.

4.10.1: Because I Could Not Stop For Death is shared under a CC BY-SA license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by LibreTexts.

- **2.2.8.1: Because I could not stop for Death** by Anita Turlington, Matthew Horton, Karen Dodson, Laura Getty, Kyounghye Kwon, Georgia, & Laura Ng is licensed CC BY-SA 4.0. Original source: https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/english-textbooks/18/.

4.11: Dylan Thomas

This section can also be viewed full screen from the Poetry Foundation Website: Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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SECTION OVERVIEW

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5.1.1: Introduction

Module 4 – The Art of Tragic Drama

Module Introduction

Introduction

Many scholars trace the origins of the genre of drama to ritual tradition, whether in ancient Greece, China, India or African cultures. A history of theater course would offer a fascinating diversity of various traditions of classical and modern theater. This module focuses on the idea of tragedy and tragic drama through a discussion of one work of classical Greek tragedy and two modern one-act plays.

Notably, the creation of a theatrical work is collaborative. This is in marked contrast to the other two genres we have studied so far, fiction and poetry. Although there are no prohibitions against fiction or poetry being collaborative works (and there are examples of this), writing in these literary genres historically is a much more individualized creative process.

Because of the collaborative process in staging a play – or adapting a play written in a previous time – reading a dramatic text in print offers different imaginative challenges than reading a poem or a work of fiction. We might suggest that combining the skills of reading poetry and reading fiction prepares us rather well for studying drama. We still can rely on the active reading skills and the appreciation of cultural context when analyzing drama. Yet we will need to add an understanding of staging and performance [1] .

Learning Outcomes

This module addresses the following Course Learning Outcomes listed in the Syllabus for this course:

1. Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
2. Demonstrate understanding of Global Sociocultural Responsibility
3. Recognize the relationships between cultural expressions and their contexts
4. Understand cultural expressions
5. Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance
6. Understand basic literary elements of specific genres: short story, poetry, and drama
7. Analyze and evaluate selected works of literature in classroom or online settings
8. Analyze and evaluate both in class discussions (whether face-to-face or electronic) and in class writing, selected works of literature
9. Demonstrate and understand how literature is relevant to their personal, social, and historical awareness [1]

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Recognize literary elements and formal structures of drama
- Describe themes and major ideas of selected plays in historical context
- Interpret selected plays for meaning and significance
- Analyze drama in writing
- Develop a full-length analysis of a specific play [1]

Readings and Resources

- Read: Learning Unit: The Art of Drama (see below)
- Read: Module 4 Readings (Attached *Module_04.pdf*)
- Listen: Antigone (LibriVox) by Sophocles (trans. Storr)
- Listen: Riders to the Sea (LibriVox) by J.M. Synge
- Listen: Trifles (LibriVox) by Susan Glaspell

Optional Further Reading

- Poole, Adrian. *Tragedy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Sands, Kathleen M. “Tragedy, Theology, and Feminism in the Time after Time.” New Literary History 35.1 (2004): 41–61.
- Williams, Raymond. *Modern Tragedy*. London: Vintage Books, (1966) 2013.

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"Trifles" by Susan Glaspell is marked CC0 1.0.

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5.1.2: About Drama

About Drama

Drama as a literary genre offers a unique challenge to the reader. Created to be performed, to become a **spectacle** , drama is based in large part on imitative action and gesture. The written works of the theater present the reader with only one dimension of what, when fully realized, becomes a multi-sensory experience. Western drama, the dramatic literature of the Western World of Europe and North America, has its origins in ancient Greek theater.

Medieval theater , dated after the fall of Rome and before the Renaissance, was composed largely of **liturgical drama** (of religious sources) and **morality plays** . Morality plays focused more on human drama than specific Biblical storylines as liturgical drama did, but they still emphasized strongly moralistic themes with characters often personifying good and evil, justice, or one of the virtues.



Figure 5.1.2.1: Macbeth-35-Palace. (CC0; Federal Theatre Project, via Wikimedia Commons)

Renaissance drama can be divided into two distinct categories: private performances that took place in indoor (often aristocratic) halls and public, open-air performances. Of historical significance, this period saw the rise of the professionalization of theater troupes with the craft of acting and the skill of dramatic production (staging, costuming, etc.) becoming more organized and regulated, including the formation of professional membership groups or **guilds** . In Italy, drama returned to an appreciation of classical staging (**Neoclassicism**) and the development of *Commedia dell'arte* , a style of drama based on four principal characters, each with a fixed costume and mask. Spanish drama, likewise experienced a golden age and French theater shared in a neo-classical revival. In England, large public theaters became profitable, most notably the Globe in London, and a bounty of playwrights from William Shakespeare to Ben Johnson and Christopher Marlowe, among many others, forged lasting reputations.

Melodrama is a style of drama that exaggerates characters, often through the strong use of stereotypes, and presents emotionally charged plots. Rising to popularity in the 18 th century, the style was at a peak in the 19 th century with many approaches to melodrama, including the use of music and dance to augment performances. Victorian melodrama particularly is known for its use

of stock characters: the hero, the villain, the damsel in distress, the clownish sidekick. Students may even recall some of these stylized characters in early examples of silent film.

Relatedly, a **farce** is a type of comedy that relies on deliberate absurdity, nonsense, and/or physical humor, even to the point of extravagance or improbability; the popularity of farce, however, was not restricted to the same time period as melodrama and examples of the dramatic style may be found even in antiquity. Literal readings of the written scripts of farces would prove disappointing for it is the enjoyment of the live experience of accumulating absurdity that is central to the style.

The rise of **Vaudeville** flowed out of the popularity of melodrama and merged with the growth of saloons, musical halls, and burlesque houses in the late 19 th century. Featuring similar stock characters in the context of a variety show, Vaudeville performances added elements of acrobatics, impressions, and stylized interpretations of famous scenes from Shakespeare and classical drama. The culturally problematic (from our current cultural perspective) tradition of **minstrel shows** , collections of skits and slapstick routines by troupes performing in blackface that were at the height of popularity just after the U.S. Civil War, was overtaken by the success of Vaudeville. (Indeed, some early Vaudeville productions included minstrel acts.) The rise of Vaudeville also was supported by the growth of a middle class that could afford an afternoon or evening diversion to the theater.

20 th century drama experienced a surge of creative experimentation including stylistic developments introduced by Expressionism, Impressionism, Modernism, and various forms of political theater; it also was influenced by the developments in the new genre of film and other media technologies. Realistic drama drawing upon the theories of modern psychology (Freud, Jung, et al.) aimed to present authentic characters and gestures, leading to the development of the **Stanislavski method** of acting (or method acting). **Radio dramas** enjoyed a huge surge of popularity over a number of subgenres from detective shows to Westerns, and many traditional literary writers tried their hands at crafting **screenplays** for Hollywood. Television scripts, whether for dramas or sitcoms (situation comedies) still rely on a written, literary document to guide the creation of multi-media productions. (1)

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5.1.3: The Importance of Tragedy

The Importance of Tragedy



Figure **5.1.3.1**: Sicily Taormina Greek Theater. (CC BY 2.0; Bart Hiddink, via Flickr)

It is important to note that the dramatic performances of the ancient Greek theater were part of the annual religious and civic celebration known as the City Dionysia an annual festival in Athens, commemorating Dionysus, the god of wine, fertility, and ritual madness. The theatrical performances were the central focus of the festival and included two major types of drama: **tragedy** and **comedy** (also known as satyr plays). Although it is difficult to tell when tragic drama first emerged, many scholars suggest that it was formally introduced by the actor Thespis in 533 BCE. The word tragedy comes from the ancient Greek word *tragodia*, which literally translates as goat song. This is important because scholars have speculated that tragic drama, as a religious ritual, originated in the sacrificial killing of a goat, or scapegoat. The song may have functioned as a kind of prayer, as well as a commemoration of the life of the sacrificial animal. Once again, we can see that like poetry, tragic drama has its origins in musical composition and performance.

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE) provided one of the earliest accounts of the formal elements of tragic drama in his treatise entitled *Poetics*. According to Aristotle, tragedies involved a main character of high social standing falling out of favor or perpetrating his or her own demise through **hubris** (excessive pride or self-conceit, in Greek tragedy often in defiance of the gods) or a tragic flaw that leads to a substantial error in judgment (what the Greeks called **hamartia**). Most importantly, the suffering of the tragic figure provoked strong feelings of both pity and fear on the part of the audience. The notion of the tragic scapegoat, then, relates to the role of the sacrificial animal in ancient religious rituals of sacrifice. According to Aristotle, when the dramatic performance reaches its resolution, the audience experiences a therapeutic release of these feelings of pity and fear. He termed this therapeutic aspect of tragedy **catharsis** . Many scholars maintain the theater continues to serve this therapeutic function today.

In the media, the word tragedy is commonly used to describe accidents, natural disasters, and even acts of seemingly random violence. Is there any relationship between this common use of the word tragedy and tragedy as a dramatic form? Theatrical performances in ancient Greece were not simply, or even primarily, for the purposes of entertainment. Tragic drama provided the audience with an opportunity to reflect on its own social, political, and religious values. Likewise, whenever so-called tragic events occur in our contemporary world, they often lead us to ask searching questions about the nature of our society, the possibility of justice, and perhaps they even cause us to reflect upon our own mortality. In works of ancient Greek tragedy, there is always a **chorus**, a group of actors who sing and provide commentary on the action taking place in the play. The chorus serves as kind of substitute for the audience and often express ideas or opinions that both reflect and also guide the interpretations of the audience.

The dramatic readings in this module consist of one work of ancient Greek tragedy, *Antigone* by Sophocles, and two plays from the early 20 th century. *Antigone* will provide a vivid portrayal of the lasting literary, as well social and political importance of tragedy and the idea of the tragic in everyday life. The **one-act plays** in this module provide an opportunity to explore how dramatic works continue to provide a unique space for dealing with the challenges and complexities of human life. Recalling our discussion of metaphors, it can be argued that the theater provides its audience with a metaphorical space for making sense of the darkest and often most difficult aspects of human life. [(1)]

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5.1.4: Elements of Drama

Formal Elements of Drama

The elements of fiction discussed in Module 2, **plot**, **character**, **setting**, **conflict**, and **theme** can be applied to drama. An additional concept to consider relating to the plot of a play is the common convention of the play beginning in the middle of the action. The Greeks referred to this convention as ***in medias res*** literally in the midst of things. A literary advantage for drama beginning *in medias res* is that without an exposition, the dramatic tension and conflict is presented immediately to the audience, which is more conducive to live performance.

An **act** is a major division in the action of the play, often used to demarcate key parts of the plot. Plays may have only one or as many as five or more acts. A **scene** is a smaller unit within an act, often signaled by the entrance or exit of a character or change in setting or focus of the action.

When analyzing **character**, the terms **dialogue**, **monologue**, and **soliloquy** take on increased importance. Conversation between two or more characters is referred to as **dialogue** (usually the majority of speech in plays consists of dialogue). A **monologue** is when one character delivers a speech to convey his or her thoughts, although other characters may remain on stage in scene. Similar to a monologue, a **soliloquy** is a speech made by one character but delivered when he or she is alone on stage. Knowing the root words of each term can help clarify the distinction. Monologue comes from the Greek words *monos* (single) and *legein* (to speak); soliloquy comes from the Latin words *solus* (alone) and *Ioqui* (to speak).

Clearly the **setting** of a play takes on extra importance as readers can pay close attention to the staging, costuming, and other directorial notes included in the text of the play. For example, the content of one scene can be set in an incongruous location or a character might be wearing a costume that contradicts the actions he is performing, thus resulting in **dramatic irony** . Understanding the subtleties between what is written as dialogue to be spoken by the actors and what is written to be gestured or achieved through **lighting**, **scenery**, **costumes**, **props**, and other elements of staging is critical for interpreting the meaning of a given scene. (The professional term for staging a character's movements and position on the stage is known as **blocking**.)

As always, attention to the use of **figurative language** whether presented in dialogue between characters or in monologue or soliloquy, will end layers of depth and add compelling specificity to any analysis and a robust consideration of the historical **context** including relevant social issues or cultural norms (or resistance to those norms) represented directly or indirectly in the play will demonstrate a more advanced level of critical thinking.

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5.2: Oscar Wilde

Learning Objectives

- Define comedy of manners and apply the definition to *The Importance of Being Earnest*.
- Analyze the use of characteristics of comedy of manners in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.
- Appraise *The Importance of Being Earnest* as a criticism of and satire on Wilde's contemporary society.

Biography



Figure **5.2.1**: Oscar Wilde. (CC0 1.0; Napoleon Sarony via Wikimedia Commons)

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin, Ireland, moved to England to attend Oxford University, and then moved to London. Wilde had been rejected by his first love, but in London met and married Constance Lloyd, with whom he had two children.

Wilde is considered one of the founders of the **aesthetic movement**, the theory of "art for art's sake" that places the pursuit of beauty as the highest purpose of art. Aestheticism, with its ideals of beauty and the belief that art and morality are not connected, spread throughout Europe in the late 19th century. The aesthetic philosophy contrasted with the Victorian ideals of duty, decorum, and decency represented by Queen Victoria and perceived in the works of Victorian writers such as Browning and Tennyson. In addition to literature, aestheticism influenced visual and decorative arts. From aestheticism grew the concept of the alienated artist, divorced from mainstream society, isolated from a middle class who cannot understand his/her work, an individual of more sensitive perception, more refined sensibilities than the ordinary person.

Wilde wrote children's books, the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and, most famously, a series of satirical plays, the last and most well known *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

In the 1890s, Wilde's scandalous court trials all but overshadowed his literary accomplishments. When the Marquis of Queensberry accused Wilde of homosexuality, Wilde sued him for libel. During the trial, witnesses testified that Wilde was guilty of homosexual activity, and even though Wilde dropped his suit against the Marquis, the government issued a warrant for Wilde's arrest on charges

of homosexual activity. Found guilty and sentenced to two years in prison, Wilde suffered declining health throughout his imprisonment. After his release, he moved to France and died there in 1900.



Figure **5.2.2**: A Conversation with Oscar Wilde Memorial. (BY-NC-SA 3.0; via lardbucket)

Text

- *The Importance of Being Earnest*. CELT: Corpus of Electronic Texts. University College Cork, Ireland.
- *The Importance of Being Earnest*. *Project Gutenberg*.
- *The Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*. London: Methuen & Co., 1919. *Hathi Trust Digital Library*.

Comedy of Manners

First produced in 1895, Wilde's play *The Importance of Being Earnest* abounds in witticisms and sly criticism of late Victorian society.

The Importance of Being Earnest is a comedy of manners, a type of play popularized in the late 17th and 18th centuries. A **comedy of manners** is a witty, satirical play which mocks aristocratic society. Wilde revived the comedy of manners, which had its zenith in the Restoration comedies of Sheridan and Goldsmith, to write an immensely popular, funny criticism of Victorian aristocracy. In the play, Wilde attacks Victorian complacency, as did Tennyson, but in a very different manner. Wilde displays the foibles of society for ridicule and for his audience's amusement.

Albert Edward



Figure **5.2.3**: Edward VII. (CC BY-SA 3.0; Stefan Schäfer, Lich, via Wikimedia Commons)

Albert Edward, the future King Edward VII, was the eldest son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Although he was heir to the throne, his mother did not entrust him with royal duties or make any attempts to prepare him for his future role as king. Instead, the Prince of Wales (known as Bertie to his family and friends) became the most prominent member of a group of highly elite socialites, the Marlborough House Set, named for the house Albert Edward occupied with his wife and family. Even after he married Princess Alexandra of Denmark (an arranged marriage), Bertie was notorious for his extravagant lifestyle and his string of mistresses, ranging from actresses to the wives of other noblemen, one of whom was at his bedside when he died. He fathered a number of illegitimate children, some of them passed off as the children of their mothers' husbands.

Bertie's crowd of affluent individuals did not work for a living (their families being independently wealthy), spent their lives in pursuit of pleasure, and gathered at their country estates for long weekends of hunting, card playing, and flirting. All members of this group would, like Wilde's character Jack, have homes in the city and in the country.

One of Bertie's well-known mistresses was Daisy, Countess of Warwick, wife of Francis Greville, Lord Brooke, the Earl of Warwick. Daisy and her husband lived in Warwick Castle, the medieval castle that had for generations been home to the Earls of Warwick. Daisy was one of the most popular hostesses of country weekends at the magnificent Warwick Castle. Warwick was owned by the same family until 1978 but is now open as a tourist attraction. One of the exhibits at Warwick Castle is called "A Royal Weekend Party" and depicts Albert Edward (Bertie) the Prince of Wales, Daisy Countess of Warwick, and others of the Marlborough House Set.

In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde writes satirically about these people, the aristocracy of late Victorian England.



Figure 5.2.4: *Warwick Castle East side. (*CC BY 2.0; Steve Knight, via Flickr*)*



Figure 5.2.5: Daisy, Countess of Warwick. (CC0 1.0, James Lafayette, via Wikimedia Commons)



Figure 5.2.6: Photographs of Oscar Wilde and His Circle at the Clark Library (via William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, UCLA)

Characteristics of Comedy of Manners

- **Realistic.** In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde presents aristocratic characters, members of highest Victorian society, people such as the Prince of Wales and his circle. While Jack, Algernon, Lady Bracknell, and Gwendolen may be exaggerated, the Victorians would have recognized their similarity to a real group of people.
- **Satiric.Satire** is a literary manner, used in any genre (in this case in drama), that blends criticism of a person, event, or situation with witty humor for the purpose of improving the object of the satire. Satire is mocking but always with a serious underlying purpose; the goal is to use humor to make the audience aware of a situation that needs improvement. In this case, Wilde satirizes the British aristocracy. He also makes fun of numerous facets of Victorian life—note the comments on everything from the British education system to marriage to Darwinism (Darwin's theories suggest that humans, like animals, behave according to instinct; Cecily comments twice on her "instinctive" knowledge).
- **Focus on a dissipated and superficial society.** The primary target of satire is the twisted values of the characters. The title of the play is, in itself, a pun on the word "earnest," meaning honest. The characters are anything but earnest. They value appearance above all else. Note Lady Bracknell's criteria for a potential husband for her daughter. The young ladies themselves have only one criterion for a future husband: his name must be Ernest. It doesn't matter if he is a man of character, honesty, worthiness; he just has to have the right name. If any word characterizes Queen Victoria and her age, it is the word *earnest*; Wilde divulges the insincerity underlying much apparent Victorian earnestness.
- **Use of stock characters.** Stock characters are stereotypes that appear in all comedies of manners. All comedies of manners will have an ingénue (Cecily in this play); they all will have a dandy (a young man concerned with fashion and fun—Jack and Algernon), they will have an authoritative matron (Lady Bracknell in this case).
- **Dominance of dialogue over plot.** There is little action; the dialogue is the important element of the play.

- **Presence of intrigue in plot.** In a comedy of manners there is a mystery to solve: in this play, Jack's identity.
- **Amoral characters.** As might be expected within the aesthetic movement, characters display a distinct lack of perception of moral values. Algernon, for instance, lies as easily about cucumber sandwiches as about his financial situation or his potential fiancée. Equally, he expects his servant to lie for him (a jab at the Victorian idea that the upper classes had a duty to set a moral example for those of lower classes). He creates an elaborate fiction (Bunbury) to use as an excuse for anything he doesn't want to do. Even Jack comments that the truth is not the sort of thing one tells a nice, young girl.

Key Takeaways

- *The Importance of Being Earnest* is a comedy of manners that exemplifies key characteristics of the form.
- Victorian audiences recognized the satire of the aristocracy and of Victorian "earnestness" in the play.

Exercises

1. Consider the title of the play. What is the meaning of the title? Why is the title ironic? To whom does the title apply?
2. Make a list of the objects of satire in this play. For example, Victorian education is satirized when Lady Bracknell comments, "Fortunately in England at any rate education produces no effect whatsoever."
3. What is Bunburying? What is its purpose?
4. Of the two young ladies Cecily and Gwendolen, does either seem more sincere, more "earnest" than the other? In what ways are they different? In what ways are they the same?
5. How does the play represent the relationship between the classes in Victorian society? Do you think this portrayal is realistic?
6. How is marriage depicted? Although not as prevalent or as overt as in the Middle Ages, marriages were, in a sense, still arranged among the upper classes in Victorian England. Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales, for example, had to marry an appropriate young woman from European royalty even though the two didn't know each other. Aristocratic young people in Victorian England usually married for the sake of family connection, maintenance of wealth, and the unifying of estates or businesses although those involved had the appearance of making their own choices. Even in the mid-20th century, the late Princess Margaret, younger sister of the current Queen Elizabeth II, was unable to marry the man with whom she fell in love because he was divorced and therefore deemed unsuitable. Although Princess Margaret ostensibly made her own decision not to marry him, she was pressured by her sister the Queen and the government to make a more appropriate choice of husband. Even in the 1980s, Lady Diana Spenser married Charles, Prince of Wales after meeting him only 13 times and was considered an appropriate choice of bride because of her family's lineage and her own innocent past.

   How does society's expectation of "appropriate" marriages influence the treatment of marriage in the play?
7. What role do diaries, notes, letters, manuscripts play in the plot? How does written communication compare with spoken communication?
8. By the end of the play, who, if anyone, deserves the name *Ernest*?
9. The play is subtitled "A Trivial Comedy for Serious People." What is the significance of the subtitle?

Resources

General Information

- "'The Importance of Being Earnest': The First Stage Production, 1895." *Victoria and Albert Museum*, web.archive.org/web/20170210145329/http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-importance-of-being-earnest-first-stage-production/.
- "A Reader's Guide to The Importance of Being Earnest." Dr. Stephanie Forward. The Open University, UK.
- "Oscar Wilde." *The Victorian Web*. George P. Landow, Brown University..
- The Oscar Wilde Society. includes a biography and images of historic play programs.
- Reading Wilde: Querying Spaces: An Exhibition Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Trials of Oscar Wilde. New York University Libraries.
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5.2.1: The Importance of Being Earnest

The Importance of Being Earnest, A Trivial Comedy for Serious People

THE PERSONS IN THE PLAY

John Worthing, J.P.
Algernon Moncrieff
Rev. Canon Chasuble, D.D.
Merriman, Butler
Lane, Manservant
Lady Bracknell
Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax
Cecily Cardew
Miss Prism, Governess

THE SCENES OF THE PLAY

ACT I. Algernon Moncrieff's Flat in Half-Moon Street, W.

ACT II. The Garden at the Manor House, Woolton.

ACT III. Drawing-Room at the Manor House, Woolton.

TIME: The Present.

FIRST ACT

SCENE

Morning-room in Algernon's flat in Half-Moon Street. The room is luxuriously and artistically furnished. The sound of a piano is heard in the adjoining room.

[**Lane** is arranging afternoon tea on the table, and after the music has ceased, **Algernon** enters.]

Algernon. Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?

Lane. I didn't think it polite to listen, sir.

Algernon. I'm sorry for that, for your sake. I don't play accurately—any one can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life.

Lane. Yes, sir.

Algernon. And, speaking of the science of Life, have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?

Lane. Yes, sir. [Hands them on a salver.]

Algernon. [Inspects them, takes two, and sits down on the sofa.] Oh! . . . by the way, Lane, I see from your book that on Thursday night, when Lord Shoreman and Mr. Worthing were dining with me, eight bottles of champagne are entered as having been consumed.

Lane. Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint.

Algernon. Why is it that at a bachelor's establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? I ask merely for information.

Lane. I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

Algernon. Good heavens! Is marriage so demoralising as that?

Lane. I believe it *is* a very pleasant state, sir. I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.

Algernon. [Languidly.] I don't know that I am much interested in your family life, Lane.

Lane. No, sir; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself.

Algernon. Very natural, I am sure. That will do, Lane, thank you.

Lane. Thank you, sir. [**Lane** goes out.]

Algernon. Lane's views on marriage seem somewhat lax. Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

[Enter **Lane**.]

Lane Mr. Ernest Worthing.

[Enter **Jack**.]

[**Lane** goes out.]

Algernon. How are you, my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town?

Jack. Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, I see, Algy!

Algernon. [Stiffly.] I believe it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock. Where have you been since last Thursday?

Jack. [Sitting down on the sofa.] In the country.

Algernon. What on earth do you do there?

Jack. [Pulling off his gloves.] When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people. It is excessively boring.

Algernon. And who are the people you amuse?

Jack. [Airily.] Oh, neighbours, neighbours.

Algernon. Got nice neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

Jack. Perfectly horrid! Never speak to one of them.

Algernon. How immensely you must amuse them! [Goes over and takes sandwich.] By the way, Shropshire is your county, is it not?

Jack. Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? Who is coming to tea?

Algernon. Oh! merely Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen.

Jack. How perfectly delightful!

Algernon. Yes, that is all very well; but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won't quite approve of your being here.

Jack. May I ask why?

Algernon. My dear fellow, the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

Jack. I am in love with Gwendolen. I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.

Algernon. I thought you had come up for pleasure? . . . I call that business.

Jack. How utterly unromantic you are!

Algernon. I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact.

Jack. I have no doubt about that, dear Algy. The Divorce Court was specially invented for people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

Algernon. Oh! there is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in Heaven—[**Jack** puts out his hand to take a sandwich. **Algernon** at once interferes.] Please don't touch the cucumber sandwiches. They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta. [Takes one and eats it.]

Jack. Well, you have been eating them all the time.

Algernon. That is quite a different matter. She is my aunt. [Takes plate from below.] Have some bread and butter. The bread and butter is for Gwendolen. Gwendolen is devoted to bread and butter.

Jack. [Advancing to table and helping himself.] And very good bread and butter it is too.

Algernon. Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat as if you were going to eat it all. You behave as if you were married to her already. You are not married to her already, and I don't think you ever will be.

Jack. Why on earth do you say that?

Algernon. Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they flirt with. Girls don't think it right.

Jack. Oh, that is nonsense!

Algernon. It isn't. It is a great truth. It accounts for the extraordinary number of bachelors that one sees all over the place. In the second place, I don't give my consent.

Jack. Your consent!

Algernon. My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my first cousin. And before I allow you to marry her, you will have to clear up the whole question of Cecily. [Rings bell.]

Jack. Cecily! What on earth do you mean? What do you mean, Algy, by Cecily! I don't know any one of the name of Cecily.

[Enter **Lane**.]

Algernon. Bring me that cigarette case Mr. Worthing left in the smoking-room the last time he dined here.

Lane. Yes, sir. [**Lane** goes out.]

Jack. Do you mean to say you have had my cigarette case all this time? I wish to goodness you had let me know. I have been writing frantic letters to Scotland Yard about it. I was very nearly offering a large reward.

Algernon. Well, I wish you would offer one. I happen to be more than usually hard up.

Jack. There is no good offering a large reward now that the thing is found.

[Enter **Lane** with the cigarette case on a salver. **Algernon** takes it at once. **Lane** goes out.]

Algernon. I think that is rather mean of you, Ernest, I must say. [Opens case and examines it.] However, it makes no matter, for, now that I look at the inscription inside, I find that the thing isn't yours after all.

Jack. Of course it's mine. [Moving to him.] You have seen me with it a hundred times, and you have no right whatsoever to read what is written inside. It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case.

Algernon. Oh! it is absurd to have a hard and fast rule about what one should read and what one shouldn't. More than half of modern culture depends on what one shouldn't read.

Jack. I am quite aware of the fact, and I don't propose to discuss modern culture. It isn't the sort of thing one should talk of in private. I simply want my cigarette case back.

Algernon. Yes; but this isn't your cigarette case. This cigarette case is a present from some one of the name of Cecily, and you said you didn't know any one of that name.

Jack. Well, if you want to know, Cecily happens to be my aunt.

Algernon. Your aunt!

Jack. Yes. Charming old lady she is, too. Lives at Tunbridge Wells. Just give it back to me, Algy.

Algernon. [Retreating to back of sofa.] But why does she call herself little Cecily if she is your aunt and lives at Tunbridge Wells? [Reading.] 'From little Cecily with her fondest love.'

Jack. [Moving to sofa and kneeling upon it.] My dear fellow, what on earth is there in that? Some aunts are tall, some aunts are not tall. That is a matter that surely an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. You seem to think that every aunt should be exactly like your aunt! That is absurd! For Heaven's sake give me back my cigarette case. [Follows **Algernon** round the room.]

Algernon. Yes. But why does your aunt call you her uncle? 'From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack.' There is no objection, I admit, to an aunt being a small aunt, but why an aunt, no matter what her size may be, should call her own nephew her uncle, I can't quite make out. Besides, your name isn't Jack at all; it is Ernest.

Jack. It isn't Ernest; it's Jack.

Algernon. You have always told me it was Ernest. I have introduced you to every one as Ernest. You answer to the name of Ernest. You look as if your name was Ernest. You are the most earnest-looking person I ever saw in my life. It is perfectly absurd your saying that your name isn't Ernest. It's on your cards. Here is one of them. [Taking it from case.] 'Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany.' I'll keep this as a proof that your name is Ernest if ever you attempt to deny it to me, or to Gwendolen, or to any one else. [Puts the card in his pocket.]

Jack. Well, my name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country, and the cigarette case was given to me in the country.

Algernon. Yes, but that does not account for the fact that your small Aunt Cecily, who lives at Tunbridge Wells, calls you her dear uncle. Come, old boy, you had much better have the thing out at once.

Jack. My dear Algy, you talk exactly as if you were a dentist. It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces a false impression.

Algernon. Well, that is exactly what dentists always do. Now, go on! Tell me the whole thing. I may mention that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; and I am quite sure of it now.

Jack. Bunburyist? What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyist?

Algernon. I'll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression as soon as you are kind enough to inform me why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

Jack. Well, produce my cigarette case first.

Algernon. Here it is. [Hands cigarette case.] Now produce your explanation, and pray make it improbable. [Sits on sofa.]

Jack. My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. In fact it's perfectly ordinary. Old Mr. Thomas Cardew, who adopted me when I was a little boy, made me in his will guardian to his grand-daughter, Miss Cecily Cardew. Cecily, who addresses me as her uncle from motives of respect that you could not possibly appreciate, lives at my place in the country under the charge of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

Algernon. Where is that place in the country, by the way?

Jack. That is nothing to you, dear boy. You are not going to be invited . . . I may tell you candidly that the place is not in Shropshire.

Algernon. I suspected that, my dear fellow! I have Bunburyed all over Shropshire on two separate occasions. Now, go on. Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?

Jack. My dear Algy, I don't know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. You are hardly serious enough. When one is placed in the position of guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It's one's duty to do so. And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness, in order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, who lives in the Albany, and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

Algernon. The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!

Jack. That wouldn't be at all a bad thing.

Algernon. Literary criticism is not your forte, my dear fellow. Don't try it. You should leave that to people who haven't been at a University. They do it so well in the daily papers. What you really are is a Bunburyist. I was quite right in saying you were a Bunburyist. You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists I know.

Jack. What on earth do you mean?

Algernon. You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, in order that you may be able to come up to town as often as you like. I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose. Bunbury is perfectly invaluable. If it wasn't for Bunbury's extraordinary bad health, for instance, I wouldn't be able to dine with you at Willis's to-night, for I have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

Jack. I haven't asked you to dine with me anywhere to-night.

Algernon. I know. You are absurdly careless about sending out invitations. It is very foolish of you. Nothing annoys people so much as not receiving invitations.

Jack. You had much better dine with your Aunt Augusta.

Algernon. I haven't the smallest intention of doing anything of the kind. To begin with, I dined there on Monday, and once a week is quite enough to dine with one's own relations. In the second place, whenever I do dine there I am always treated as a member of the family, and sent down with either no woman at all, or two. In the third place, I know perfectly well whom she will place me next to, to-night. She will place me next Mary Farquhar, who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner-table. That is not very pleasant. Indeed, it is not even decent . . . and that sort of thing is enormously on the increase. The amount of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so bad. It is simply washing one's clean linen in public. Besides, now that I know you to be a confirmed Bunburyist I naturally want to talk to you about Bunburying. I want to tell you the rules.

Jack. I'm not a Bunburyist at all. If Gwendolen accepts me, I am going to kill my brother, indeed I think I'll kill him in any case. Cecily is a little too much interested in him. It is rather a bore. So I am going to get rid of Ernest. And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr. . . . with your invalid friend who has the absurd name.

Algernon. Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, and if you ever get married, which seems to me extremely problematic, you will be very glad to know Bunbury. A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it.

Jack. That is nonsense. If I marry a charming girl like Gwendolen, and she is the only girl I ever saw in my life that I would marry, I certainly won't want to know Bunbury.

Algernon. Then your wife will. You don't seem to realise, that in married life three is company and two is none.

Jack. [Sententiously.] That, my dear young friend, is the theory that the corrupt French Drama has been propounding for the last fifty years.

Algernon. Yes; and that the happy English home has proved in half the time.

Jack. For heaven's sake, don't try to be cynical. It's perfectly easy to be cynical.

Algernon. My dear fellow, it isn't easy to be anything nowadays. There's such a lot of beastly competition about. [The sound of an electric bell is heard.] Ah! that must be Aunt Augusta. Only relatives, or creditors, ever ring in that Wagnerian manner. Now, if I get her out of the way for ten minutes, so that you can have an opportunity for proposing to Gwendolen, may I dine with you to-night at Willis's?

Jack. I suppose so, if you want to.

Algernon. Yes, but you must be serious about it. I hate people who are not serious about meals. It is so shallow of them.

[Enter **Lane**.]

Lane. Lady Bracknell and Miss Fairfax.

[**Algernon** goes forward to meet them. Enter **Lady Bracknell** and **Gwendolen**.]

Lady Bracknell. Good afternoon, dear Algernon, I hope you are behaving very well.

Algernon. I'm feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. That's not quite the same thing. In fact the two things rarely go together. [Sees **Jack** and bows to him with icy coldness.]

Algernon. [To **Gwendolen**.] Dear me, you are smart!

Gwendolen. I am always smart! Am I not, Mr. Worthing?

Jack. You're quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

Gwendolen. Oh! I hope I am not that. It would leave no room for developments, and I intend to develop in many directions. [**Gwendolen** and **Jack** sit down together in the corner.]

Lady Bracknell. I'm sorry if we are a little late, Algernon, but I was obliged to call on dear Lady Harbury. I hadn't been there since her poor husband's death. I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite twenty years younger. And now I'll have a cup of tea, and one of those nice cucumber sandwiches you promised me.

Algernon. Certainly, Aunt Augusta. [Goes over to tea-table.]

Lady Bracknell. Won't you come and sit here, Gwendolen?

Gwendolen. Thanks, mamma, I'm quite comfortable where I am.

Algernon. [Picking up empty plate in horror.] Good heavens! Lane! Why are there no cucumber sandwiches? I ordered them specially.

Lane. [Gravely.] There were no cucumbers in the market this morning, sir. I went down twice.

Algernon. No cucumbers!

Lane. No, sir. Not even for ready money.

Algernon. That will do, Lane, thank you.

Lane. Thank you, sir. [Goes out.]

Algernon. I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

Lady Bracknell. It really makes no matter, Algernon. I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

Algernon. I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

Lady Bracknell. It certainly has changed its colour. From what cause I, of course, cannot say. [**Algernon** crosses and hands tea.] Thank you. I've quite a treat for you to-night, Algernon. I am going to send you down with Mary Farquhar. She is such a nice woman, and so attentive to her husband. It's delightful to watch them.

Algernon. I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

Lady Bracknell. [Frowning.] I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately he is accustomed to that.

Algernon. It is a great bore, and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. [Exchanges glances with **Jack**.] They seem to think I should be with him.

Lady Bracknell. It is very strange. This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

Algernon. Yes; poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

Lady Bracknell. Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice . . . as far as any improvement in his ailment

goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when every one has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

Algernon. I'll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, if he is still conscious, and I think I can promise you he'll be all right by Saturday. Of course the music is a great difficulty. You see, if one plays good music, people don't listen, and if one plays bad music people don't talk. But I'll run over the programme I've drawn out, if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

Lady Bracknell. Thank you, Algernon. It is very thoughtful of you. [Rising, and following **Algernon**.] I'm sure the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations. French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse. But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, I believe is so. Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

Gwendolen. Certainly, mamma.

[**Lady Bracknell** and **Algernon** go into the music-room, **Gwendolen** remains behind.]

Jack. Charming day it has been, Miss Fairfax.

Gwendolen. Pray don't talk to me about the weather, Mr. Worthing. Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I always feel quite certain that they mean something else. And that makes me so nervous.

Jack. I do mean something else.

Gwendolen. I thought so. In fact, I am never wrong.

Jack. And I would like to be allowed to take advantage of Lady Bracknell's temporary absence . . .

Gwendolen. I would certainly advise you to do so. Mamma has a way of coming back suddenly into a room that I have often had to speak to her about.

Jack. [Nervously.] Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girl . . . I have ever met since . . . I met you.

Gwendolen. Yes, I am quite well aware of the fact. And I often wish that in public, at any rate, you had been more demonstrative. For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. [**Jack** looks at her in amazement.] We live, as I hope you know, Mr. Worthing, in an age of ideals. The fact is constantly mentioned in the more expensive monthly magazines, and has reached the provincial pulpits, I am told; and my ideal has always been to love some one of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.

Jack. You really love me, Gwendolen?

Gwendolen. Passionately!

Jack. Darling! You don't know how happy you've made me.

Gwendolen. My own Ernest!

Jack. But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

Gwendolen. But your name is Ernest.

Jack. Yes, I know it is. But supposing it was something else? Do you mean to say you couldn't love me then?

Gwendolen. [Glibly.] Ah! that is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations has very little reference at all to the actual facts of real life, as we know them.

Jack. Personally, darling, to speak quite candidly, I don't much care about the name of Ernest . . . I don't think the name suits me at all.

Gwendolen. It suits you perfectly. It is a divine name. It has a music of its own. It produces vibrations.

Jack. Well, really, Gwendolen, I must say that I think there are lots of other much nicer names. I think Jack, for instance, a charming name.

Gwendolen. Jack? . . . No, there is very little music in the name Jack, if any at all, indeed. It does not thrill. It produces absolutely no vibrations . . . I have known several Jacks, and they all, without exception, were more than usually plain. Besides, Jack is a notorious domesticity for John! And I pity any woman who is married to a man called John. She would probably never be allowed to know the entrancing pleasure of a single moment's solitude. The only really safe name is Ernest.

Jack. Gwendolen, I must get christened at once—I mean we must get married at once. There is no time to be lost.

Gwendolen. Married, Mr. Worthing?

Jack. [Astounded.] Well . . . surely. You know that I love you, and you led me to believe, Miss Fairfax, that you were not absolutely indifferent to me.

Gwendolen. I adore you. But you haven't proposed to me yet. Nothing has been said at all about marriage. The subject has not even been touched on.

Jack. Well . . . may I propose to you now?

Gwendolen. I think it would be an admirable opportunity. And to spare you any possible disappointment, Mr. Worthing, I think it only fair to tell you quite frankly before-hand that I am fully determined to accept you.

Jack. Gwendolen!

Gwendolen. Yes, Mr. Worthing, what have you got to say to me?

Jack. You know what I have got to say to you.

Gwendolen. Yes, but you don't say it.

Jack. Gwendolen, will you marry me? [Goes on his knees.]

Gwendolen. Of course I will, darling. How long you have been about it! I am afraid you have had very little experience in how to propose.

Jack. My own one, I have never loved any one in the world but you.

Gwendolen. Yes, but men often propose for practice. I know my brother Gerald does. All my girl-friends tell me so. What wonderfully blue eyes you have, Ernest! They are quite, quite, blue. I hope you will always look at me just like that, especially when there are other people present. [Enter **Lady Bracknell**.]

Lady Bracknell. Mr. Worthing! Rise, sir, from this semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

Gwendolen. Mamma! [He tries to rise; she restrains him.] I must beg you to retire. This is no place for you. Besides, Mr. Worthing has not quite finished yet.

Lady Bracknell. Finished what, may I ask?

Gwendolen. I am engaged to Mr. Worthing, mamma. [They rise together.]

Lady Bracknell. Pardon me, you are not engaged to any one. When you do become engaged to some one, I, or your father, should his health permit him, will inform you of the fact. An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself . . . And now I have a few questions to put to you, Mr. Worthing. While I am making these inquiries, you, Gwendolen, will wait for me below in the carriage.

Gwendolen. [Reproachfully.] Mamma!

Lady Bracknell. In the carriage, Gwendolen! [**Gwendolen** goes to the door. She and **Jack** blow kisses to each other behind **Lady Bracknell's** back. **Lady Bracknell** looks vaguely about as if she could not understand what the noise was. Finally turns round.] Gwendolen, the carriage!

Gwendolen. Yes, mamma. [Goes out, looking back at **Jack**.]

Lady Bracknell. [Sitting down.] You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing.

[Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil.]

Jack. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

Lady Bracknell. [Pencil and note-book in hand.] I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men, although I have the same list as the dear Duchess of Bolton has. We work together, in fact. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

Jack. Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

Lady Bracknell. I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. There are far too many idle men in London as it is. How old are you?

Jack. Twenty-nine.

Lady Bracknell. A very good age to be married at. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?

Jack. [After some hesitation.] I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square. What is your income?

Jack. Between seven and eight thousand a year.

Lady Bracknell. [Makes a note in her book.] In land, or in investments?

Jack. In investments, chiefly.

Lady Bracknell. That is satisfactory. What between the duties expected of one during one's lifetime, and the duties exacted from one after one's death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position, and prevents one from keeping it up. That's all that can be said about land.

Jack. I have a country house with some land, of course, attached to it, about fifteen hundred acres, I believe; but I don't depend on that for my real income. In fact, as far as I can make out, the poachers are the only people who make anything out of it.

Lady Bracknell. A country house! How many bedrooms? Well, that point can be cleared up afterwards. You have a town house, I hope? A girl with a simple, unspoiled nature, like Gwendolen, could hardly be expected to reside in the country.

Jack. Well, I own a house in Belgrave Square, but it is let by the year to Lady Bloxham. Of course, I can get it back whenever I like, at six months' notice.

Lady Bracknell. Lady Bloxham? I don't know her.

Jack. Oh, she goes about very little. She is a lady considerably advanced in years.

Lady Bracknell. Ah, nowadays that is no guarantee of respectability of character. What number in Belgrave Square?

Jack. 149.

Lady Bracknell. [Shaking her head.] The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. However, that could easily be altered.

Jack. Do you mean the fashion, or the side?

Lady Bracknell. [Sternly.] Both, if necessary, I presume. What are your politics?

Jack. Well, I am afraid I really have none. I am a Liberal Unionist.

Lady Bracknell. Oh, they count as Tories. They dine with us. Or come in the evening, at any rate. Now to minor matters. Are your parents living?

Jack. I have lost both my parents.

Lady Bracknell. To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the Radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?

Jack. I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is, Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents. It would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me . . . I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.

Lady Bracknell. Found!

Jack. The late Mr. Thomas Cardew, an old gentleman of a very charitable and kindly disposition, found me, and gave me the name of Worthing, because he happened to have a first-class ticket for Worthing in his pocket at the time. Worthing is a place in Sussex. It is a seaside resort.

Lady Bracknell. Where did the charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?

Jack. [Gravely.] In a hand-bag.

Lady Bracknell. A hand-bag?

Jack. [Very seriously.] Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a hand-bag—a somewhat large, black leather hand-bag, with handles to it—an ordinary hand-bag in fact.

Lady Bracknell. In what locality did this Mr. James, or Thomas, Cardew come across this ordinary hand-bag?

Jack. In the cloak-room at Victoria Station. It was given to him in mistake for his own.

Lady Bracknell. The cloak-room at Victoria Station?

Jack. Yes. The Brighton line.

Lady Bracknell. The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a hand-bag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life that reminds one of the worst excesses of the French Revolution. And I presume you know what that unfortunate movement led to? As for the particular locality in which the hand-bag was found, a cloak-room at a railway station might serve to conceal a social indiscretion—has probably, indeed, been used for that purpose before now—but it could hardly be regarded as an assured basis for a recognised position in good society.

Jack. May I ask you then what you would advise me to do? I need hardly say I would do anything in the world to ensure Gwendolen's happiness.

Lady Bracknell. I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and to make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over.

Jack. Well, I don't see how I could possibly manage to do that. I can produce the hand-bag at any moment. It is in my dressing-room at home. I really think that should satisfy you, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. Me, sir! What has it to do with me? You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing!

[**Lady Bracknell** sweeps out in majestic indignation.]

Jack. Good morning! [**Algernon**, from the other room, strikes up the Wedding March. Jack looks perfectly furious, and goes to the door.] For goodness' sake don't play that ghastly tune, Algy. How idiotic you are!

[The music stops and **Algernon** enters cheerily.]

Algernon. Didn't it go off all right, old boy? You don't mean to say Gwendolen refused you? I know it is a way she has. She is always refusing people. I think it is most ill-natured of her.

Jack. Oh, Gwendolen is as right as a trivet. As far as she is concerned, we are engaged. Her mother is perfectly unbearable. Never met such a Gorgon . . . I don't really know what a Gorgon is like, but I am quite sure that Lady Bracknell is one. In any case, she is

a monster, without being a myth, which is rather unfair . . . I beg your pardon, Algy, I suppose I shouldn't talk about your own aunt in that way before you.

Algernon. My dear boy, I love hearing my relations abused. It is the only thing that makes me put up with them at all. Relations are simply a tedious pack of people, who haven't got the remotest knowledge of how to live, nor the smallest instinct about when to die.

Jack. Oh, that is nonsense!

Algernon. It isn't!

Jack. Well, I won't argue about the matter. You always want to argue about things.

Algernon. That is exactly what things were originally made for.

Jack. Upon my word, if I thought that, I'd shoot myself . . . [A pause.] You don't think there is any chance of Gwendolen becoming like her mother in about a hundred and fifty years, do you, Algy?

Algernon. All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.

Jack. Is that clever?

Algernon. It is perfectly phrased! and quite as true as any observation in civilised life should be.

Jack. I am sick to death of cleverness. Everybody is clever nowadays. You can't go anywhere without meeting clever people. The thing has become an absolute public nuisance. I wish to goodness we had a few fools left.

Algernon. We have.

Jack. I should extremely like to meet them. What do they talk about?

Algernon. The fools? Oh! about the clever people, of course.

Jack. What fools!

Algernon. By the way, did you tell Gwendolen the truth about your being Ernest in town, and Jack in the country?

Jack. [In a very patronising manner.] My dear fellow, the truth isn't quite the sort of thing one tells to a nice, sweet, refined girl. What extraordinary ideas you have about the way to behave to a woman!

Algernon. The only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her, if she is pretty, and to some one else, if she is plain.

Jack. Oh, that is nonsense.

Algernon. What about your brother? What about the profligate Ernest?

Jack. Oh, before the end of the week I shall have got rid of him. I'll say he died in Paris of apoplexy. Lots of people die of apoplexy, quite suddenly, don't they?

Algernon. Yes, but it's hereditary, my dear fellow. It's a sort of thing that runs in families. You had much better say a severe chill.

Jack. You are sure a severe chill isn't hereditary, or anything of that kind?

Algernon. Of course it isn't!

Jack. Very well, then. My poor brother Ernest to carried off suddenly, in Paris, by a severe chill. That gets rid of him.

Algernon. But I thought you said that . . . Miss Cardew was a little too much interested in your poor brother Ernest? Won't she feel his loss a good deal?

Jack. Oh, that is all right. Cecily is not a silly romantic girl, I am glad to say. She has got a capital appetite, goes long walks, and pays no attention at all to her lessons.

Algernon. I would rather like to see Cecily.

Jack. I will take very good care you never do. She is excessively pretty, and she is only just eighteen.

Algernon. Have you told Gwendolen yet that you have an excessively pretty ward who is only just eighteen?

Jack. Oh! one doesn't blurt these things out to people. Cecily and Gwendolen are perfectly certain to be extremely great friends. I'll bet you anything you like that half an hour after they have met, they will be calling each other sister.

Algernon. Women only do that when they have called each other a lot of other things first. Now, my dear boy, if we want to get a good table at Willis's, we really must go and dress. Do you know it is nearly seven?

Jack. [Irritably.] Oh! It always is nearly seven.

Algernon. Well, I'm hungry.

Jack. I never knew you when you weren't . . .

Algernon. What shall we do after dinner? Go to a theatre?

Jack. Oh no! I loathe listening.

Algernon. Well, let us go to the Club?

Jack. Oh, no! I hate talking.

Algernon. Well, we might trot round to the Empire at ten?

Jack. Oh, no! I can't bear looking at things. It is so silly.

Algernon. Well, what shall we do?

Jack. Nothing!

Algernon. It is awfully hard work doing nothing. However, I don't mind hard work where there is no definite object of any kind.

[Enter **Lane**.]

Lane. Miss Fairfax.

[Enter **Gwendolen**. **Lane** goes out.]

Algernon. Gwendolen, upon my word!

Gwendolen. Algy, kindly turn your back. I have something very particular to say to Mr. Worthing.

Algernon. Really, Gwendolen, I don't think I can allow this at all.

Gwendolen. Algy, you always adopt a strictly immoral attitude towards life. You are not quite old enough to do that. [**Algernon** retires to the fireplace.]

Jack. My own darling!

Gwendolen. Ernest, we may never be married. From the expression on mamma's face I fear we never shall. Few parents nowadays pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out. Whatever influence I ever had over mamma, I lost at the age of three. But although she may prevent us from becoming man and wife, and I may marry some one else, and marry often, nothing that she can possibly do can alter my eternal devotion to you.

Jack. Dear Gwendolen!

Gwendolen. The story of your romantic origin, as related to me by mamma, with unpleasing comments, has naturally stirred the deeper fibres of my nature. Your Christian name has an irresistible fascination. The simplicity of your character makes you exquisitely incomprehensible to me. Your town address at the Albany I have. What is your address in the country?

Jack. The Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire.

[**Algernon**, who has been carefully listening, smiles to himself, and writes the address on his shirt-cuff. Then picks up the Railway Guide.]

Gwendolen. There is a good postal service, I suppose? It may be necessary to do something desperate. That of course will require serious consideration. I will communicate with you daily.

Jack. My own one!

Gwendolen. How long do you remain in town?

Jack. Till Monday.

Gwendolen. Good! Algy, you may turn round now.

Algernon. Thanks, I've turned round already.

Gwendolen. You may also ring the bell.

Jack. You will let me see you to your carriage, my own darling?

Gwendolen. Certainly.

Jack. [To **Lane**, who now enters.] I will see Miss Fairfax out.

Lane. Yes, sir. [**Jack** and **Gwendolen** go off.]

[**Lane** presents several letters on a salver to **Algernon**. It is to be surmised that they are bills, as **Algernon**, after looking at the envelopes, tears them up.]

Algernon. A glass of sherry, Lane.

Lane. Yes, sir.

Algernon. To-morrow, Lane, I'm going Bunburying.

Lane. Yes, sir.

Algernon. I shall probably not be back till Monday. You can put up my dress clothes, my smoking jacket, and all the Bunbury suits . . .

Lane. Yes, sir. [Handing sherry.]

Algernon. I hope to-morrow will be a fine day, Lane.

Lane. It never is, sir.

Algernon. Lane, you're a perfect pessimist.

Lane. I do my best to give satisfaction, sir.

[Enter **Jack**. **Lane** goes off.]

Jack. There's a sensible, intellectual girl! the only girl I ever cared for in my life. [**Algernon** is laughing immoderately.] What on earth are you so amused at?

Algernon. Oh, I'm a little anxious about poor Bunbury, that is all.

Jack. If you don't take care, your friend Bunbury will get you into a serious scrape some day.

Algernon. I love scrapes. They are the only things that are never serious.

Jack. Oh, that's nonsense, Algy. You never talk anything but nonsense.

Algernon. Nobody ever does.

[**Jack** looks indignantly at him, and leaves the room. **Algernon** lights a cigarette, reads his shirt-cuff, and smiles.]

ACT DROP

SECOND ACT

SCENE

Garden at the Manor House. A flight of grey stone steps leads up to the house. The garden, an old-fashioned one, full of roses. Time of year, July. Basket chairs, and a table covered with books, are set under a large yew-tree.

[**Miss Prism** discovered seated at the table. **Cecily** is at the back watering flowers.]

Miss Prism. [Calling.] Cecily, Cecily! Surely such a utilitarian occupation as the watering of flowers is rather Moulton's duty than yours? Especially at a moment when intellectual pleasures await you. Your German grammar is on the table. Pray open it at page fifteen. We will repeat yesterday's lesson.

Cecily. [Coming over very slowly.] But I don't like German. It isn't at all a becoming language. I know perfectly well that I look quite plain after my German lesson.

Miss Prism. Child, you know how anxious your guardian is that you should improve yourself in every way. He laid particular stress on your German, as he was leaving for town yesterday. Indeed, he always lays stress on your German when he is leaving for town.

Cecily. Dear Uncle Jack is so very serious! Sometimes he is so serious that I think he cannot be quite well.

Miss Prism. [Drawing herself up.] Your guardian enjoys the best of health, and his gravity of demeanour is especially to be commended in one so comparatively young as he is. I know no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility.

Cecily. I suppose that is why he often looks a little bored when we three are together.

Miss Prism. Cecily! I am surprised at you. Mr. Worthing has many troubles in his life. Idle merriment and triviality would be out of place in his conversation. You must remember his constant anxiety about that unfortunate young man his brother.

Cecily. I wish Uncle Jack would allow that unfortunate young man, his brother, to come down here sometimes. We might have a good influence over him, Miss Prism. I am sure you certainly would. You know German, and geology, and things of that kind influence a man very much. [**Cecily** begins to write in her diary.]

Miss Prism. [Shaking her head.] I do not think that even I could produce any effect on a character that according to his own brother's admission is irretrievably weak and vacillating. Indeed I am not sure that I would desire to reclaim him. I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice. As a man sows so let him reap. You must put away your diary, Cecily. I really don't see why you should keep a diary at all.

Cecily. I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn't write them down, I should probably forget all about them.

Miss Prism. Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary that we all carry about with us.

Cecily. Yes, but it usually chronicles the things that have never happened, and couldn't possibly have happened. I believe that Memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels that Mudie sends us.

Miss Prism. Do not speak slightingly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days.

Cecily. Did you really, Miss Prism? How wonderfully clever you are! I hope it did not end happily? I don't like novels that end happily. They depress me so much.

Miss Prism. The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.

Cecily. I suppose so. But it seems very unfair. And was your novel ever published?

Miss Prism. Alas! no. The manuscript unfortunately was abandoned. [**Cecily** starts.] I use the word in the sense of lost or mislaid. To your work, child, these speculations are profitless.

Cecily. [Smiling.] But I see dear Dr. Chasuble coming up through the garden.

Miss Prism. [Rising and advancing.] Dr. Chasuble! This is indeed a pleasure.

[Enter **Canon Chasuble**.]

Chasuble. And how are we this morning? Miss Prism, you are, I trust, well?

Cecily. Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache. I think it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the Park, Dr. Chasuble.

Miss Prism. Cecily, I have not mentioned anything about a headache.

Cecily. No, dear Miss Prism, I know that, but I felt instinctively that you had a headache. Indeed I was thinking about that, and not about my German lesson, when the Rector came in.

Chasuble. I hope, Cecily, you are not inattentive.

Cecily. Oh, I am afraid I am.

Chasuble. That is strange. Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism's pupil, I would hang upon her lips. [**Miss Prism** glares.] I spoke metaphorically.—My metaphor was drawn from bees. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, I suppose, has not returned from town yet?

Miss Prism. We do not expect him till Monday afternoon.

Chasuble. Ah yes, he usually likes to spend his Sunday in London. He is not one of those whose sole aim is enjoyment, as, by all accounts, that unfortunate young man his brother seems to be. But I must not disturb Egeria and her pupil any longer.

Miss Prism. Egeria? My name is Lætitia, Doctor.

Chasuble. [Bowing.] A classical allusion merely, drawn from the Pagan authors. I shall see you both no doubt at Evensong?

Miss Prism. I think, dear Doctor, I will have a stroll with you. I find I have a headache after all, and a walk might do it good.

Chasuble. With pleasure, Miss Prism, with pleasure. We might go as far as the schools and back.

Miss Prism. That would be delightful. Cecily, you will read your Political Economy in my absence. The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side.

[Goes down the garden with **Dr. Chasuble**.]

Cecily. [Picks up books and throws them back on table.] Horrid Political Economy! Horrid Geography! Horrid, horrid German!

[Enter **Merriman** with a card on a salver.]

Merriman. Mr. Ernest Worthing has just driven over from the station. He has brought his luggage with him.

Cecily. [Takes the card and reads it.] 'Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany, W.' Uncle Jack's brother! Did you tell him Mr. Worthing was in town?

Merriman. Yes, Miss. He seemed very much disappointed. I mentioned that you and Miss Prism were in the garden. He said he was anxious to speak to you privately for a moment.

Cecily. Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. I suppose you had better talk to the housekeeper about a room for him.

Merriman. Yes, Miss.

[**Merriman** goes off.]

Cecily. I have never met any really wicked person before. I feel rather frightened. I am so afraid he will look just like every one else.

[Enter **Algernon**, very gay and debonnair.] He does!

Algernon. [Raising his hat.] You are my little cousin Cecily, I'm sure.

Cecily. You are under some strange mistake. I am not little. In fact, I believe I am more than usually tall for my age. [**Algernon** is rather taken aback.] But I am your cousin Cecily. You, I see from your card, are Uncle Jack's brother, my cousin Ernest, my wicked cousin Ernest.

Algernon. Oh! I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily. You mustn't think that I am wicked.

Cecily. If you are not, then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

Algernon. [Looks at her in amazement.] Oh! Of course I have been rather reckless.

Cecily. I am glad to hear it.

Algernon. In fact, now you mention the subject, I have been very bad in my own small way.

Cecily. I don't think you should be so proud of that, though I am sure it must have been very pleasant.

Algernon. It is much pleasanter being here with you.

Cecily. I can't understand how you are here at all. Uncle Jack won't be back till Monday afternoon.

Algernon. That is a great disappointment. I am obliged to go up by the first train on Monday morning. I have a business appointment that I am anxious . . . to miss?

Cecily. Couldn't you miss it anywhere but in London?

Algernon. No: the appointment is in London.

Cecily. Well, I know, of course, how important it is not to keep a business engagement, if one wants to retain any sense of the beauty of life, but still I think you had better wait till Uncle Jack arrives. I know he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

Algernon. About my what?

Cecily. Your emigrating. He has gone up to buy your outfit.

Algernon. I certainly wouldn't let Jack buy my outfit. He has no taste in neckties at all.

Cecily. I don't think you will require neckties. Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

Algernon. Australia! I'd sooner die.

Cecily. Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia.

Algernon. Oh, well! The accounts I have received of Australia and the next world, are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

Cecily. Yes, but are you good enough for it?

Algernon. I'm afraid I'm not that. That is why I want you to reform me. You might make that your mission, if you don't mind, cousin Cecily.

Cecily. I'm afraid I've no time, this afternoon.

Algernon. Well, would you mind my reforming myself this afternoon?

Cecily. It is rather Quixotic of you. But I think you should try.

Algernon. I will. I feel better already.

Cecily. You are looking a little worse.

Algernon. That is because I am hungry.

Cecily. How thoughtless of me. I should have remembered that when one is going to lead an entirely new life, one requires regular and wholesome meals. Won't you come in?

Algernon. Thank you. Might I have a buttonhole first? I never have any appetite unless I have a buttonhole first.

Cecily. A Marechal Niel? [Picks up scissors.]

Algernon. No, I'd sooner have a pink rose.

Cecily. Why? [Cuts a flower.]

Algernon. Because you are like a pink rose, Cousin Cecily.

Cecily. I don't think it can be right for you to talk to me like that. Miss Prism never says such things to me.

Algernon. Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. [**Cecily** puts the rose in his buttonhole.] You are the prettiest girl I ever saw.

Cecily. Miss Prism says that all good looks are a snare.

Algernon. They are a snare that every sensible man would like to be caught in.

Cecily. Oh, I don't think I would care to catch a sensible man. I shouldn't know what to talk to him about.

[They pass into the house. **Miss Prism** and **Dr. Chasuble** return.]

Miss Prism. You are too much alone, dear Dr. Chasuble. You should get married. A misanthrope I can understand—a womanthrope, never!

Chasuble. [With a scholar's shudder.] Believe me, I do not deserve so neologistic a phrase. The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church was distinctly against matrimony.

Miss Prism. [Sententiously.] That is obviously the reason why the Primitive Church has not lasted up to the present day. And you do not seem to realise, dear Doctor, that by persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. Men should be more careful; this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

Chasuble. But is a man not equally attractive when married?

Miss Prism. No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.

Chasuble. And often, I've been told, not even to her.

Miss Prism. That depends on the intellectual sympathies of the woman. Maturity can always be depended on. Ripeness can be trusted. Young women are green. [**Dr. Chasuble** starts.] I spoke horticulturally. My metaphor was drawn from fruits. But where is Cecily?

Chasuble. Perhaps she followed us to the schools.

[Enter **Jack** slowly from the back of the garden. He is dressed in the deepest mourning, with crape hatband and black gloves.]

Miss Prism. Mr. Worthing!

Chasuble. Mr. Worthing?

Miss Prism. This is indeed a surprise. We did not look for you till Monday afternoon.

Jack. [Shakes **Miss Prism's** hand in a tragic manner.] I have returned sooner than I expected. Dr. Chasuble, I hope you are well?

Chasuble. Dear Mr. Worthing, I trust this garb of woe does not betoken some terrible calamity?

Jack. My brother.

Miss Prism. More shameful debts and extravagance?

Chasuble. Still leading his life of pleasure?

Jack. [Shaking his head.] Dead!

Chasuble. Your brother Ernest dead?

Jack. Quite dead.

Miss Prism. What a lesson for him! I trust he will profit by it.

Chasuble. Mr. Worthing, I offer you my sincere condolence. You have at least the consolation of knowing that you were always the most generous and forgiving of brothers.

Jack. Poor Ernest! He had many faults, but it is a sad, sad blow.

Chasuble. Very sad indeed. Were you with him at the end?

Jack. No. He died abroad; in Paris, in fact. I had a telegram last night from the manager of the Grand Hotel.

Chasuble. Was the cause of death mentioned?

Jack. A severe chill, it seems.

Miss Prism. As a man sows, so shall he reap.

Chasuble. [Raising his hand.] Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity! None of us are perfect. I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts. Will the interment take place here?

Jack. No. He seems to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

Chasuble. In Paris! [Shakes his head.] I fear that hardly points to any very serious state of mind at the last. You would no doubt wish me to make some slight allusion to this tragic domestic affliction next Sunday. [**Jack** presses his hand convulsively.] My sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful, or, as in the present case, distressing. [All sigh.] I have preached it at harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation and festal days. The last time I delivered it was in the Cathedral, as a charity sermon on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Discontent among the Upper Orders. The Bishop, who was present, was much struck by some of the analogies I drew.

Jack. Ah! that reminds me, you mentioned christenings I think, Dr. Chasuble? I suppose you know how to christen all right? [**Dr. Chasuble** looks astounded.] I mean, of course, you are continually christening, aren't you?

Miss Prism. It is, I regret to say, one of the Rector's most constant duties in this parish. I have often spoken to the poorer classes on the subject. But they don't seem to know what thrift is.

Chasuble. But is there any particular infant in whom you are interested, Mr. Worthing? Your brother was, I believe, unmarried, was he not?

Jack. Oh yes.

Miss Prism. [Bitterly.] People who live entirely for pleasure usually are.

Jack. But it is not for any child, dear Doctor. I am very fond of children. No! the fact is, I would like to be christened myself, this afternoon, if you have nothing better to do.

Chasuble. But surely, Mr. Worthing, you have been christened already?

Jack. I don't remember anything about it.

Chasuble. But have you any grave doubts on the subject?

Jack. I certainly intend to have. Of course I don't know if the thing would bother you in any way, or if you think I am a little too old now.

Chasuble. Not at all. The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

Jack. Immersion!

Chasuble. You need have no apprehensions. Sprinkling is all that is necessary, or indeed I think advisable. Our weather is so changeable. At what hour would you wish the ceremony performed?

Jack. Oh, I might trot round about five if that would suit you.

Chasuble. Perfectly, perfectly! In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time. A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

Jack. Oh! I don't see much fun in being christened along with other babies. It would be childish. Would half-past five do?

Chasuble. Admirably! Admirably! [Takes out watch.] And now, dear Mr. Worthing, I will not intrude any longer into a house of sorrow. I would merely beg you not to be too much bowed down by grief. What seem to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.

Miss Prism. This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

[Enter **Cecily** from the house.]

Cecily. Uncle Jack! Oh, I am pleased to see you back. But what horrid clothes you have got on! Do go and change them.

Miss Prism. Cecily!

Chasuble. My child! my child! [**Cecily** goes towards **Jack**; he kisses her brow in a melancholy manner.]

Cecily. What is the matter, Uncle Jack? Do look happy! You look as if you had toothache, and I have got such a surprise for you. Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

Jack. Who?

Cecily. Your brother Ernest. He arrived about half an hour ago.

Jack. What nonsense! I haven't got a brother.

Cecily. Oh, don't say that. However badly he may have behaved to you in the past he is still your brother. You couldn't be so heartless as to disown him. I'll tell him to come out. And you will shake hands with him, won't you, Uncle Jack? [Runs back into the house.]

Chasuble. These are very joyful tidings.

Miss Prism. After we had all been resigned to his loss, his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

Jack. My brother is in the dining-room? I don't know what it all means. I think it is perfectly absurd.

[Enter **Algernon** and **Cecily** hand in hand. They come slowly up to **Jack**.]

Jack. Good heavens! [Motions **Algernon** away.]

Algernon. Brother John, I have come down from town to tell you that I am very sorry for all the trouble I have given you, and that I intend to lead a better life in the future. [**Jack** glares at him and does not take his hand.]

Cecily. Uncle Jack, you are not going to refuse your own brother's hand?

Jack. Nothing will induce me to take his hand. I think his coming down here disgraceful. He knows perfectly well why.

Cecily. Uncle Jack, do be nice. There is some good in every one. Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid friend Mr. Bunbury whom he goes to visit so often. And surely there must be much good in one who is kind to an invalid, and leaves the pleasures of London to sit by a bed of pain.

Jack. Oh! he has been talking about Bunbury, has he?

Cecily. Yes, he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health.

Jack. Bunbury! Well, I won't have him talk to you about Bunbury or about anything else. It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

Algernon. Of course I admit that the faults were all on my side. But I must say that I think that Brother John's coldness to me is peculiarly painful. I expected a more enthusiastic welcome, especially considering it is the first time I have come here.

Cecily. Uncle Jack, if you don't shake hands with Ernest I will never forgive you.

Jack. Never forgive me?

Cecily. Never, never, never!

Jack. Well, this is the last time I shall ever do it. [Shakes with **Algernon** and glares.]

Chasuble. It's pleasant, is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation? I think we might leave the two brothers together.

Miss Prism. Cecily, you will come with us.

Cecily. Certainly, Miss Prism. My little task of reconciliation is over.

Chasuble. You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

Miss Prism. We must not be premature in our judgments.

Cecily. I feel very happy. [They all go off except **Jack** and **Algernon**.]

Jack. You young scoundrel, Algy, you must get out of this place as soon as possible. I don't allow any Bunburying here.

[Enter **Merriman**.]

Merriman. I have put Mr. Ernest's things in the room next to yours, sir. I suppose that is all right?

Jack. What?

Merriman. Mr. Ernest's luggage, sir. I have unpacked it and put it in the room next to your own.

Jack. His luggage?

Merriman. Yes, sir. Three portmanteaus, a dressing-case, two hat-boxes, and a large luncheon-basket.

Algernon. I am afraid I can't stay more than a week this time.

Jack. Merriman, order the dog-cart at once. Mr. Ernest has been suddenly called back to town.

Merriman. Yes, sir. [Goes back into the house.]

Algernon. What a fearful liar you are, Jack. I have not been called back to town at all.

Jack. Yes, you have.

Algernon. I haven't heard any one call me.

Jack. Your duty as a gentleman calls you back.

Algernon. My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree.

Jack. I can quite understand that.

Algernon. Well, Cecily is a darling.

Jack. You are not to talk of Miss Cardew like that. I don't like it.

Algernon. Well, I don't like your clothes. You look perfectly ridiculous in them. Why on earth don't you go up and change? It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man who is actually staying for a whole week with you in your house as a guest. I call it grotesque.

Jack. You are certainly not staying with me for a whole week as a guest or anything else. You have got to leave . . . by the four-five train.

Algernon. I certainly won't leave you so long as you are in mourning. It would be most unfriendly. If I were in mourning you would stay with me, I suppose. I should think it very unkind if you didn't.

Jack. Well, will you go if I change my clothes?

Algernon. Yes, if you are not too long. I never saw anybody take so long to dress, and with such little result.

Jack. Well, at any rate, that is better than being always over-dressed as you are.

Algernon. If I am occasionally a little over-dressed, I make up for it by being always immensely over-educated.

Jack. Your vanity is ridiculous, your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd. However, you have got to catch the four-five, and I hope you will have a pleasant journey back to town. This Bunburying, as you call it, has not been a great success for you.

[Goes into the house.]

Algernon. I think it has been a great success. I'm in love with Cecily, and that is everything.

[Enter **Cecily** at the back of the garden. She picks up the can and begins to water the flowers.] But I must see her before I go, and make arrangements for another Bunbury. Ah, there she is.

Cecily. Oh, I merely came back to water the roses. I thought you were with Uncle Jack.

Algernon. He's gone to order the dog-cart for me.

Cecily. Oh, is he going to take you for a nice drive?

Algernon. He's going to send me away.

Cecily. Then have we got to part?

Algernon. I am afraid so. It's a very painful parting.

Cecily. It is always painful to part from people whom one has known for a very brief space of time. The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. But even a momentary separation from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.

Algernon. Thank you.

[Enter **Merriman**.]

Merriman. The dog-cart is at the door, sir. [**Algernon** looks appealingly at **Cecily**.]

Cecily. It can wait, Merriman for . . . five minutes.

Merriman. Yes, Miss. [Exit **Merriman**.]

Algernon. I hope, Cecily, I shall not offend you if I state quite frankly and openly that you seem to me to be in every way the visible personification of absolute perfection.

Cecily. I think your frankness does you great credit, Ernest. If you will allow me, I will copy your remarks into my diary. [Goes over to table and begins writing in diary.]

Algernon. Do you really keep a diary? I'd give anything to look at it. May I?

Cecily. Oh no. [Puts her hand over it.] You see, it is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and impressions, and consequently meant for publication. When it appears in volume form I hope you will order a copy. But pray, Ernest, don't stop. I delight in taking down from dictation. I have reached 'absolute perfection'. You can go on. I am quite ready for more.

Algernon. [Somewhat taken aback.] Ahem! Ahem!

Cecily. Oh, don't cough, Ernest. When one is dictating one should speak fluently and not cough. Besides, I don't know how to spell a cough. [Writes as **Algernon** speaks.]

Algernon. [Speaking very rapidly.] Cecily, ever since I first looked upon your wonderful and incomparable beauty, I have dared to love you wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly.

Cecily. I don't think that you should tell me that you love me wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly. Hopelessly doesn't seem to make much sense, does it?

Algernon. Cecily!

[Enter **Merriman**.]

Merriman. The dog-cart is waiting, sir.

Algernon. Tell it to come round next week, at the same hour.

Merriman. [Looks at **Cecily**, who makes no sign.] Yes, sir.

[**Merriman** retires.]

Cecily. Uncle Jack would be very much annoyed if he knew you were staying on till next week, at the same hour.

Algernon. Oh, I don't care about Jack. I don't care for anybody in the whole world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you?

Cecily. You silly boy! Of course. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months.

Algernon. For the last three months?

Cecily. Yes, it will be exactly three months on Thursday.

Algernon. But how did we become engaged?

Cecily. Well, ever since dear Uncle Jack first confessed to us that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you of course have formed the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be something in him, after all. I daresay it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest.

Algernon. Darling! And when was the engagement actually settled?

Cecily. On the 14th of February last. Worn out by your entire ignorance of my existence, I determined to end the matter one way or the other, and after a long struggle with myself I accepted you under this dear old tree here. The next day I bought this little ring in

your name, and this is the little bangle with the true lover's knot I promised you always to wear.

Algernon. Did I give you this? It's very pretty, isn't it?

Cecily. Yes, you've wonderfully good taste, Ernest. It's the excuse I've always given for your leading such a bad life. And this is the box in which I keep all your dear letters. [Kneels at table, opens box, and produces letters tied up with blue ribbon.]

Algernon. My letters! But, my own sweet Cecily, I have never written you any letters.

Cecily. You need hardly remind me of that, Ernest. I remember only too well that I was forced to write your letters for you. I wrote always three times a week, and sometimes oftener.

Algernon. Oh, do let me read them, Cecily?

Cecily. Oh, I couldn't possibly. They would make you far too conceited. [Replaces box.] The three you wrote me after I had broken off the engagement are so beautiful, and so badly spelled, that even now I can hardly read them without crying a little.

Algernon. But was our engagement ever broken off?

Cecily. Of course it was. On the 22nd of last March. You can see the entry if you like. [Shows diary.] 'To-day I broke off my engagement with Ernest. I feel it is better to do so. The weather still continues charming.'

Algernon. But why on earth did you break it off? What had I done? I had done nothing at all. Cecily, I am very much hurt indeed to hear you broke it off. Particularly when the weather was so charming.

Cecily. It would hardly have been a really serious engagement if it hadn't been broken off at least once. But I forgave you before the week was out.

Algernon. [Crossing to her, and kneeling.] What a perfect angel you are, Cecily.

Cecily. You dear romantic boy. [He kisses her, she puts her fingers through his hair.] I hope your hair curls naturally, does it?

Algernon. Yes, darling, with a little help from others.

Cecily. I am so glad.

Algernon. You'll never break off our engagement again, Cecily?

Cecily. I don't think I could break it off now that I have actually met you. Besides, of course, there is the question of your name.

Algernon. Yes, of course. [Nervously.]

Cecily. You must not laugh at me, darling, but it had always been a girlish dream of mine to love some one whose name was Ernest. [**Algernon** rises, **Cecily** also.] There is something in that name that seems to inspire absolute confidence. I pity any poor married woman whose husband is not called Ernest.

Algernon. But, my dear child, do you mean to say you could not love me if I had some other name?

Cecily. But what name?

Algernon. Oh, any name you like—Algernon—for instance . . .

Cecily. But I don't like the name of Algernon.

Algernon. Well, my own dear, sweet, loving little darling, I really can't see why you should object to the name of Algernon. It is not at all a bad name. In fact, it is rather an aristocratic name. Half of the chaps who get into the Bankruptcy Court are called Algernon. But seriously, Cecily . . . [Moving to her] . . . if my name was Algy, couldn't you love me?

Cecily. [Rising.] I might respect you, Ernest, I might admire your character, but I fear that I should not be able to give you my undivided attention.

Algernon. Ahem! Cecily! [Picking up hat.] Your Rector here is, I suppose, thoroughly experienced in the practice of all the rites and ceremonials of the Church?

Cecily. Oh, yes. Dr. Chasuble is a most learned man. He has never written a single book, so you can imagine how much he knows.

Algernon. I must see him at once on a most important christening—I mean on most important business.

Cecily. Oh!

Algernon. I shan't be away more than half an hour.

Cecily. Considering that we have been engaged since February the 14th, and that I only met you to-day for the first time, I think it is rather hard that you should leave me for so long a period as half an hour. Couldn't you make it twenty minutes?

Algernon. I'll be back in no time.

[Kisses her and rushes down the garden.]

Cecily. What an impetuous boy he is! I like his hair so much. I must enter his proposal in my diary.

[Enter **Merriman**.]

Merriman. A Miss Fairfax has just called to see Mr. Worthing. On very important business, Miss Fairfax states.

Cecily. Isn't Mr. Worthing in his library?

Merriman. Mr. Worthing went over in the direction of the Rectory some time ago.

Cecily. Pray ask the lady to come out here; Mr. Worthing is sure to be back soon. And you can bring tea.

Merriman. Yes, Miss. [Goes out.]

Cecily. Miss Fairfax! I suppose one of the many good elderly women who are associated with Uncle Jack in some of his philanthropic work in London. I don't quite like women who are interested in philanthropic work. I think it is so forward of them.

[Enter **Merriman**.]

Merriman. Miss Fairfax.

[Enter **Gwendolen**.]

[Exit **Merriman**.]

Cecily. [Advancing to meet her.] Pray let me introduce myself to you. My name is Cecily Cardew.

Gwendolen. Cecily Cardew? [Moving to her and shaking hands.] What a very sweet name! Something tells me that we are going to be great friends. I like you already more than I can say. My first impressions of people are never wrong.

Cecily. How nice of you to like me so much after we have known each other such a comparatively short time. Pray sit down.

Gwendolen. [Still standing up.] I may call you Cecily, may I not?

Cecily. With pleasure!

Gwendolen. And you will always call me Gwendolen, won't you?

Cecily. If you wish.

Gwendolen. Then that is all quite settled, is it not?

Cecily. I hope so. [A pause. They both sit down together.]

Gwendolen. Perhaps this might be a favourable opportunity for my mentioning who I am. My father is Lord Bracknell. You have never heard of papa, I suppose?

Cecily. I don't think so.

Gwendolen. Outside the family circle, papa, I am glad to say, is entirely unknown. I think that is quite as it should be. The home seems to me to be the proper sphere for the man. And certainly once a man begins to neglect his domestic duties he becomes painfully effeminate, does he not? And I don't like that. It makes men so very attractive. Cecily, mamma, whose views on education are remarkably strict, has brought me up to be extremely short-sighted; it is part of her system; so do you mind my looking at you through my glasses?

Cecily. Oh! not at all, Gwendolen. I am very fond of being looked at.

Gwendolen. [After examining **Cecily** carefully through a lorgnette.] You are here on a short visit, I suppose.

Cecily. Oh no! I live here.

Gwendolen. [Severely.] Really? Your mother, no doubt, or some female relative of advanced years, resides here also?

Cecily. Oh no! I have no mother, nor, in fact, any relations.

Gwendolen. Indeed?

Cecily. My dear guardian, with the assistance of Miss Prism, has the arduous task of looking after me.

Gwendolen. Your guardian?

Cecily. Yes, I am Mr. Worthing's ward.

Gwendolen. Oh! It is strange he never mentioned to me that he had a ward. How secretive of him! He grows more interesting hourly. I am not sure, however, that the news inspires me with feelings of unmixed delight. [Rising and going to her.] I am very fond of you, Cecily; I have liked you ever since I met you! But I am bound to state that now that I know that you are Mr. Worthing's ward, I cannot help expressing a wish you were—well, just a little older than you seem to be—and not quite so very alluring in appearance. In fact, if I may speak candidly—

Cecily. Pray do! I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid.

Gwendolen. Well, to speak with perfect candour, Cecily, I wish that you were fully forty-two, and more than usually plain for your age. Ernest has a strong upright nature. He is the very soul of truth and honour. Disloyalty would be as impossible to him as deception. But even men of the noblest possible moral character are extremely susceptible to the influence of the physical charms of others. Modern, no less than Ancient History, supplies us with many most painful examples of what I refer to. If it were not so, indeed, History would be quite unreadable.

Cecily. I beg your pardon, Gwendolen, did you say Ernest?

Gwendolen. Yes.

Cecily. Oh, but it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is my guardian. It is his brother—his elder brother.

Gwendolen. [Sitting down again.] Ernest never mentioned to me that he had a brother.

Cecily. I am sorry to say they have not been on good terms for a long time.

Gwendolen. Ah! that accounts for it. And now that I think of it I have never heard any man mention his brother. The subject seems distasteful to most men. Cecily, you have lifted a load from my mind. I was growing almost anxious. It would have been terrible if any cloud had come across a friendship like ours, would it not? Of course you are quite, quite sure that it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is your guardian?

Cecily. Quite sure. [A pause.] In fact, I am going to be his.

Gwendolen. [Inquiringly.] I beg your pardon?

Cecily. [Rather shy and confidingly.] Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it to you. Our little county newspaper is sure to chronicle the fact next week. Mr. Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

Gwendolen. [Quite politely, rising.] My darling Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr. Ernest Worthing is engaged to me. The announcement will appear in the *Morning Post* on Saturday at the latest.

Cecily. [Very politely, rising.] I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago. [Shows diary.]

Gwendolen. [Examines diary through her lorgnettte carefully.] It is certainly very curious, for he asked me to be his wife yesterday afternoon at 5.30. If you would care to verify the incident, pray do so. [Produces diary of her own.] I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. I am so sorry, dear Cecily, if it is any disappointment to you, but I am afraid I have the prior claim.

Cecily. It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, if it caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to point out that since Ernest proposed to you he clearly has changed his mind.

Gwendolen. [Meditatively.] If the poor fellow has been entrapped into any foolish promise I shall consider it my duty to rescue him at once, and with a firm hand.

Cecily. [Thoughtfully and sadly.] Whatever unfortunate entanglement my dear boy may have got into, I will never reproach him with it after we are married.

Gwendolen. Do you allude to me, Miss Cardew, as an entanglement? You are presumptuous. On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one's mind. It becomes a pleasure.

Cecily. Do you suggest, Miss Fairfax, that I entrapped Ernest into an engagement? How dare you? This is no time for wearing the shallow mask of manners. When I see a spade I call it a spade.

Gwendolen. [Satirically.] I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different.

[Enter **Merriman**, followed by the footman. He carries a salver, table cloth, and plate stand. **Cecily** is about to retort. The presence of the servants exercises a restraining influence, under which both girls chafe.]

Merriman. Shall I lay tea here as usual, Miss?

Cecily. [Sternly, in a calm voice.] Yes, as usual. [**Merriman** begins to clear table and lay cloth. A long pause. **Cecily** and **Gwendolen** glare at each other.]

Gwendolen. Are there many interesting walks in the vicinity, Miss Cardew?

Cecily. Oh! yes! a great many. From the top of one of the hills quite close one can see five counties.

Gwendolen. Five counties! I don't think I should like that; I hate crowds.

Cecily. [Sweetly.] I suppose that is why you live in town? [**Gwendolen** bites her lip, and beats her foot nervously with her parasol.]

Gwendolen. [Looking round.] Quite a well-kept garden this is, Miss Cardew.

Cecily. So glad you like it, Miss Fairfax.

Gwendolen. I had no idea there were any flowers in the country.

Cecily. Oh, flowers are as common here, Miss Fairfax, as people are in London.

Gwendolen. Personally I cannot understand how anybody manages to exist in the country, if anybody who is anybody does. The country always bores me to death.

Cecily. Ah! This is what the newspapers call agricultural depression, is it not? I believe the aristocracy are suffering very much from it just at present. It is almost an epidemic amongst them, I have been told. May I offer you some tea, Miss Fairfax?

Gwendolen. [With elaborate politeness.] Thank you. [Aside.] Detestable girl! But I require tea!

Cecily. [Sweetly.] Sugar?

Gwendolen. [Superciliously.] No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more. [**Cecily** looks angrily at her, takes up the tongs and puts four lumps of sugar into the cup.]

Cecily. [Severely.] Cake or bread and butter?

Gwendolen. [In a bored manner.] Bread and butter, please. Cake is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays.

Cecily. [Cuts a very large slice of cake, and puts it on the tray.] Hand that to Miss Fairfax.

[**Merriman** does so, and goes out with footman. **Gwendolen** drinks the tea and makes a grimace. Puts down cup at once, reaches out her hand to the bread and butter, looks at it, and finds it is cake. Rises in indignation.]

Gwendolen. You have filled my tea with lumps of sugar, and though I asked most distinctly for bread and butter, you have given me cake. I am known for the gentleness of my disposition, and the extraordinary sweetness of my nature, but I warn you, Miss Cardew, you may go too far.

Cecily. [Rising.] To save my poor, innocent, trusting boy from the machinations of any other girl there are no lengths to which I would not go.

Gwendolen. From the moment I saw you I distrusted you. I felt that you were false and deceitful. I am never deceived in such matters. My first impressions of people are invariably right.

Cecily. It seems to me, Miss Fairfax, that I am trespassing on your valuable time. No doubt you have many other calls of a similar character to make in the neighbourhood.

[Enter **Jack**.]

Gwendolen. [Catching sight of him.] Ernest! My own Ernest!

Jack. Gwendolen! Darling! [Offers to kiss her.]

Gwendolen. [Draws back.] A moment! May I ask if you are engaged to be married to this young lady? [Points to**Cecily**.]

Jack. [Laughing.] To dear little Cecily! Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

Gwendolen. Thank you. You may! [Offers her cheek.]

Cecily. [Very sweetly.] I knew there must be some misunderstanding, Miss Fairfax. The gentleman whose arm is at present round your waist is my guardian, Mr. John Worthing.

Gwendolen. I beg your pardon?

Cecily. This is Uncle Jack.

Gwendolen. [Receding.] Jack! Oh!

[Enter **Algernon**.]

Cecily. Here is Ernest.

Algernon. [Goes straight over to **Cecily** without noticing any one else.] My own love! [Offers to kiss her.]

Cecily. [Drawing back.] A moment, Ernest! May I ask you—are you engaged to be married to this young lady?

Algernon. [Looking round.] To what young lady? Good heavens! Gwendolen!

Cecily. Yes! to good heavens, Gwendolen, I mean to Gwendolen.

Algernon. [Laughing.] Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

Cecily. Thank you. [Presenting her cheek to be kissed.] You may. [**Algernon** kisses her.]

Gwendolen. I felt there was some slight error, Miss Cardew. The gentleman who is now embracing you is my cousin, Mr. Algernon Moncrieff.

Cecily. [Breaking away from **Algernon**.] Algernon Moncrieff! Oh! [The two girls move towards each other and put their arms round each other's waists as if for protection.]

Cecily. Are you called Algernon?

Algernon. I cannot deny it.

Cecily. Oh!

Gwendolen. Is your name really John?

Jack. [Standing rather proudly.] I could deny it if I liked. I could deny anything if I liked. But my name certainly is John. It has been John for years.

Cecily. [To **Gwendolen**.] A gross deception has been practised on both of us.

Gwendolen. My poor wounded Cecily!

Cecily. My sweet wronged Gwendolen!

Gwendolen. [Slowly and seriously.] You will call me sister, will you not? [They embrace. **Jack** and **Algernon** groan and walk up and down.]

Cecily. [Rather brightly.] There is just one question I would like to be allowed to ask my guardian.

Gwendolen. An admirable idea! Mr. Worthing, there is just one question I would like to be permitted to put to you. Where is your brother Ernest? We are both engaged to be married to your brother Ernest, so it is a matter of some importance to us to know where your brother Ernest is at present.

Jack. [Slowly and hesitatingly.] Gwendolen—Cecily—it is very painful for me to be forced to speak the truth. It is the first time in my life that I have ever been reduced to such a painful position, and I am really quite inexperienced in doing anything of the kind. However, I will tell you quite frankly that I have no brother Ernest. I have no brother at all. I never had a brother in my life, and I certainly have not the smallest intention of ever having one in the future.

Cecily. [Surprised.] No brother at all?

Jack. [Cheerily.] None!

Gwendolen. [Severely.] Had you never a brother of any kind?

Jack. [Pleasantly.] Never. Not even of any kind.

Gwendolen. I am afraid it is quite clear, Cecily, that neither of us is engaged to be married to any one.

Cecily. It is not a very pleasant position for a young girl suddenly to find herself in. Is it?

Gwendolen. Let us go into the house. They will hardly venture to come after us there.

Cecily. No, men are so cowardly, aren't they?

[They retire into the house with scornful looks.]

Jack. This ghastly state of things is what you call Bunburying, I suppose?

Algernon. Yes, and a perfectly wonderful Bunbury it is. The most wonderful Bunbury I have ever had in my life.

Jack. Well, you've no right whatsoever to Bunbury here.

Algernon. That is absurd. One has a right to Bunbury anywhere one chooses. Every serious Bunburyist knows that.

Jack. Serious Bunburyist! Good heavens!

Algernon. Well, one must be serious about something, if one wants to have any amusement in life. I happen to be serious about Bunburying. What on earth you are serious about I haven't got the remotest idea. About everything, I should fancy. You have such an absolutely trivial nature.

Jack. Well, the only small satisfaction I have in the whole of this wretched business is that your friend Bunbury is quite exploded. You won't be able to run down to the country quite so often as you used to do, dear Algy. And a very good thing too.

Algernon. Your brother is a little off colour, isn't he, dear Jack? You won't be able to disappear to London quite so frequently as your wicked custom was. And not a bad thing either.

Jack. As for your conduct towards Miss Cardew, I must say that your taking in a sweet, simple, innocent girl like that is quite inexcusable. To say nothing of the fact that she is my ward.

Algernon. I can see no possible defence at all for your deceiving a brilliant, clever, thoroughly experienced young lady like Miss Fairfax. To say nothing of the fact that she is my cousin.

Jack. I wanted to be engaged to Gwendolen, that is all. I love her.

Algernon. Well, I simply wanted to be engaged to Cecily. I adore her.

Jack. There is certainly no chance of your marrying Miss Cardew.

Algernon. I don't think there is much likelihood, Jack, of you and Miss Fairfax being united.

Jack. Well, that is no business of yours.

Algernon. If it was my business, I wouldn't talk about it. [Begins to eat muffins.] It is very vulgar to talk about one's business. Only people like stock-brokers do that, and then merely at dinner parties.

Jack. How can you sit there, calmly eating muffins when we are in this horrible trouble, I can't make out. You seem to me to be perfectly heartless.

Algernon. Well, I can't eat muffins in an agitated manner. The butter would probably get on my cuffs. One should always eat muffins quite calmly. It is the only way to eat them.

Jack. I say it's perfectly heartless your eating muffins at all, under the circumstances.

Algernon. When I am in trouble, eating is the only thing that consoles me. Indeed, when I am in really great trouble, as any one who knows me intimately will tell you, I refuse everything except food and drink. At the present moment I am eating muffins because I am unhappy. Besides, I am particularly fond of muffins. [Rising.]

Jack. [Rising.] Well, that is no reason why you should eat them all in that greedy way. [Takes muffins from**Algernon**.]

Algernon. [Offering tea-cake.] I wish you would have tea-cake instead. I don't like tea-cake.

Jack. Good heavens! I suppose a man may eat his own muffins in his own garden.

Algernon. But you have just said it was perfectly heartless to eat muffins.

Jack. I said it was perfectly heartless of you, under the circumstances. That is a very different thing.

Algernon. That may be. But the muffins are the same. [He seizes the muffin-dish from **Jack**.]

Jack. Algy, I wish to goodness you would go.

Algernon. You can't possibly ask me to go without having some dinner. It's absurd. I never go without my dinner. No one ever does, except vegetarians and people like that. Besides I have just made arrangements with Dr. Chasuble to be christened at a quarter to six under the name of Ernest.

Jack. My dear fellow, the sooner you give up that nonsense the better. I made arrangements this morning with Dr. Chasuble to be christened myself at 5.30, and I naturally will take the name of Ernest. Gwendolen would wish it. We can't both be christened Ernest. It's absurd. Besides, I have a perfect right to be christened if I like. There is no evidence at all that I have ever been christened by anybody. I should think it extremely probable I never was, and so does Dr. Chasuble. It is entirely different in your case. You have been christened already.

Algernon. Yes, but I have not been christened for years.

Jack. Yes, but you have been christened. That is the important thing.

Algernon. Quite so. So I know my constitution can stand it. If you are not quite sure about your ever having been christened, I must say I think it rather dangerous your venturing on it now. It might make you very unwell. You can hardly have forgotten that some one very closely connected with you was very nearly carried off this week in Paris by a severe chill.

Jack. Yes, but you said yourself that a severe chill was not hereditary.

Algernon. It usen't to be, I know—but I daresay it is now. Science is always making wonderful improvements in things.

Jack. [Picking up the muffin-dish.] Oh, that is nonsense; you are always talking nonsense.

Algernon. Jack, you are at the muffins again! I wish you wouldn't. There are only two left. [Takes them.] I told you I was particularly fond of muffins.

Jack. But I hate tea-cake.

Algernon. Why on earth then do you allow tea-cake to be served up for your guests? What ideas you have of hospitality!

Jack. Algernon! I have already told you to go. I don't want you here. Why don't you go!

Algernon. I haven't quite finished my tea yet! and there is still one muffin left. [**Jack** groans, and sinks into a chair. **Algernon** still continues eating.]

ACT DROP

THIRD ACT

SCENE

Morning-room at the Manor House.

[**Gwendolen** and **Cecily** are at the window, looking out into the garden.]

Gwendolen. The fact that they did not follow us at once into the house, as any one else would have done, seems to me to show that they have some sense of shame left.

Cecily. They have been eating muffins. That looks like repentance.

Gwendolen. [After a pause.] They don't seem to notice us at all. Couldn't you cough?

Cecily. But I haven't got a cough.

Gwendolen. They're looking at us. What effrontery!

Cecily. They're approaching. That's very forward of them.

Gwendolen. Let us preserve a dignified silence.

Cecily. Certainly. It's the only thing to do now. [Enter **Jack** followed by **Algernon**. They whistle some dreadful popular air from a British Opera.]

Gwendolen. This dignified silence seems to produce an unpleasant effect.

Cecily. A most distasteful one.

Gwendolen. But we will not be the first to speak.

Cecily. Certainly not.

Gwendolen. Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you. Much depends on your reply.

Cecily. Gwendolen, your common sense is invaluable. Mr. Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following question. Why did you pretend to be my guardian's brother?

Algernon. In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you.

Cecily. [To **Gwendolen**.] That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, does it not?

Gwendolen. Yes, dear, if you can believe him.

Cecily. I don't. But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.

Gwendolen. True. In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing. Mr. Worthing, what explanation can you offer to me for pretending to have a brother? Was it in order that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

Jack. Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?

Gwendolen. I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. But I intend to crush them. This is not the moment for German scepticism. [Moving to **Cecily**.] Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing's. That seems to me to have the stamp of truth upon it.

Cecily. I am more than content with what Mr. Moncrieff said. His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

Gwendolen. Then you think we should forgive them?

Cecily. Yes. I mean no.

Gwendolen. True! I had forgotten. There are principles at stake that one cannot surrender. Which of us should tell them? The task is not a pleasant one.

Cecily. Could we not both speak at the same time?

Gwendolen. An excellent idea! I nearly always speak at the same time as other people. Will you take the time from me?

Cecily. Certainly. [**Gwendolen** beats time with uplifted finger.]

Gwendolen and **Cecily** [Speaking together.] Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier. That is all!

Jack and **Algernon** [Speaking together.] Our Christian names! Is that all? But we are going to be christened this afternoon.

Gwendolen. [To **Jack**.] For my sake you are prepared to do this terrible thing?

Jack. I am.

Cecily. [To **Algernon**.] To please me you are ready to face this fearful ordeal?

Algernon. I am!

Gwendolen. How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes! Where questions of self-sacrifice are concerned, men are infinitely beyond us.

Jack. We are. [Clasps hands with **Algernon**.]

Cecily. They have moments of physical courage of which we women know absolutely nothing.

Gwendolen. [To **Jack**.] Darling!

Algernon. [To **Cecily**.] Darling! [They fall into each other's arms.]

[Enter **Merriman**. When he enters he coughs loudly, seeing the situation.]

Merriman. Ahem! Ahem! Lady Bracknell!

Jack. Good heavens!

[Enter **Lady Bracknell**. The couples separate in alarm. Exit **Merriman**.]

Lady Bracknell. Gwendolen! What does this mean?

Gwendolen. Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Worthing, mamma.

Lady Bracknell. Come here. Sit down. Sit down immediately. Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old. [Turns to **Jack**.] Apprised, sir, of my daughter's sudden flight by her trusty maid, whose confidence I purchased by means of a small coin, I followed her at once by a luggage train. Her unhappy father is, I am glad to say, under the impression that she is attending a more than usually lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a permanent income on Thought. I do not propose to undeceive him. Indeed I have never undeceived him on any question. I would consider it wrong. But of course, you will clearly understand that all communication between yourself and my daughter must cease immediately from this moment. On this point, as indeed on all points, I am firm.

Jack. I am engaged to be married to Gwendolen Lady Bracknell!

Lady Bracknell. You are nothing of the kind, sir. And now, as regards Algernon! . . . Algernon!

Algernon. Yes, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. May I ask if it is in this house that your invalid friend Mr. Bunbury resides?

Algernon. [Stammering.] Oh! No! Bunbury doesn't live here. Bunbury is somewhere else at present. In fact, Bunbury is dead.

Lady Bracknell. Dead! When did Mr. Bunbury die? His death must have been extremely sudden.

Algernon. [Airily.] Oh! I killed Bunbury this afternoon. I mean poor Bunbury died this afternoon.

Lady Bracknell. What did he die of?

Algernon. Bunbury? Oh, he was quite exploded.

Lady Bracknell. Exploded! Was he the victim of a revolutionary outrage? I was not aware that Mr. Bunbury was interested in social legislation. If so, he is well punished for his morbidity.

Algernon. My dear Aunt Augusta, I mean he was found out! The doctors found out that Bunbury could not live, that is what I mean —so Bunbury died.

Lady Bracknell. He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. I am glad, however, that he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice. And now that we have finally got rid of this Mr. Bunbury, may I ask, Mr. Worthing, who is that young person whose hand my nephew Algernon is now holding in what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?

Jack. That lady is Miss Cecily Cardew, my ward. [**Lady Bracknell** bows coldly to **Cecily**.]

Algernon. I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. I beg your pardon?

Cecily. Mr. Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. [With a shiver, crossing to the sofa and sitting down.] I do not know whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire, but the number of engagements that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. I think some preliminary inquiry on my part would not be out of place. Mr. Worthing, is Miss Cardew at all connected with any of the larger railway stations in London? I merely desire information. Until yesterday I had no idea that there were any families or persons whose origin was a Terminus. [**Jack** looks perfectly furious, but restrains himself.]

Jack. [In a clear, cold voice.] Miss Cardew is the grand-daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149 Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park, Dorking, Surrey; and the Sporran, Fifeshire, N.B.

Lady Bracknell. That sounds not unsatisfactory. Three addresses always inspire confidence, even in tradesmen. But what proof have I of their authenticity?

Jack. I have carefully preserved the Court Guides of the period. They are open to your inspection, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. [Grimly.] I have known strange errors in that publication.

Jack. Miss Cardew's family solicitors are Messrs. Markby, Markby, and Markby.

Lady Bracknell. Markby, Markby, and Markby? A firm of the very highest position in their profession. Indeed I am told that one of the Mr. Markby's is occasionally to be seen at dinner parties. So far I am satisfied.

Jack. [Very irritably.] How extremely kind of you, Lady Bracknell! I have also in my possession, you will be pleased to hear, certificates of Miss Cardew's birth, baptism, whooping cough, registration, vaccination, confirmation, and the measles; both the German and the English variety.

Lady Bracknell. Ah! A life crowded with incident, I see; though perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl. I am not myself in favour of premature experiences. [Rises, looks at her watch.] Gwendolen! the time approaches for our departure. We have not a moment to lose. As a matter of form, Mr. Worthing, I had better ask you if Miss Cardew has any little fortune?

Jack. Oh! about a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in the Funds. That is all. Goodbye, Lady Bracknell. So pleased to have seen you.

Lady Bracknell. [Sitting down again.] A moment, Mr. Worthing. A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! And in the Funds! Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, now that I look at her. Few girls of the present day have any really solid qualities, any of the qualities that last, and improve with time. We live, I regret to say, in an age of surfaces. [To **Cecily**.] Come over here, dear. [**Cecily** goes across.] Pretty child! your dress is sadly simple, and your hair seems almost as Nature might have left it. But we can soon alter all that. A thoroughly experienced French maid produces a really marvellous result in a very brief space of time. I remember recommending one to young Lady Lancing, and after three months her own husband did not know her.

Jack. And after six months nobody knew her.

Lady Bracknell. [Glares at **Jack** for a few moments. Then bends, with a practised smile, to **Cecily**.] Kindly turn round, sweet child. [**Cecily** turns completely round.] No, the side view is what I want. [**Cecily** presents her profile.] Yes, quite as I expected. There are distinct social possibilities in your profile. The two weak points in our age are its want of principle and its want of profile. The chin a little higher, dear. Style largely depends on the way the chin is worn. They are worn very high, just at present. Algernon!

Algernon. Yes, Aunt Augusta!

Lady Bracknell. There are distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew's profile.

Algernon. Cecily is the sweetest, dearest, prettiest girl in the whole world. And I don't care twopence about social possibilities.

Lady Bracknell. Never speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. Only people who can't get into it do that. [To**Cecily**.] Dear child, of course you know that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon. But I do not approve of mercenary marriages. When I married Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind. But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way. Well, I suppose I must give my consent.

Algernon. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. Cecily, you may kiss me!

Cecily. [Kisses her.] Thank you, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. You may also address me as Aunt Augusta for the future.

Cecily. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. The marriage, I think, had better take place quite soon.

Algernon. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Cecily. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. To speak frankly, I am not in favour of long engagements. They give people the opportunity of finding out each other's character before marriage, which I think is never advisable.

Jack. I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Lady Bracknell, but this engagement is quite out of the question. I am Miss Cardew's guardian, and she cannot marry without my consent until she comes of age. That consent I absolutely decline to give.

Lady Bracknell. Upon what grounds may I ask? Algernon is an extremely, I may almost say an ostentatiously, eligible young man. He has nothing, but he looks everything. What more can one desire?

Jack. It pains me very much to have to speak frankly to you, Lady Bracknell, about your nephew, but the fact is that I do not approve at all of his moral character. I suspect him of being untruthful. [**Algernon** and **Cecily** look at him in indignant amazement.]

Lady Bracknell. Untruthful! My nephew Algernon? Impossible! He is an Oxonian.

Jack. I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. This afternoon during my temporary absence in London on an important question of romance, he obtained admission to my house by means of the false pretence of being my brother. Under an assumed name he drank, I've just been informed by my butler, an entire pint bottle of my Perrier-Jouet, Brut, '89; wine I was specially reserving for myself. Continuing his disgraceful deception, he succeeded in the course of the afternoon in alienating the affections of my only ward. He subsequently stayed to tea, and devoured every single muffin. And what makes his conduct all the more heartless is, that he was perfectly well aware from the first that I have no brother, that I never had a brother, and that I don't intend to have a brother, not even of any kind. I distinctly told him so myself yesterday afternoon.

Lady Bracknell. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration I have decided entirely to overlook my nephew's conduct to you.

Jack. That is very generous of you, Lady Bracknell. My own decision, however, is unalterable. I decline to give my consent.

Lady Bracknell. [To **Cecily**.] Come here, sweet child. [**Cecily** goes over.] How old are you, dear?

Cecily. Well, I am really only eighteen, but I always admit to twenty when I go to evening parties.

Lady Bracknell. You are perfectly right in making some slight alteration. Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating . . . [In a meditative manner.] Eighteen, but admitting to twenty at evening parties. Well, it will not be very long before you are of age and free from the restraints of tutelage. So I don't think your guardian's consent is, after all, a matter of any importance.

Jack. Pray excuse me, Lady Bracknell, for interrupting you again, but it is only fair to tell you that according to the terms of her grandfather's will Miss Cardew does not come legally of age till she is thirty-five.

Lady Bracknell. That does not seem to me to be a grave objection. Thirty-five is a very attractive age. London society is full of women of the very highest birth who have, of their own free choice, remained thirty-five for years. Lady Dumbleton is an instance in point. To my own knowledge she has been thirty-five ever since she arrived at the age of forty, which was many years ago now. I see no reason why our dear Cecily should not be even still more attractive at the age you mention than she is at present. There will be a large accumulation of property.

Cecily. Algy, could you wait for me till I was thirty-five?

Algernon. Of course I could, Cecily. You know I could.

Cecily. Yes, I felt it instinctively, but I couldn't wait all that time. I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. It always makes me rather cross. I am not punctual myself, I know, but I do like punctuality in others, and waiting, even to be married, is quite out of the question.

Algernon. Then what is to be done, Cecily?

Cecily. I don't know, Mr. Moncrieff.

Lady Bracknell. My dear Mr. Worthing, as Miss Cardew states positively that she cannot wait till she is thirty-five—a remark which I am bound to say seems to me to show a somewhat impatient nature—I would beg of you to reconsider your decision.

Jack. But my dear Lady Bracknell, the matter is entirely in your own hands. The moment you consent to my marriage with Gwendolen, I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

Lady Bracknell. [Rising and drawing herself up.] You must be quite aware that what you propose is out of the question.

Jack. Then a passionate celibacy is all that any of us can look forward to.

Lady Bracknell. That is not the destiny I propose for Gwendolen. Algernon, of course, can choose for himself. [Pulls out her watch.] Come, dear, [**Gwendolen** rises] we have already missed five, if not six, trains. To miss any more might expose us to comment on the platform.

[Enter **Dr. Chasuble**.]

Chasuble. Everything is quite ready for the christenings.

Lady Bracknell. The christenings, sir! Is not that somewhat premature?

Chasuble. [Looking rather puzzled, and pointing to **Jack** and **Algernon**.] Both these gentlemen have expressed a desire for immediate baptism.

Lady Bracknell. At their age? The idea is grotesque and irreligious! Algernon, I forbid you to be baptized. I will not hear of such excesses. Lord Bracknell would be highly displeased if he learned that that was the way in which you wasted your time and money.

Chasuble. Am I to understand then that there are to be no christenings at all this afternoon?

Jack. I don't think that, as things are now, it would be of much practical value to either of us, Dr. Chasuble.

Chasuble. I am grieved to hear such sentiments from you, Mr. Worthing. They savour of the heretical views of the Anabaptists, views that I have completely refuted in four of my unpublished sermons. However, as your present mood seems to be one peculiarly secular, I will return to the church at once. Indeed, I have just been informed by the pew-opener that for the last hour and a half Miss Prism has been waiting for me in the vestry.

Lady Bracknell. [Starting.] Miss Prism! Did I hear you mention a Miss Prism?

Chasuble. Yes, Lady Bracknell. I am on my way to join her.

Lady Bracknell. Pray allow me to detain you for a moment. This matter may prove to be one of vital importance to Lord Bracknell and myself. Is this Miss Prism a female of repellent aspect, remotely connected with education?

Chasuble. [Somewhat indignantly.] She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability.

Lady Bracknell. It is obviously the same person. May I ask what position she holds in your household?

Chasuble. [Severely.] I am a celibate, madam.

Jack. [Interposing.] Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell, has been for the last three years Miss Cardew's esteemed governess and valued companion.

Lady Bracknell. In spite of what I hear of her, I must see her at once. Let her be sent for.

Chasuble. [Looking off.] She approaches; she is nigh.

[Enter **Miss Prism** hurriedly.]

Miss Prism. I was told you expected me in the vestry, dear Canon. I have been waiting for you there for an hour and three-quarters. [Catches sight of **Lady Bracknell**, who has fixed her with a stony glare. **Miss Prism** grows pale and quails. She looks anxiously round as if desirous to escape.]

Lady Bracknell. [In a severe, judicial voice.] Prism! [**Miss Prism** bows her head in shame.] Come here, Prism! [**Miss Prism** approaches in a humble manner.] Prism! Where is that baby? [General consternation. The **Canon** starts back in horror. **Algernon** and **Jack** pretend to be anxious to shield **Cecily** and **Gwendolen** from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal.] Twenty-eight years ago, Prism, you left Lord Bracknell's house, Number 104, Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of a perambulator that contained a baby of the male sex. You never returned. A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight, standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality. [**Miss Prism** starts in involuntary indignation.] But the baby was not there! [Every one looks at **Miss Prism**.] Prism! Where is that baby? [A pause.]

Miss Prism. Lady Bracknell, I admit with shame that I do not know. I only wish I did. The plain facts of the case are these. On the morning of the day you mention, a day that is for ever branded on my memory, I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. I had also with me a somewhat old, but capacious hand-bag in which I had intended to place the manuscript of a work of fiction that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, I deposited the manuscript in the basinette, and placed the baby in the hand-bag.

Jack. [Who has been listening attentively.] But where did you deposit the hand-bag?

Miss Prism. Do not ask me, Mr. Worthing.

Jack. Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me. I insist on knowing where you deposited the hand-bag that contained that infant.

Miss Prism. I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

Jack. What railway station?

Miss Prism. [Quite crushed.] Victoria. The Brighton line. [Sinks into a chair.]

Jack. I must retire to my room for a moment. Gwendolen, wait here for me.

Gwendolen. If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life. [Exit **Jack** in great excitement.]

Chasuble. What do you think this means, Lady Bracknell?

Lady Bracknell. I dare not even suspect, Dr. Chasuble. I need hardly tell you that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur. They are hardly considered the thing.

[Noises heard overhead as if some one was throwing trunks about. Every one looks up.]

Cecily. Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated.

Chasuble. Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

Lady Bracknell. This noise is extremely unpleasant. It sounds as if he was having an argument. I dislike arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar, and often convincing.

Chasuble. [Looking up.] It has stopped now. [The noise is redoubled.]

Lady Bracknell. I wish he would arrive at some conclusion.

Gwendolen. This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last. [Enter **Jack** with a hand-bag of black leather in his hand.]

Jack. [Rushing over to **Miss Prism**.] Is this the hand-bag, Miss Prism? Examine it carefully before you speak. The happiness of more than one life depends on your answer.

Miss Prism. [Calmly.] It seems to be mine. Yes, here is the injury it received through the upsetting of a Gower Street omnibus in younger and happier days. Here is the stain on the lining caused by the explosion of a temperance beverage, an incident that occurred at Leamington. And here, on the lock, are my initials. I had forgotten that in an extravagant mood I had had them placed there. The bag is undoubtedly mine. I am delighted to have it so unexpectedly restored to me. It has been a great inconvenience being without it all these years.

Jack. [In a pathetic voice.] Miss Prism, more is restored to you than this hand-bag. I was the baby you placed in it.

Miss Prism. [Amazed.] You?

Jack. [Embracing her.] Yes . . . mother!

Miss Prism. [Recoiling in indignant astonishment.] Mr. Worthing! I am unmarried!

Jack. Unmarried! I do not deny that is a serious blow. But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one who has suffered? Cannot repentance wipe out an act of folly? Why should there be one law for men, and another for women? Mother, I forgive you. [Tries to embrace her again.]

Miss Prism. [Still more indignant.] Mr. Worthing, there is some error. [Pointing to **Lady Bracknell**.] There is the lady who can tell you who you really are.

Jack. [After a pause.] Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive, but would you kindly inform me who I am?

Lady Bracknell. I am afraid that the news I have to give you will not altogether please you. You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon's elder brother.

Jack. Algy's elder brother! Then I have a brother after all. I knew I had a brother! I always said I had a brother! Cecily,—how could you have ever doubted that I had a brother? [Seizes hold of **Algernon**.] Dr. Chasuble, my unfortunate brother. Miss Prism, my unfortunate brother. Gwendolen, my unfortunate brother. Algy, you young scoundrel, you will have to treat me with more respect in the future. You have never behaved to me like a brother in all your life.

Algernon. Well, not till to-day, old boy, I admit. I did my best, however, though I was out of practice.

[Shakes hands.]

Gwendolen. [To **Jack**.] My own! But what own are you? What is your Christian name, now that you have become some one else?

Jack. Good heavens! . . . I had quite forgotten that point. Your decision on the subject of my name is irrevocable, I suppose?

Gwendolen. I never change, except in my affections.

Cecily. What a noble nature you have, Gwendolen!

Jack. Then the question had better be cleared up at once. Aunt Augusta, a moment. At the time when Miss Prism left me in the hand-bag, had I been christened already?

Lady Bracknell. Every luxury that money could buy, including christening, had been lavished on you by your fond and doting parents.

Jack. Then I was christened! That is settled. Now, what name was I given? Let me know the worst.

Lady Bracknell. Being the eldest son you were naturally christened after your father.

Jack. [Irritably.] Yes, but what was my father's Christian name?

Lady Bracknell. [Meditatively.] I cannot at the present moment recall what the General's Christian name was. But I have no doubt he had one. He was eccentric, I admit. But only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.

Jack. Algy! Can't you recollect what our father's Christian name was?

Algernon. My dear boy, we were never even on speaking terms. He died before I was a year old.

Jack. His name would appear in the Army Lists of the period, I suppose, Aunt Augusta?

Lady Bracknell. The General was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life. But I have no doubt his name would appear in any military directory.

Jack. The Army Lists of the last forty years are here. These delightful records should have been my constant study. [Rushes to bookcase and tears the books out.] M. Generals . . . Mallam, Maxbohm, Magley, what ghastly names they have—Markby, Migsby, Mobbs, Moncrieff! Lieutenant 1840, Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel, General 1869, Christian names, Ernest John. [Puts book very quietly down and speaks quite calmly.] I always told you, Gwendolen, my name was Ernest, didn't I? Well, it is Ernest after all. I mean it naturally is Ernest.

Lady Bracknell. Yes, I remember now that the General was called Ernest, I knew I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

Gwendolen. Ernest! My own Ernest! I felt from the first that you could have no other name!

Jack. Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?

Gwendolen. I can. For I feel that you are sure to change.

Jack. My own one!

Chasuble. [To **Miss Prism**.] Lætitia! [Embraces her]

Miss Prism. [Enthusiastically.] Frederick! At last!

Algernon. Cecily! [Embraces her.] At last!

Jack. Gwendolen! [Embraces her.] At last!

Lady Bracknell. My nephew, you seem to be displaying signs of triviality.

Jack. On the contrary, Aunt Augusta, I've now realised for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest.

TABLEAU

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5.2.2: Oscar Wilde, “The Picture of Dorian Gray”

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) was one of the most celebrated and controversial writers of his era. His works were part of the Decadence artistic movement that rejected conventional morals and reveled in beauty for beauty’s sake. Wilde was eventually tried and found guilty of homosexuality, a serious offense in England at the time. His works were used as evidence against him and subject to censorship for many years.

The Picture of Dorian Gray, Wilde’s most famous novel, was published in several forms. A thirteen chapter version was released in a London magazine. Later, after he made some edits, a twenty chapter version was published independently. The story follows a young aristocrat who gains a form of immortality when his portrait begins to age and show the signs of his sins, while he remains beautiful.

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5.3: Susan Glaspell's "Trifles" (1916)

Trifles

by Susan Glaspell

First performed by the Provincetown Players at the Wharf Theatre, Provincetown, Mass., August 8, 1916.

Characters

GEORGE HENDERSON (County Attorney)

HENRY PETERS (Sheriff)

LEWIS HALE, A neighboring farmer

MRS PETERS

MRS HALE

Scene 1

SCENE: *The kitchen is the now abandoned farmhouse of* JOHN WRIGHT, *a gloomy kitchen, and left without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the bread-box, a dish-towel on the table—other signs of incompleted work. At the rear the outer door opens and the* SHERIFF *comes in followed by the* COUNTY ATTORNEY *and* HALE. *The* SHERIFF *and* HALE *are men in middle life, the* COUNTY ATTORNEY *is a young man; all are much bundled up and go at once to the stove. They are followed by the two women—the* SHERIFF*'s wife first; she is a slight wiry woman, a thin nervous face.* MRS HALE *is larger and would ordinarily be called more comfortable looking, but she is disturbed now and looks fearfully about as she enters. The women have come in slowly, and stand close together near the door.*

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*rubbing his hands*) This feels good. Come up to the fire, ladies.

MRS PETERS: (*after taking a step forward*) I'm not—cold.

SHERIFF: (*unbuttoning his overcoat and stepping away from the stove as if to mark the beginning of official business*) Now, Mr Hale, before we move things about, you explain to Mr Henderson just what you saw when you came here yesterday morning.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: By the way, has anything been moved? Are things just as you left them yesterday?

SHERIFF: (*looking about*) It's just the same. When it dropped below zero last night I thought I'd better send Frank out this morning to make a fire for us—no use getting pneumonia with a big case on, but I told him not to touch anything except the stove—and you know Frank.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Somebody should have been left here yesterday.

SHERIFF: Oh—yesterday. When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that man who went crazy—I want you to know I had my hands full yesterday. I knew you could get back from Omaha by today and as long as I went over everything here myself—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Well, Mr Hale, tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning.

HALE: Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along the road from my place and as I got here I said, I'm going to see if I can't get John Wright to go in with me on a party telephone.' I spoke to Wright about it once before and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself; but I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, though I said to Harry that I didn't know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Let's talk about that later, Mr Hale. I do want to talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house.

HALE: I didn't hear or see anything; I knocked at the door, and still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up, it was past eight o'clock. So I knocked again, and I thought I heard somebody say, 'Come in.' I wasn't sure, I'm not sure yet, but I opened the door—this door (*indicating the door by which the two women are still standing*) and there in that rocker—(*pointing to it*) sat Mrs Wright.

(*They all look at the rocker*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: What—was she doing?

HALE: She was rockin' back and forth. She had her apron in her hand and was kind of—pleating it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And how did she—look?

HALE: Well, she looked queer.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: How do you mean—queer?

HALE: Well, as if she didn't know what she was going to do next. And kind of done up.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: How did she seem to feel about your coming?

HALE: Why, I don't think she minded—one way or other. She didn't pay much attention. I said, 'How do, Mrs Wright it's cold, ain't it?' And she said, 'Is it?'—and went on kind of pleating at her apron. Well, I was surprised; she didn't ask me to come up to the stove, or to set down, but just sat there, not even looking at me, so I said, 'I want to see John.' And then she—laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: 'Can't I see John?' 'No', she says, kind o' dull like. 'Ain't he home?' says I. 'Yes', says she, 'he's home'. 'Then why can't I see him?' I asked her, out of patience. "Cause he's dead', says she. *'Dead*?' says I. She just nodded her head, not getting a bit excited, but rockin' back and forth. 'Why—where is he?' says I, not knowing what to say. She just pointed upstairs—like that (*himself pointing to the room above*) I got up, with the idea of going up there. I walked from there to here—then I says, 'Why, what did he die of?' 'He died of a rope round his neck', says she, and just went on pleatin' at her apron. Well, I went out and called Harry. I thought I might—need help. We went upstairs and there he was lyin'—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I think I'd rather have you go into that upstairs, where you can point it all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story.

HALE: Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. It looked ... (*stops, his face twitches*) ... but Harry, he went up to him, and he said, 'No, he's dead all right, and we'd better not touch anything.' So we went back down stairs. She was still sitting that same way. 'Has anybody been notified?' I asked. 'No', says she unconcerned. 'Who did this, Mrs Wright?' said Harry. He said it business-like—and she stopped pleatin' of her apron. 'I don't know', she says. 'You don't *know*?' says Harry. 'No', says she. 'Weren't you sleepin' in the bed with him?' says Harry. 'Yes', says she, 'but I was on the inside'. 'Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him and you didn't wake up?' says Harry. 'I didn't wake up', she said after him. We must 'a looked as if we didn't see how that could be, for after a minute she said, 'I sleep sound'. Harry was going to ask her more questions but I said maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the coroner, or the sheriff, so Harry went fast as he could to Rivers' place, where there's a telephone.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And what did Mrs Wright do when she knew that you had gone for the coroner?

HALE: She moved from that chair to this one over here (*pointing to a small chair in the corner*) and just sat there with her hands held together and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone, and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me—scared, (*the* COUNTY ATTORNEY, *who has had his notebook out, makes a note*) I dunno, maybe it wasn't scared. I wouldn't like to say it was. Soon Harry got back, and then Dr Lloyd came, and you, Mr Peters, and so I guess that's all I know that you don't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*looking around*) I guess we'll go upstairs first—and then out to the barn and around there, (*to the* SHERIFF) You're convinced that there was nothing important here—nothing that would point to any motive.

SHERIFF: Nothing here but kitchen things.

(*The* COUNTY ATTORNEY, *after again looking around the kitchen, opens the door of a cupboard closet. He gets up on a chair and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Here's a nice mess.

(*The women draw nearer*.)

MRS PETERS: (*to the other woman*) Oh, her fruit; it did freeze, (*to the* LAWYER) She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire'd go out and her jars would break.

SHERIFF: Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about.

HALE: Well, women are used to worrying over trifles.

(*The two women move a little closer together*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*with the gallantry of a young politician*) And yet, for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies? (*the women do not unbend. He goes to the sink, takes a dipperful of water from the pail and pouring it into a basin, washes his hands. Starts to wipe them on the roller-towel, turns it for a cleaner place*) Dirty towels! (*kicks his foot against the pans under the sink*) Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?

MRS HALE: (*stiffly*) There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: To be sure. And yet (*with a little bow to her*) I know there are some Dickson county farmhouses which do not have such roller towels. (*He gives it a pull to expose its length again*.)

MRS HALE: Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Ah, loyal to your sex, I see. But you and Mrs Wright were neighbors. I suppose you were friends, too.

MRS HALE: (*shaking her head*) I've not seen much of her of late years. I've not been in this house—it's more than a year.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: And why was that? You didn't like her?

MRS HALE: I liked her all well enough. Farmers' wives have their hands full, Mr Henderson. And then—

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Yes—?

MRS HALE: (*looking about*) It never seemed a very cheerful place.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No—it's not cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the homemaking instinct.

MRS HALE: Well, I don't know as Wright had, either.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: You mean that they didn't get on very well?

MRS HALE: No, I don't mean anything. But I don't think a place'd be any cheerfuller for John Wright's being in it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I'd like to talk more of that a little later. I want to get the lay of things upstairs now. (*He goes to the left, where three steps lead to a stair door*.)

SHERIFF: I suppose anything Mrs Peters does'll be all right. She was to take in some clothes for her, you know, and a few little things. We left in such a hurry yesterday.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Yes, but I would like to see what you take, Mrs Peters, and keep an eye out for anything that might be of use to us.

MRS PETERS: Yes, Mr Henderson.

(*The women listen to the men's steps on the stairs, then look about the kitchen*.)

MRS HALE: I'd hate to have men coming into my kitchen, snooping around and criticising.

(*She arranges the pans under sink which the* LAWYER *had shoved out of place*.)

MRS PETERS: Of course it's no more than their duty.

MRS HALE: Duty's all right, but I guess that deputy sheriff that came out to make the fire might have got a little of this on. (*gives the roller towel a pull*) Wish I'd thought of that sooner. Seems mean to talk about her for not having things slicked up when she had to come away in such a hurry.

MRS PETERS: (*who has gone to a small table in the left rear corner of the room, and lifted one end of a towel that covers a pan*) She had bread set. (*Stands still*.)

MRS HALE: (*eyes fixed on a loaf of bread beside the bread-box, which is on a low shelf at the other side of the room. Moves slowly toward it*) She was going to put this in there, (*picks up loaf, then abruptly drops it. In a manner of returning to familiar*

things) It's a shame about her fruit. I wonder if it's all gone. (*gets up on the chair and looks*) I think there's some here that's all right, Mrs Peters. Yes—here; (*holding it toward the window*) this is cherries, too. (*looking again*) I declare I believe that's the only one. (*gets down, bottle in her hand. Goes to the sink and wipes it off on the outside*) She'll feel awful bad after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer.

(*She puts the bottle on the big kitchen table, center of the room. With a sigh, is about to sit down in the rocking-chair. Before she is seated realizes what chair it is; with a slow look at it, steps back. The chair which she has touched rocks back and forth.*)

MRS PETERS: Well, I must get those things from the front room closet, (*she goes to the door at the right, but after looking into the other room, steps back*) You coming with me, Mrs Hale? You could help me carry them.

(*They go in the other room; reappear,* MRS PETERS *carrying a dress and skirt,* MRS HALE *following with a pair of shoes.*)

MRS PETERS: My, it's cold in there.

(*She puts the clothes on the big table, and hurries to the stove.*)

MRS HALE: (*examining the skirt*) Wright was close. I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that—oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take in?

MRS PETERS: She said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want, for there isn't much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. She said they was in the top drawer in this cupboard. Yes, here. And then her little shawl that always hung behind the door. (*opens stair door and looks*) Yes, here it is.

(*Quickly shuts door leading upstairs.*)

MRS HALE: (*abruptly moving toward her*) Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Yes, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: Do you think she did it?

MRS PETERS: (*in a frightened voice*) Oh, I don't know.

MRS HALE: Well, I don't think she did. Asking for an apron and her little shawl. Worrying about her fruit.

MRS PETERS: (*starts to speak, glances up, where footsteps are heard in the room above. In a low voice*) Mr Peters says it looks bad for her. Mr Henderson is awful sarcastic in a speech and he'll make fun of her sayin' she didn't wake up.

MRS HALE: Well, I guess John Wright didn't wake when they was slipping that rope under his neck.

MRS PETERS: No, it's strange. It must have been done awful crafty and still. They say it was such a—funny way to kill a man, rigging it all up like that.

MRS HALE: That's just what Mr Hale said. There was a gun in the house. He says that's what he can't understand.

MRS PETERS: Mr Henderson said coming out that what was needed for the case was a motive; something to show anger, or—sudden feeling.

MRS HALE: (*who is standing by the table*) Well, I don't see any signs of anger around here, (*she puts her hand on the dish towel which lies on the table, stands looking down at table, one half of which is clean, the other half messy*) It's wiped to here, (*makes a move as if to finish work, then turns and looks at loaf of bread outside the breadbox. Drops towel. In that voice of coming back to familiar things.*) Wonder how they are finding things upstairs. I hope she had it a little more red-up up there. You know, it seems kind of sneaking. Locking her up in town and then coming out here and trying to get her own house to turn against her!

MRS PETERS: But Mrs Hale, the law is the law.

MRS HALE: I s'pose 'tis, (*unbuttoning her coat*) Better loosen up your things, Mrs Peters. You won't feel them when you go out.

(MRS PETERS *takes off her fur tippet, goes to hang it on hook at back of room, stands looking at the under part of the small corner table.*)

MRS PETERS: She was piecing a quilt. (*She brings the large sewing basket and they look at the bright pieces*.)

MRS HALE: It's log cabin pattern. Pretty, isn't it? I wonder if she was goin' to quilt it or just knot it?

(*Footsteps have been heard coming down the stairs*. The SHERIFF enters followed by HALE and the COUNTY ATTORNEY.)

SHERIFF: They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it! (*The men laugh, the women look abashed*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*rubbing his hands over the stove*) Frank's fire didn't do much up there, did it? Well, let's go out to the barn and get that cleared up. (*The men go outside*.)

MRS HALE: (*resentfully*) I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. (*she sits down at the big table smoothing out a block with decision*) I don't see as it's anything to laugh about.

MRS PETERS: (*apologetically*) Of course they've got awful important things on their minds.

(*Pulls up a chair and joins MRS HALE at the table*.)

MRS HALE: (*examining another block*) Mrs Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about!

(*After she has said this they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant* MRS HALE *has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing*.)

MRS PETERS: Oh, what are you doing, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: (*mildly*) Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good. (*threading a needle*) Bad sewing always made me fidgety.

MRS PETERS: (nervously) I don't think we ought to touch things.

MRS HALE: I'll just finish up this end. (*suddenly stopping and leaning forward*) Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Yes, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: What do you suppose she was so nervous about?

MRS PETERS: Oh—I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I'm just tired. (MRS HALE *starts to say something, looks at* MRS PETERS, *then goes on sewing*) Well I must get these things wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think, (*putting apron and other things together*) I wonder where I can find a piece of paper, and string.

MRS HALE: In that cupboard, maybe.

MRS PETERS: (*looking in cupboard*) Why, here's a bird-cage, (*holds it up*) Did she have a bird, Mrs Hale?

MRS HALE: Why, I don't know whether she did or not—I've not been here for so long. There was a man around last year selling canaries cheap, but I don't know as she took one; maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself.

MRS PETERS: (*glancing around*) Seems funny to think of a bird here. But she must have had one, or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it.

MRS HALE: I s'pose maybe the cat got it.

MRS PETERS: No, she didn't have a cat. She's got that feeling some people have about cats—being afraid of them. My cat got in her room and she was real upset and asked me to take it out.

MRS HALE: My sister Bessie was like that. Queer, ain't it?

MRS PETERS: (*examining the cage*) Why, look at this door. It's broke. One hinge is pulled apart.

MRS HALE: (*looking too*) Looks as if someone must have been rough with it.

MRS PETERS: Why, yes.

(*She brings the cage forward and puts it on the table*.)

MRS HALE: I wish if they're going to find any evidence they'd be about it. I don't like this place.

MRS PETERS: But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.

MRS HALE: It would, wouldn't it? (*dropping her sewing*) But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when *she* was here. I—(*looking around the room*)—wish I had.

MRS PETERS: But of course you were awful busy, Mrs Hale—your house and your children.

MRS HALE: I could've come. I stayed away because it weren't cheerful—and that's why I ought to have come. I—I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down in a hollow and you don't see the road. I dunno what it is, but it's a lonesome place and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now—(*shakes her head*)

MRS PETERS: Well, you mustn't reproach yourself, Mrs Hale. Somehow we just don't see how it is with other folks until—something comes up.

MRS HALE: Not having children makes less work—but it makes a quiet house, and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in. Did you know John Wright, Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Not to know him; I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man.

MRS HALE: Yes—good; he didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him—(*shivers*) Like a raw wind that gets to the bone, (*pauses, her eye falling on the cage*) I should think she would 'a wanted a bird. But what do you suppose went with it?

MRS PETERS: I don't know, unless it got sick and died.

(*She reaches over and swings the broken door, swings it again, both women watch it*.)

MRS HALE: You weren't raised round here, were you? (*MRS PETERS shakes her head*) You didn't know—her?

MRS PETERS: Not till they brought her yesterday.

MRS HALE: She—come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself—real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and—fluttery. How—she—did—change. (*silence; then as if struck by a happy thought and relieved to get back to everyday things*) Tell you what, Mrs Peters, why don't you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind.

MRS PETERS: Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs Hale. There couldn't possibly be any objection to it, could there? Now, just what would I take? I wonder if her patches are in here—and her things.

(*They look in the sewing basket*.)

MRS HALE: Here's some red. I expect this has got sewing things in it. (*brings out a fancy box*) What a pretty box. Looks like something somebody would give you. Maybe her scissors are in here. (*Opens box. Suddenly puts her hand to her nose*) Why—(MRS PETERS *bends nearer, then turns her face away*) There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk.

MRS PETERS: Why, this isn't her scissors.

MRS HALE: (*lifting the silk*) Oh, Mrs Peters—it's—

(MRS PETERS *bends closer*.)

MRS PETERS: It's the bird.

MRS HALE: (*jumping up*) But, Mrs Peters—look at it! It's neck! Look at its neck!

It's all—other side *to*.

MRS PETERS: Somebody—wrung—its—neck.

(*Their eyes meet. A look of growing comprehension, of horror. Steps are heard outside*. MRS HALE *slips box under quilt pieces, and sinks into her chair. Enter* SHERIFF *and* COUNTY ATTORNEY. MRS PETERS *rises*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*as one turning from serious things to little pleasantries*) Well ladies, have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?

MRS PETERS: We think she was going to—knot it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Well, that's interesting, I'm sure. (*seeing the birdcage*) Has the bird flown?

MRS HALE: (*putting more quilt pieces over the box*) We think the—cat got it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*preoccupied*) Is there a cat?

(MRS HALE *glances in a quick covert way at* MRS PETERS.)

MRS PETERS: Well, not now. They're superstitious, you know. They leave.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*to* SHERIFF PETERS, *continuing an interrupted conversation*) No sign at all of anyone having come from the outside. Their own rope. Now let's go up again and go over it piece by piece. (*they start upstairs*) It would have to have been someone who knew just the—

(MRS PETERS *sits down. The two women sit there not looking at one another, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they talk now it is in the manner of feeling their way over strange ground, as if afraid of what they are saying, but as if they can not help saying it*.)

MRS HALE: She liked the bird. She was going to bury it in that pretty box.

MRS PETERS: (*in a whisper*) When I was a girl—my kitten—there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes—and before I could get there—(*covers her face an instant*) If they hadn't held me back I would have—(*catches herself, looks upstairs where steps are heard, falters weakly*)—hurt him.

MRS HALE: (*with a slow look around her*) I wonder how it would seem never to have had any children around, (*pause*) No, Wright wouldn't like the bird—a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too.

MRS PETERS: (*moving uneasily*) We don't know who killed the bird.

MRS HALE: I knew John Wright.

MRS PETERS: It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked the life out of him.

MRS HALE: His neck. Choked the life out of him.

(*Her hand goes out and rests on the bird-cage*.)

MRS PETERS: (*with rising voice*) We don't know who killed him. We don't *know*.

MRS HALE: (*her own feeling not interrupted*) If there'd been years and years of nothing, then a bird to sing to you, it would be awful—still, after the bird was still.

MRS PETERS: (*something within her speaking*) I know what stillness is. When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died—after he was two years old, and me with no other then—

MRS HALE: (*moving*) How soon do you suppose they'll be through, looking for the evidence?

MRS PETERS: I know what stillness is. (*pulling herself back*) The law has got to punish crime, Mrs Hale.

MRS HALE: (*not as if answering that*) I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang. (*a look around the room*) Oh, I *wish* I'd come over here once in a while! That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that?

MRS PETERS: (*looking upstairs*) We mustn't—take on.

MRS HALE: I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be—for women. I tell you, it's queer, Mrs Peters. We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things—it's all just a different kind of the same thing, (*brushes her eyes, noticing the bottle of fruit, reaches out for it*) If I was you, I wouldn't tell her her fruit was gone. Tell her it *ain't*. Tell her it's all right. Take this in to prove it to her. She—she may never know whether it was broke or not.

MRS PETERS: (*takes the bottle, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room, very nervously begins winding this around the bottle. In a false voice*) My, it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us.

Wouldn't they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a—dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with—with—wouldn't they *laugh*!

(*The men are heard coming down stairs*.)

MRS HALE: (*under her breath*) Maybe they would—maybe they wouldn't.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: No, Peters, it's all perfectly clear except a reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing. Something to show—something to make a story about—a thing that would connect up with this strange way of doing it—

(*The women's eyes meet for an instant. Enter HALE from outer door*.)

HALE: Well, I've got the team around. Pretty cold out there.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: I'm going to stay here a while by myself, (*to the* SHERIFF) You can send Frank out for me, can't you? I want to go over everything. I'm not satisfied that we can't do better.

SHERIFF: Do you want to see what Mrs Peters is going to take in?

(*The* LAWYER *goes to the table, picks up the apron, laughs*.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: Oh, I guess they're not very dangerous things the ladies have picked out. (*Moves a few things about, disturbing the quilt pieces which cover the box. Steps back*) No, Mrs Peters doesn't need supervising. For that matter, a sheriff's wife is married to the law. Ever think of it that way, Mrs Peters?

MRS PETERS: Not—just that way.

SHERIFF: (*chuckling*) Married to the law. (*moves toward the other room*) I just want you to come in here a minute, George. We ought to take a look at these windows.

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*scoffingly*) Oh, windows!

SHERIFF: We'll be right out, Mr Hale.

(HALE *goes outside. The* SHERIFF *follows the* COUNTY ATTORNEY *into the other room. Then* MRS HALE *rises, hands tight together, looking intensely at* MRS PETERS, *whose eyes make a slow turn, finally meeting* MRS HALE's. *A moment* MRS HALE *holds her, then her own eyes point the way to where the box is concealed. Suddenly* MRS PETERS *throws back quilt pieces and tries to put the box in the bag she is wearing. It is too big. She opens box, starts to take bird out, cannot touch it, goes to pieces, stands there helpless. Sound of a knob turning in the other room*. MRS HALE *snatches the box and puts it in the pocket of her big coat. Enter* COUNTY ATTORNEY *and* SHERIFF.)

COUNTY ATTORNEY: (*facetiously*) Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is it you call it, ladies?

MRS HALE: (*her hand against her pocket*) We call it—knot it, Mr Henderson.

(CURTAIN)

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5.4: Christopher Marlowe

Christopher Marlowe was the son of a shoemaker. He attended King's School in Canterbury and then, by winning an Archbishop Parker scholarship, he studied at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree which should have been followed three years later by a Master's degree. To earn a Master's, Marlowe was expected to take orders. That he didn't, and that the university only awarded Marlowe the Masters after receiving a letter from the Privy Council, speaks to mysteries and uncertainties in Marlowe's activities while at Cambridge. During the time when he was ostensibly studying for his Master's, Marlowe left Cambridge for extended lengths of time. His destinations and actions during these frequent absences remain unknown. However, the Privy Council reassured the university by letter in which it declared that Marlowe was working for England's benefit and for the Queen's good service. Some scholars believe that this service involved spying against expatriate Roman Catholics (and their conspiracies against Elizabeth) in Rheims. That Marlowe's work remains a mystery suggests that it was deliberately kept secret by the government.

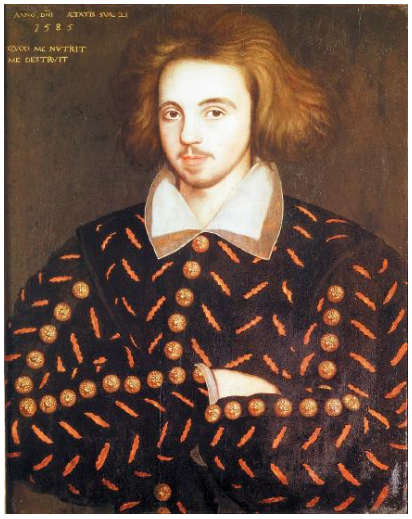


Figure **5.4.1**: Christopher Marlowe (CC0 1.0, Corpus Christi College, via Wikimedia Commons)

His post-graduate public career began when he left Cambridge for London. There, he may have continued his work for the government, but he certainly began writing plays. His Tamburlaine the Great (1590) proved a great success and heralded the new age of great Elizabethan Theater, directly influencing its flowering. Marlowe was one of the first playwrights to use blank verse; Thomas Kyd (1558- 1594) imitated it in The Spanish Tragedy (c. 1585). Marlowe's style was astounding; his title characters and his plays' actions are larger than life—almost incomprehensibly so. Edward II was a powerful monarch who was also flawed and ultimately deposed (though it is unclear whether or not Marlowe wrote a play called Edward II); the Jew of Malta was phenomenally wealthy yet morally bankrupt; Dr. Faustus is a demigod in his magical powers who heedlessly diminishes and damns himself. Faustus aspires to a dominion that stretches "as far as doth the mind of man" (I.i.61) but ultimately wishes to be changed to a dumb beast.

Marlowe's own character may have been as compelling and ambiguous as those in his plays. Suspicion surrounded him, and friends and acquaintances denounced him for atheism or leanings toward the Roman Catholic faith. In 1593, Thomas Kyd, with whom Marlowe at one time shared lodgings, testified that Marlowe read atheistical texts, upon which testimony Marlowe was arrested for heresy, or atheism (which was then a crime). He was not brought to trial, nor even imprisoned. Instead, he was released on the condition that he report to an officer of the court. Within days of his release, Marlowe was killed by Ingram Frizer (d. 1627). Apparently, the two fought over a lodging house bill, and Frizer fatally stabbed Marlowe in the forehead. Frizer served Sir Francis Walsingham (c. 1532-1590) who ran an intelligence service. Some scholars believe Frizer assassinated Marlowe for being a spy, or counter-spy. But no evidence has proven such conjectures.

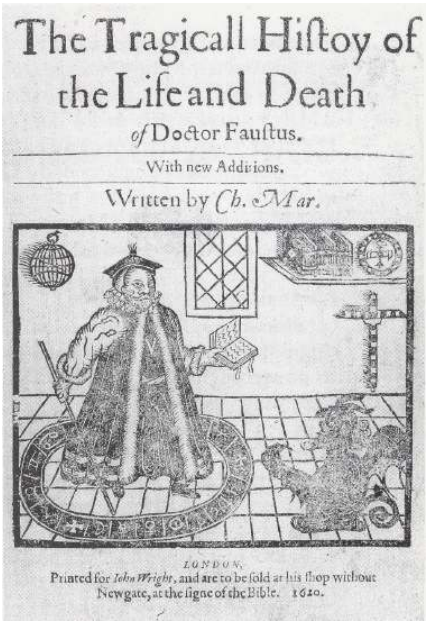


Figure 5.4.2: The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus Title Page. (CC0 1.0, Iohn Wright, via Wikimedia Commons)

We do know that Marlowe was an extraordinary artist and playwright, one who certainly influenced his contemporaries, including William Shakespeare—who also created a famously-divided character (like Dr. Faustus) in his Hamlet and an avaricious, vengeful Jew in his Shylock. And in his Sonnet 29, when Shakespeare acknowledges envy for “this man’s art,” it does not take much stretch of the imagination to wonder if he may have had Marlowe in mind.

Work Cited

Robinson, Bonnie J., and Laura Getty. *British Literature I: Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century and Neoclassicism*. English Open Textbooks, 2018.

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5.4.1: Dr. Faustus

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

THE POPE.
CARDINAL OF LORRAIN.
THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY.
DUKE OF VANHOLT.
FAUSTUS.
VALDES,] friends to FAUSTUS.
CORNELIUS,]
WAGNER, servant to FAUSTUS.
Clown.
ROBIN.
RALPH.
Vintner.
Horse-courser.
A Knight.
An Old Man.
Scholars, Friars, and Attendants.

DUCHESS OF VANHOLT

LUCIFER.
BELZEBUB.
MEPHISTOPHILIS.
Good Angel.
Evil Angel.
The Seven Deadly Sins.
Devils.
Spirits in the shapes of ALEXANDER THE GREAT, of his Paramour and of HELEN.

Chorus.

THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS

FROM THE QUARTO OF 1604.

Enter CHORUS.

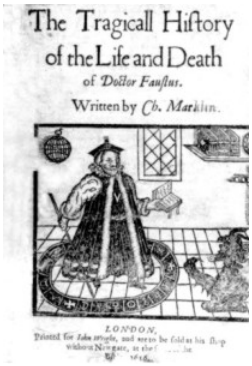


Figure 5.4.1.1: Image of Dr. Faustus Cover Page. (CC0 1.0; Iohn Wright, via Wikimedia Commons)

CHORUS. Not marching now in fields of Thrasymene,
Where Mars did mate[1] the Carthaginians;
Nor sporting in the dalliance of love,
In courts of kings where state is overturn'd;
Nor in the pomp of proud audacious deeds,
Intends our Muse to vaunt[2] her[3] heavenly verse:
Only this, gentlemen,–we must perform
The form of Faustus' fortunes, good or bad:
To patient judgments we appeal our plaud,
And speak for Faustus in his infancy.
Now is he born, his parents base of stock,
In Germany, within a town call'd Rhodes:
Of riper years, to Wertenberg he went,
Whereas[4] his kinsmen chiefly brought him up.
So soon he profits in divinity,
The fruitful plot of scholarism grac'd,
That shortly he was grac'd with doctor's name,
Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes
In heavenly matters of theology;
Till swoln with cunning,[5] of a self-conceit,
His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
And, melting, heavens conspir'd his overthrow;
For, falling to a devilish exercise,
And glutted now[6] with learning's golden gifts,
He surfeits upon cursed necromancy;
Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss:
And this the man that in his study sits.
[Exit.]

FAUSTUS discovered in his study.[7]

FAUSTUS. Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin
To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess:
Having commenc'd, be a divine in shew,
Yet level at the end of every art,
And live and die in Aristotle's works.
Sweet Analytics, 'tis thou[8] hast ravish'd me!
Bene disserere est finis logices.
Is, to dispute well, logic's chiefest end?
Affords this art no greater miracle?
Then read no more; thou hast attain'd that[9] end:
A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit:
Bid Economy[10] farewell, and[11] Galen come,
Seeing, Ubi desinit philosophus, ibi incipit medicus:
Be a physician, Faustus; heap up gold,
And be eterniz'd for some wondrous cure:
Summum bonum medicinae sanitas,
The end of physic is our body's health.
Why, Faustus, hast thou not attain'd that end?
Is not thy common talk found aphorisms?

Are not thy bills hung up as monuments,
Whereby whole cities have escap'd the plague,
And thousand desperate maladies been eas'd?
Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man.
Couldst[12] thou make men[13] to live eternally,
Or, being dead, raise them to life again,
Then this profession were to be esteem'd.
Physic, farewell! Where is Justinian?

[Reads.]
Si una eademque res legatur[14] duobus, alter rem,
alter valorem rei, &c.

A pretty case of paltry legacies!

[Reads.]
Exhoereditare filium non potest pater, nisi, &c.[15]

Such is the subject of the institute,
And universal body of the law:[16]
This[17] study fits a mercenary drudge,
Who aims at nothing but external trash;
Too servile[18] and illiberal for me.
When all is done, divinity is best:
Jerome's Bible, Faustus; view it well.

[Reads.]
Stipendium peccati mors est.
Ha!
Stipendium, &c.

The reward of sin is death: that's hard.

[Reads.]
Si peccasse negamus, fallimur, et nulla est in nobis veritas;

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and
there's no truth in us. Why, then, belike we must sin, and so
consequently die:
Ay, we must die an everlasting death.
What doctrine call you this, Che sera, sera,[19]
What will be, shall be? Divinity, adieu!
These metaphysics of magicians,
And necromantic books are heavenly;
Lines, circles, scenes,[20] letters, and characters;
Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.
O, what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,
Is promis'd to the studious artizan!
All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command: emperors and kings
Are but obeyed in their several provinces,
Nor can they raise the wind, or rend the clouds;
But his dominion that exceeds in this,
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man;

A sound magician is a mighty god:
Here, Faustus, tire[21] thy brains to gain a deity.

Enter WAGNER.[22]

Wagner, commend me to my dearest friends,
The German Valdes and Cornelius;
Request them earnestly to visit me.

WAGNER. I will, sir.
[Exit.]

FAUSTUS. Their conference will be a greater help to me
Than all my labours, plod I ne'er so fast.

Enter GOOD ANGEL and EVIL ANGEL.

GOOD ANGEL. O, Faustus, lay that damned book aside,
And gaze not on it, lest it tempt thy soul,
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head!
Read, read the Scriptures:–that is blasphemy.

EVIL ANGEL. Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art
Wherein all Nature's treasure[23] is contain'd:
Be thou on earth as Jove[24] is in the sky,
Lord and commander of these elements.[25]
[Exeunt Angels.]

FAUSTUS. How am I glutted with conceit of this!
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve[26] me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates;
I'll have them read me strange philosophy,
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wertenberg;
I'll have them fill the public schools with silk,[27]
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad;
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the Prince of Parma from our land,
And reign sole king of all the[28] provinces;
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war,
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp's bridge,[29]
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.

Enter VALDES and CORNELIUS.

Come, German Valdes, and Cornelius,
And make me blest with your sage conference.
Valdes, sweet Valdes, and Cornelius,
Know that your words have won me at the last
To practice magic and concealed arts:

Yet not your words only,[30] but mine own fantasy,
That will receive no object; for my head
But ruminates on necromantic skill.
Philosophy is odious and obscure;
Both law and physic are for petty wits;
Divinity is basest of the three,
Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible, and vile:[31]
'Tis magic, magic, that hath ravish'd me.
Then, gentle friends, aid me in this attempt;
And I, that have with concise syllogisms[32]
Gravell'd the pastors of the German church,
And made the flowering pride of Wertenberg
Swarm to my problems, as the infernal spirits
On sweet Musaeus when he came to hell,
Will be as cunning[33] as Agrippa[34] was,
Whose shadow[35] made all Europe honour him.

VALDES. Faustus, these books, thy wit, and our experience,
Shall make all nations to canonize us.
As Indian Moors obey their Spanish lords,
So shall the spirits[36] of every element
Be always serviceable to us three;
Like lions shall they guard us when we please;
Like Almain rutters[37] with their horsemen's staves,
Or Lapland giants, trotting by our sides;
Sometimes like women, or unwedded maids,
Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the[38] white breasts of the queen of love:
From[39] Venice shall they drag huge argosies,
And from America the golden fleece
That yearly stuffs old Philip's treasury;
If learned Faustus will be resolute.

FAUSTUS. Valdes, as resolute am I in this
As thou to live: therefore object it not.

CORNELIUS. The miracles that magic will perform
Will make thee vow to study nothing else.
He that is grounded in astrology,
Enrich'd with tongues, well seen in[40] minerals,
Hath all the principles magic doth require:
Then doubt not, Faustus, but to be renowm'd,[41]
And more frequented for this mystery
Than heretofore the Delphian oracle.
The spirits tell me they can dry the sea,
And fetch the treasure of all foreign wrecks,
Ay, all the wealth that our forefathers hid
Within the massy entrails of the earth:
Then tell me, Faustus, what shall we three want?

FAUSTUS. Nothing, Cornelius. O, this cheers my soul!
Come, shew me some demonstrations magical,

That I may conjure in some lusty grove,
And have these joys in full possession.

VALDES. Then haste thee to some solitary grove,
And bear wise Bacon's and Albertus'[42] works,
The Hebrew Psalter, and New Testament;
And whatsoever else is requisite
We will inform thee ere our conference cease.

CORNELIUS. Valdes, first let him know the words of art;
And then, all other ceremonies learn'd,
Faustus may try his cunning[43] by himself.

VALDES. First I'll instruct thee in the rudiments,
And then wilt thou be perfecter than I.

FAUSTUS. Then come and dine with me, and, after meat,
We'll canvass every quiddity thereof;
For, ere I sleep, I'll try what I can do:
This night I'll conjure, though I die therefore.
[Exeunt.]

Enter two SCHOLARS.[44]

FIRST SCHOLAR. I wonder what's become of Faustus, that was wont
to make our schools ring with sic probo.

SECOND SCHOLAR. That shall we know, for see, here comes his boy.

Enter WAGNER.

FIRST SCHOLAR. How now, sirrah! where's thy master?

WAGNER. God in heaven knows.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Why, dost not thou know?

WAGNER. Yes, I know; but that follows not.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Go to, sirrah! leave your jesting, and tell us where he is.



Figure **5.4.1.2**: Faust staring at skull. (CC0 1.0; Eugene Delacroix, via Wikimedia Commons)

WAGNER. That follows not necessary by force of argument, that you,
being licentiates, should stand upon:[45] therefore acknowledge
your error, and be attentive.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Why, didst thou not say thou knewest?

WAGNER. Have you any witness on't?

FIRST SCHOLAR. Yes, sirrah, I heard you.

WAGNER. Ask my fellow if I be a thief.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Well, you will not tell us?

WAGNER. Yes, sir, I will tell you: yet, if you were not dunces,
you would never ask me such a question; for is not he corpus
naturale? and is not that mobile? then wherefore should you
ask me such a question? But that I am by nature phlegmatic,
slow to wrath, and prone to lechery (to love, I would say),
it were not for you to come within forty foot of the place
of execution, although I do not doubt to see you both hanged
the next sessions. Thus having triumphed over you, I will set
my countenance like a precisian, and begin to speak thus:–
Truly, my dear brethren, my master is within at dinner,
with Valdes and Cornelius, as this wine, if it could speak,
would[46] inform your worships: and so, the Lord bless you,
preserve you, and keep you, my dear brethren, my dear brethren![47]
[Exit.]

FIRST SCHOLAR. Nay, then, I fear he is fallen into that damned art
for which they two are infamous through the world.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Were he a stranger, and not allied to me, yet should
I grieve for him. But, come, let us go and inform the Rector,
and see if he by his grave counsel can reclaim him.

FIRST SCHOLAR. O, but I fear me nothing can reclaim him!

SECOND SCHOLAR. Yet let us try what we can do.
[Exeunt.]

Enter FAUSTUS to conjure.[48]

FAUSTUS. Now that the gloomy shadow of the earth,
Longing to view Orion’s drizzling look,
Leaps from th’ antartic world unto the sky,
And dims the welkin with her pitchy breath,
Faustus, begin thine incantations,
And try if devils will obey thy hest,
Seeing thou hast pray’d and sacrific’d to them.
Within this circle is Jehovah’s name,
Forward and backward anagrammatiz’d,[49]
Th’ abbreviated[50] names of holy saints,
Figures of every adjunct to the heavens,
And characters of signs and erring[51] stars,
By which the spirits are enforc’d to rise:
Then fear not, Faustus, but be resolute,
And try the uttermost magic can perform.–
Sint mihi dei Acherontis propitii! Valeat numen triplex Jehovoe!
Ignei, aerii, aquatani spiritus, salvete! Orientis princeps
Belzebub, inferni ardentis monarcha, et Demogorgon, propitiamus
vos, ut appareat et surgat Mephistophilis, quod tumeraris:[52]
per Jehovam, Gehennam, et consecratam aquam quam nunc spargo,

signumque crucis quod nunc facio, et per vota nostra, ipse nunc surgat nobis dicatus[53] Mephistophilis!

Enter MEPHISTOPHILIS.

I charge thee to return, and change thy shape;
Thou art too ugly to attend on me:
Go, and return an old Franciscan friar;
That holy shape becomes a devil best.
[Exit MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

I see there's virtue in my heavenly words:
Who would not be proficient in this art?
How pliant is this Mephistophilis,
Full of obedience and humility!
Such is the force of magic and my spells:
No, Faustus, thou art conjuror laureat,
That canst command great Mephistophilis:
Quin regis Mephistophilis fratris imagine.

Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS like a Franciscan friar.[54]

MEPHIST. Now, Faustus, what wouldst thou have me do?

FAUSTUS. I charge thee wait upon me whilst I live,
To do whatever Faustus shall command,
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.

MEPHIST. I am a servant to great Lucifer,
And may not follow thee without his leave:
No more than he commands must we perform.

FAUSTUS. Did not he charge thee to appear to me?

MEPHIST. No, I came hither[55] of mine own accord.

FAUSTUS. Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? speak.

MEPHIST. That was the cause, but yet per accidens;[56]
For, when we hear one rack the name of God,
Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ,
We fly, in hope to get his glorious soul;
Nor will we come, unless he use such means
Whereby he is in danger to be damn'd.
Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity,
And pray devoutly to the prince of hell.

FAUSTUS. So Faustus hath
Already done; and holds this principle,
There is no chief but only Belzebub;
To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.
This word "damnation" terrifies not him,
For he confounds hell in Elysium:
His ghost be with the old philosophers!

But, leaving these vain trifles of men's souls,
Tell me what is that Lucifer thy lord?

MEPHIST. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.

FAUSTUS. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?

MEPHIST. Yes, Faustus, and most dearly lov'd of God.

FAUSTUS. How comes it, then, that he is prince of devils?

MEPHIST. O, by aspiring pride and insolence;
For which God threw him from the face of heaven.

FAUSTUS. And what are you that live with Lucifer?

MEPHIST. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
Conspir'd against our God with Lucifer,
And are for ever damn'd with Lucifer.

FAUSTUS. Where are you damn'd?

MEPHIST. In hell.

FAUSTUS. How comes it, then, that thou art out of hell?

MEPHIST. Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it:[57]
Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
In being depriv'd of everlasting bliss?
O, Faustus, leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul!

FAUSTUS. What, is great Mephistophilis so passionate
For being deprived of the joys of heaven?
Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.
Go bear these[58] tidings to great Lucifer:
Seeing Faustus hath incurr'd eternal death
By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity,[59]
Say, he surrenders up to him his soul,
So he will spare him four and twenty[60] years,
Letting him live in all voluptuousness;
Having thee ever to attend on me,
To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
To tell me whatsoever I demand,
To slay mine enemies, and aid my friends,
And always be obedient to my will.
Go and return to mighty Lucifer,
And meet me in my study at midnight,
And then resolve[61] me of thy master's mind.

MEPHIST. I will, Faustus.
[Exit.]

FAUSTUS. Had I as many souls as there be stars,
I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.
By him I'll be great emperor of the world,

And make a bridge thorough[62] the moving air,
To pass the ocean with a band of men;
I'll join the hills that bind the Afric shore,
And make that country[63] continent to Spain,
And both contributory to my crown:
The Emperor shall not live but by my leave,
Nor any potentate of Germany.
Now that I have obtain'd what I desir'd,[64]
I'll live in speculation of this art,
Till Mephistophilis return again.
[Exit.]

Enter WAGNER[65] and CLOWN.

WAGNER. Sirrah boy, come hither.

CLOWN. How, boy! swowns, boy! I hope you have seen many boys with such pickadevaunts[66] as I have: boy, quotha!

WAGNER. Tell me, sirrah, hast thou any comings in?

CLOWN. Ay, and goings out too; you may see else.

WAGNER. Alas, poor slave! see how poverty jesteth in his nakedness! the villain is bare and out of service, and so hungry, that I know he would give his soul to the devil for a shoulder of mutton, though it were blood-raw.

CLOWN. How! my soul to the devil for a shoulder of mutton, though 'twere blood-raw! not so, good friend: by'r lady,[67] I had need have it well roasted, and good sauce to it, if I pay so dear.

WAGNER. Well, wilt thou serve me, and I'll make thee go like Qui mihi discipulus?[68]

CLOWN. How, in verse?

WAGNER. No, sirrah; in beaten silk and staves-acre.[69]

CLOWN. How, how, knaves-acre! ay, I thought that was all the land his father left him. Do you hear? I would be sorry to rob you of your living.

WAGNER. Sirrah, I say in staves-acre.

CLOWN. Oho, oho, staves-acre! why, then, belike, if I were your man, I should be full of vermin.[70]

WAGNER. So thou shalt, whether thou beest with me or no. But, sirrah, leave your jesting, and bind yourself presently unto me for seven years, or I'll turn all the lice about thee into familiars,[71] and they shall tear thee in pieces.



Figure **5.4.1.3**: Steel engraving of the Pact With the Devil (around 1840). (CC0 1.0; Julius Nisle, via Wikimedia Commons)

CLOWN. Do you hear, sir? you may save that labour; they are too familiar with me already: swowns, they are as bold with my flesh as if they had paid for their[72] meat and drink.

WAGNER. Well, do you hear, sirrah? hold, take these guilders. [Gives money.]

CLOWN. Gridirons! what be they?

WAGNER. Why, French crowns.

CLOWN. Mass, but for the name of French crowns, a man were as good have as many English counters. And what should I do with these?

WAGNER. Why, now, sirrah, thou art at an hour's warning, whensoever or wheresoever the devil shall fetch thee.

CLOWN. No, no; here, take your gridirons again.

WAGNER. Truly, I'll none of them.

CLOWN. Truly, but you shall.

WAGNER. Bear witness I gave them him.

CLOWN. Bear witness I give them you again.

WAGNER. Well, I will cause two devils presently to fetch thee away.–Baliol and Belcher!

CLOWN. Let your Baliol and your Belcher come here, and I'll knock them, they were never so knocked since they were devils: say I should kill one of them, what would folks say? "Do ye see yonder tall fellow in the round slop?[73] he has killed the devil." So I should be called Kill-devil all the parish over.

Enter two DEVILS; and the CLOWN runs up and down crying.

WAGNER. Baliol and Belcher,–spirits, away! [Exeunt DEVILS.]

CLOWN. What, are they gone? a vengeance on them! they have vile[74] long nails. There was a he-devil and a she-devil: I'll tell you how you shall know them; all he-devils has horns, and all she-devils has clifts and cloven feet.

WAGNER. Well, sirrah, follow me.

CLOWN. But, do you hear? if I should serve you, would you teach me to raise up Banios and Belcheos?

WAGNER. I will teach thee to turn thyself to any thing, to a dog, or a cat, or a mouse, or a rat, or any thing.

CLOWN. How! a Christian fellow to a dog, or a cat, a mouse, or a rat! no, no, sir; if you turn me into any thing, let it be in the likeness of a little pretty frisking flea, that I may be here and there and every where: O, I'll tickle the pretty wenches' plackets! I'll be amongst them, i'faith.

WAGNER. Well, sirrah, come.

CLOWN. But, do you hear, Wagner?

WAGNER. How!–Baliol and Belcher!

CLOWN. O Lord! I pray, sir, let Banio and Belcher go sleep.

WAGNER. Villain, call me Master Wagner, and let thy left eye be diametarily fixed upon my right heel, with quasi vestigiis nostris[75] insistere.
[Exit.]

CLOWN. God forgive me, he speaks Dutch fustian. Well, I'll follow him; I'll serve him, that's flat.
[Exit.]

FAUSTUS discovered in his study.

FAUSTUS. Now, Faustus, must
Thou needs be damn'd, and canst thou not be sav'd:
What boots it, then, to think of God or heaven?
Away with such vain fancies, and despair;
Despair in God, and trust in Belzebub:
Now go not backward; no, Faustus, be resolute:
Why waver'st thou? O, something soundeth in mine ears,
"Abjure this magic, turn to God again!"
Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again.
To God? he loves thee not;
The god thou serv'st is thine own appetite,
Wherein is fix'd the love of Belzebub:
To him I'll build an altar and a church,
And offer lukewarm blood of new-born babes.

Enter GOOD ANGEL and EVIL ANGEL.

GOOD ANGEL. Sweet Faustus, leave that execrable art.

FAUSTUS. Contrition, prayer, repentance–what of them?

GOOD ANGEL. O, they are means to bring thee unto heaven!

EVIL ANGEL. Rather illusions, fruits of lunacy,
That make men foolish that do trust them most.

GOOD ANGEL. Sweet Faustus, think of heaven and heavenly things.

EVIL ANGEL. No, Faustus; think of honour and of[76] wealth.
[Exeunt ANGELS.]

FAUSTUS. Of wealth!
Why, the signiory of Embden shall be mine.
When Mephistophilis shall stand by me,
What god can hurt thee, Faustus? thou art safe
Cast no more doubts.–Come, Mephistophilis,
And bring glad tidings from great Lucifer;–
Is't not midnight?–come, Mephistophilis,
Veni, veni, Mephistophile!

Enter MEPHISTOPHILIS.

Now tell me[77] what says Lucifer, thy lord?

MEPHIST. That I shall wait on Faustus whilst he lives,[78]
So he will buy my service with his soul.

FAUSTUS. Already Faustus hath hazarded that for thee.

MEPHIST. But, Faustus, thou must bequeath it solemnly,
And write a deed of gift with thine own blood;
For that security craves great Lucifer.
If thou deny it, I will back to hell.

FAUSTUS. Stay, Mephistophilis, and tell me, what good will my soul do thy lord?

MEPHIST. Enlarge his kingdom.

FAUSTUS. Is that the reason why[79] he tempts us thus?

MEPHIST. Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris.[80]

FAUSTUS. Why,[81] have you any pain that torture[82] others!

MEPHIST. As great as have the human souls of men.
But, tell me, Faustus, shall I have thy soul?
And I will be thy slave, and wait on thee,
And give thee more than thou hast wit to ask.

FAUSTUS. Ay, Mephistophilis, I give it thee.

MEPHIST. Then, Faustus,[83] stab thine arm courageously,
And bind thy soul, that at some certain day
Great Lucifer may claim it as his own;
And then be thou as great as Lucifer.

FAUSTUS. [Stabbing his arm] Lo, Mephistophilis, for love of thee,
I cut mine arm, and with my proper blood
Assure my soul to be great Lucifer's,
Chief lord and regent of perpetual night!
View here the blood that trickles from mine arm,
And let it be propitious for my wish.

MEPHIST. But, Faustus, thou must
Write it in manner of a deed of gift.

FAUSTUS. Ay, so I will [Writes]. But, Mephistophilis,
My blood congeals, and I can write no more.

MEPHIST. I'll fetch thee fire to dissolve it straight.
[Exit.]

FAUSTUS. What might the staying of my blood portend?
Is it unwilling I should write this bill?[84]
Why streams it not, that I may write afresh?
FAUSTUS GIVES TO THEE HIS SOUL: ah, there it stay'd!
Why shouldst thou not? is not thy soul shine own?
Then write again, FAUSTUS GIVES TO THEE HIS SOUL.

Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with a chafer of coals.

MEPHIST. Here's fire; come, Faustus, set it on.[85]

FAUSTUS. So, now the blood begins to clear again;
Now will I make an end immediately.
[Writes.]

MEPHIST. O, what will not I do to obtain his soul?
[Aside.]

FAUSTUS. Consummatum est; this bill is ended,
And Faustus hath bequeath'd his soul to Lucifer.
But what is this inscription[86] on mine arm?
Homo, fuge: whither should I fly?
If unto God, he'll throw me[87] down to hell.
My senses are deceiv'd; here's nothing writ:–
I see it plain; here in this place is writ,
Homo, fuge: yet shall not Faustus fly.

MEPHIST. I'll fetch him somewhat to delight his mind.
[Aside, and then exit.]

Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with DEVILS, who give crowns
and rich apparel to FAUSTUS, dance, and then depart.

FAUSTUS. Speak, Mephistophilis, what means this show?

MEPHIST. Nothing, Faustus, but to delight thy mind withal,
And to shew thee what magic can perform.

FAUSTUS. But may I raise up spirits when I please?

MEPHIST. Ay, Faustus, and do greater things than these.

FAUSTUS. Then there's enough for a thousand souls.
Here, Mephistophilis, receive this scroll,
A deed of gift of body and of soul:
But yet conditionally that thou perform
All articles prescrib'd between us both.

MEPHIST. Faustus, I swear by hell and Lucifer
To effect all promises between us made!

FAUSTUS. Then hear me read them. [Reads] ON THESE CONDITIONS FOLLOWING. FIRST, THAT FAUSTUS MAY BE A SPIRIT IN FORM AND SUBSTANCE. SECONDLY, THAT MEPHISTOPHILIS SHALL BE HIS SERVANT, AND AT HIS COMMAND. THIRDLY, THAT MEPHISTOPHILIS SHALL DO FOR HIM, AND BRING HIM WHATSOEVER HE DESIRES.[88] FOURTHLY, THAT HE SHALL BE IN HIS CHAMBER OR HOUSE INVISIBLE. LASTLY, THAT HE SHALL APPEAR TO THE SAID JOHN FAUSTUS, AT ALL TIMES, IN WHAT FORM OR SHAPE SOEVER HE PLEASE. I, JOHN FAUSTUS, OF WERTENBERG, DOCTOR, BY

THESE PRESENTS, DO GIVE BOTH BODY AND SOUL TO LUCIFER PRINCE OF THE EAST, AND HIS MINISTER MEPHISTOPHILIS; AND FURTHERMORE GRANT UNTO THEM, THAT,[89] TWENTY-FOUR YEARS BEING EXPIRED, THE ARTICLES ABOVE-WRITTEN INVIOLATE, FULL POWER TO FETCH OR CARRY THE SAID JOHN FAUSTUS, BODY AND SOUL, FLESH, BLOOD, OR GOODS, INTO THEIR HABITATION WHERESOEVER. BY ME, JOHN FAUSTUS.

MEPHIST. Speak, Faustus, do you deliver this as your deed?

FAUSTUS. Ay, take it, and the devil give thee good on't!

MEPHIST. Now, Faustus, ask what thou wilt.

FAUSTUS. First will I question with thee about hell.
Tell me, where is the place that men call hell?

MEPHIST. Under the heavens.

FAUSTUS. Ay, but whereabout?

MEPHIST. Within the bowels of these[90] elements,
Where we are tortur'd and remain for ever:
Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd
In one self place; for where we are is hell,
And where hell is, there[91] must we ever be:
And, to conclude, when all the world dissolves,
And every creature shall be purified,
All places shall be hell that are[92] not heaven.

FAUSTUS. Come, I think hell's a fable.

MEPHIST. Ay, think so still, till experience change thy mind.

FAUSTUS. Why, think'st thou, then, that Faustus shall be damn'd?

MEPHIST. Ay, of necessity, for here's the scroll
Wherein thou hast given thy soul to Lucifer.

FAUSTUS. Ay, and body too: but what of that?
Think'st thou that Faustus is so fond[93] to imagine
That, after this life, there is any pain?
Tush, these are trifles and mere old wives' tales.

MEPHIST. But, Faustus, I am an instance to prove the contrary,
For I am damn'd, and am now in hell.

FAUSTUS. How! now in hell!
Nay, an this be hell, I'll willingly be damn'd here:
What! walking, disputing, &c.[94]
But, leaving off this, let me have a wife,[95]
The fairest maid in Germany;
For I am wanton and lascivious,
And cannot live without a wife.

MEPHIST. How! a wife!
I prithee, Faustus, talk not of a wife.

FAUSTUS. Nay, sweet Mephistophilis, fetch me one, for I will have one.

MEPHIST. Well, thou wilt have one? Sit there till I come: I'll
fetch thee a wife in the devil's name.
[Exit.]

Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with a DEVIL drest like a WOMAN,
with fire-works.

MEPHIST. Tell me,[96] Faustus, how dost thou like thy wife?

FAUSTUS. A plague on her for a hot whore!

MEPHIST. Tut, Faustus,
Marriage is but a ceremonial toy;
If thou lovest me, think no[97] more of it.
I'll cull thee out the fairest courtezans,
And bring them every morning to thy bed:
She whom thine eye shall like, thy heart shall have,
Be she as chaste as was Penelope,
As wise as Saba,[98] or as beautiful
As was bright Lucifer before his fall.
Hold, take this book, peruse it thoroughly:
[Gives book.]

The iterating[99] of these lines brings gold;
The framing of this circle on the ground
Brings whirlwinds, tempests, thunder, and lightning;
Pronounce this thrice devoutly to thyself,
And men in armour shall appear to thee,
Ready to execute what thou desir'st.

FAUSTUS. Thanks, Mephistophilis: yet fain would I have a book
wherein I might behold all spells and incantations, that I
might raise up spirits when I please.

MEPHIST. Here they are in this book.
[Turns to them.]

FAUSTUS. Now would I have a book where I might see all characters
and planets of the heavens, that I might know their motions and
dispositions.

MEPHIST. Here they are too.
[Turns to them.]

FAUSTUS. Nay, let me have one book more,–and then I have done,–
wherein I might see all plants, herbs, and trees, that grow upon
the earth.

MEPHIST. Here they be.

FAUSTUS. O, thou art deceived.

MEPHIST. Tut, I warrant thee.
[Turns to them.]

FAUSTUS. When I behold the heavens, then I repent,
And curse thee, wicked Mephistophilis,
Because thou hast depriv'd me of those joys.

MEPHIST. Why, Faustus,
Thinkest thou heaven is such a glorious thing?
I tell thee, 'tis not half so fair as thou,
Or any man that breathes on earth.

FAUSTUS. How prov'st thou that?

MEPHIST. 'Twas made for man, therefore is man more excellent.

FAUSTUS. If it were made for man, 'twas made for me:
I will renounce this magic and repent.

Enter GOOD ANGEL and EVIL ANGEL.

GOOD ANGEL. Faustus, repent; yet God will pity thee.

EVIL ANGEL. Thou art a spirit; God cannot pity thee.

FAUSTUS. Who buzzeth in mine ears I am a spirit?
Be I a devil, yet God may pity me;
Ay, God will pity me, if I repent.

EVIL ANGEL. Ay, but Faustus never shall repent.
[Exeunt ANGELS.]

FAUSTUS. My heart's so harden'd, I cannot repent:
Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears,
"Faustus, thou art damn'd!" then swords, and knives,
Poison, guns, halters, and envenom'd steel
Are laid before me to despatch myself;
And long ere this I should have slain myself,
Had not sweet pleasure conquer'd deep despair.
Have not I made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Oenon's death?
And hath not he, that built the walls of Thebes
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,
Made music with my Mephistophilis?
Why should I die, then, or basely despair?
I am resolv'd; Faustus shall ne'er repent.–
Come, Mephistophilis, let us dispute again,
And argue of divine astrology.[100]
Tell me, are there many heavens above the moon
Are all celestial bodies but one globe,
As is the substance of this centric earth?

MEPHIST. As are the elements, such are the spheres,
Mutually folded in each other's orb,
And, Faustus,
All jointly move upon one axletree,
Whose terminine is term'd the world's wide pole;
Nor are the names of Saturn, Mars, or Jupiter
Feign'd, but are erring[101] stars.

FAUSTUS. But, tell me, have they all one motion, both situ et tempore?

MEPHIST. All jointly move from east to west in twenty-four hours upon the poles of the world; but differ in their motion upon the poles of the zodiac.

FAUSTUS. Tush,
These slender trifles Wagner can decide:
Hath Mephistophilis no greater skill?
Who knows not the double motion of the planets?
The first is finish'd in a natural day;
The second thus; as Saturn in thirty years; Jupiter in twelve;
Mars in four; the Sun, Venus, and Mercury in a year; the Moon in twenty-eight days. Tush, these are freshmen's[102] suppositions.
But, tell me, hath every sphere a dominion or intelligentia?

MEPHIST. Ay.

FAUSTUS. How many heavens or spheres are there?

MEPHIST. Nine; the seven planets, the firmament, and the empyreal heaven.

FAUSTUS. Well, resolve[103] me in this question; why have we not conjunctions, oppositions, aspects, eclipses, all at one time, but in some years we have more, in some less?

MEPHIST. Per inoequalem motum respectu totius.

FAUSTUS. Well, I am answered. Tell me who made the world?

MEPHIST. I will not.

FAUSTUS. Sweet Mephistophilis, tell me.

MEPHIST. Move me not, for I will not tell thee.

FAUSTUS. Villain, have I not bound thee to tell me any thing?

MEPHIST. Ay, that is not against our kingdom; but this is. Think thou on hell, Faustus, for thou art damned.

FAUSTUS. Think, Faustus, upon God that made the world.

MEPHIST. Remember this.
[Exit.]

FAUSTUS. Ay, go, accursed spirit, to ugly hell!
'Tis thou hast damn'd distressed Faustus' soul.
Is't not too late?

Re-enter GOOD ANGEL and EVIL ANGEL.

EVIL ANGEL. Too late.

GOOD ANGEL. Never too late, if Faustus can repent.

EVIL ANGEL. If thou repent, devils shall tear thee in pieces.

GOOD ANGEL. Repent, and they shall never raze thy skin.
[Exeunt ANGELS.]

FAUSTUS. Ah, Christ, my Saviour,
Seek to save[104] distressed Faustus' soul!

Enter LUCIFER, BELZEBUB, and MEPHISTOPHILIS.

LUCIFER. Christ cannot save thy soul, for he is just:
There's none but I have interest in the same.

FAUSTUS. O, who art thou that look'st so terrible?

LUCIFER. I am Lucifer,
And this is my companion-prince in hell.

FAUSTUS. O, Faustus, they are come to fetch away thy soul!

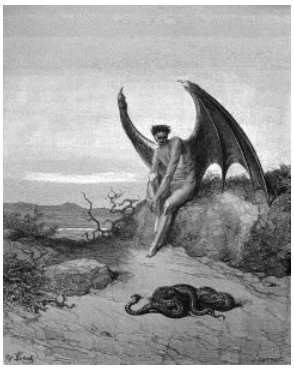


Figure 5.4.1.4: Illustration to Paradise Lost, book IX, 179–187. (CC0 1.0; Gustave Dore, via Wikimedia Commons)

LUCIFER. We come to tell thee thou dost injure us;
Thou talk'st of Christ, contrary to thy promise:
Thou shouldst not think of God: think of the devil,
And of his dam too.

FAUSTUS. Nor will I henceforth: pardon me in this,
And Faustus vows never to look to heaven,
Never to name God, or to pray to him,
To burn his Scriptures, slay his ministers,
And make my spirits pull his churches down.

LUCIFER. Do so, and we will highly gratify thee. Faustus, we are
come from hell to shew thee some pastime: sit down, and thou
shalt see all the Seven Deadly Sins appear in their proper shapes.

FAUSTUS. That sight will be as pleasing unto me,
As Paradise was to Adam, the first day
Of his creation.

LUCIFER. Talk not of Paradise nor creation; but mark this show:
talk of the devil, and nothing else.–Come away!

Enter the SEVEN DEADLY SINS.[105]

Now, Faustus, examine them of their several names and dispositions.

FAUSTUS. What art thou, the first?

PRIDE. I am Pride. I disdain to have any parents. I am like to
Ovid's flea; I can creep into every corner of a wench; sometimes,
like a perriwig, I sit upon her brow; or, like a fan of feathers,
I kiss her lips; indeed, I do–what do I not? But, fie, what a
scent is here! I'll not speak another word, except the ground
were perfumed, and covered with cloth of arras.

FAUSTUS. What art thou, the second?

COVETOUSNESS. I am Covetousness, begotten of an old churl, in an old leathern bag: and, might I have my wish, I would desire that this house and all the people in it were turned to gold, that I might lock you up in my good chest: O, my sweet gold!

FAUSTUS. What art thou, the third?

WRATH. I am Wrath. I had neither father nor mother: I leapt out of a lion's mouth when I was scarce half-an-hour old; and ever since I have run up and down the world with this case[106] of rapiers, wounding myself when I had nobody to fight withal. I was born in hell; and look to it, for some of you shall be my father.

FAUSTUS. What art thou, the fourth?

ENVY. I am Envy, begotten of a chimney-sweeper and an oyster-wife. I cannot read, and therefore wish all books were burnt. I am lean with seeing others eat. O, that there would come a famine through all the world, that all might die, and I live alone! then thou shouldst see how fat I would be. But must thou sit, and I stand? come down, with a vengeance!

FAUSTUS. Away, envious rascal!–What art thou, the fifth?

GLUTTONY. Who I, sir? I am Gluttony. My parents are all dead, and the devil a penny they have left me, but a bare pension, and that is thirty meals a-day and ten bevers,[107]–a small trifle to suffice nature. O, I come of a royal parentage! my grandfather was a Gammon of Bacon, my grandmother a Hogshead of Claret-wine; my godfathers were these, Peter Pickle-herring and Martin Martlemas-beef; O, but my godmother, she was a jolly gentlewoman, and well-beloved in every good town and city; her name was Mistress Margery March-beer. Now, Faustus, thou hast heard all my progeny; wilt thou bid me to supper?

FAUSTUS. No, I'll see thee hanged: thou wilt eat up all my victuals.

GLUTTONY. Then the devil choke thee!

FAUSTUS. Choke thyself, glutton!–What art thou, the sixth?

SLOTH. I am Sloth. I was begotten on a sunny bank, where I have lain ever since; and you have done me great injury to bring me from thence: let me be carried thither again by Gluttony and Lechery. I'll not speak another word for a king's ransom.

FAUSTUS. What are you, Mistress Minx, the seventh and last?

LECHERY. Who I, sir? I am one that loves an inch of raw mutton better than an ell of fried stock-fish; and the first letter of my name begins with L.[108]

FAUSTUS. Away, to hell, to hell![109]
[Exeunt the SINS.]

LUCIFER. Now, Faustus, how dost thou like this?

FAUSTUS. O, this feeds my soul!

LUCIFER. Tut, Faustus, in hell is all manner of delight.

FAUSTUS. O, might I see hell, and return again,
How happy were I then!

LUCIFER. Thou shalt; I will send for thee at midnight.[110]
In meantime take this book; peruse it throughly,
And thou shalt turn thyself into what shape thou wilt.

FAUSTUS. Great thanks, mighty Lucifer!
This will I keep as chary as my life.

LUCIFER. Farewell, Faustus, and think on the devil.

FAUSTUS. Farewell, great Lucifer.
[Exeunt LUCIFER and BELZEBUB.]

Come, Mephistophilis.
[Exeunt.]

Enter CHORUS.[111]

CHORUS. Learned Faustus,
To know the secrets of astronomy[112]
Graven in the book of Jove's high firmament,
Did mount himself to scale Olympus' top,
Being seated in a chariot burning bright,
Drawn by the strength of yoky dragons' necks.
He now is gone to prove cosmography,
And, as I guess, will first arrive at Rome,
To see the Pope and manner of his court,
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,
That to this day is highly solemniz'd.
[Exit.]

Enter FAUSTUS and MEPHISTOPHILIS.[113]

FAUSTUS. Having now, my good Mephistophilis,
Pass'd with delight the stately town of Trier,[114]
Environ'd round with airy mountain-tops,
With walls of flint, and deep-entrenched lakes,
Not to be won by any conquering prince;
From Paris next,[115] coasting the realm of France,
We saw the river Maine fall into Rhine,
Whose banks are set with groves of fruitful vines;
Then up to Naples, rich Campania,
Whose buildings fair and gorgeous to the eye,
The streets straight forth, and pav'd with finest brick,
Quarter the town in four equivalents:
There saw we learned Maro's golden tomb,
The way he cut,[116] an English mile in length,
Thorough a rock of stone, in one night's space;
From thence to Venice, Padua, and the rest,
In one of which a sumptuous temple stands,[117]
That threats the stars with her aspiring top.
Thus hitherto hath Faustus spent his time:

But tell me now what resting-place is this?
Hast thou, as erst I did command,
Conducted me within the walls of Rome?

MEPHIST. Faustus, I have; and, because we will not be unprovided,
I have taken up his Holiness' privy-chamber for our use.

FAUSTUS. I hope his Holiness will bid us welcome.

MEPHIST.
Tut, 'tis no matter; man; we'll be bold with his good cheer.
And now, my Faustus, that thou mayst perceive
What Rome containeth to delight thee with,
Know that this city stands upon seven hills
That underprop the groundwork of the same:
Just through the midst[118] runs flowing Tiber's stream
With winding banks that cut it in two parts;
Over the which four stately bridges lean,
That make safe passage to each part of Rome:
Upon the bridge call'd Ponte[119] Angelo
Erected is a castle passing strong,
Within whose walls such store of ordnance are,
And double cannons fram'd of carved brass,
As match the days within one complete year;
Besides the gates, and high pyramides,
Which Julius Caesar brought from Africa.

FAUSTUS. Now, by the kingdoms of infernal rule,
Of Styx, of[120] Acheron, and the fiery lake
Of ever-burning Phlegethon, I swear
That I do long to see the monuments
And situation of bright-splendent Rome:
Come, therefore, let's away.

MEPHIST. Nay, Faustus, stay: I know you'd fain see the Pope,
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,
Where thou shalt see a troop of bald-pate friars,
Whose summum bonum is in belly-cheer.

FAUSTUS. Well, I'm content to compass then some sport,
And by their folly make us merriment.
Then charm me, that I[121]
May be invisible, to do what I please,
Unseen of any whilst I stay in Rome.
[Mephistophilis charms him.]

MEPHIST. So, Faustus; now
Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not be discern'd.

Sound a Sonnet.[122] Enter the POPE and the CARDINAL OF LORRAIN to the banquet, with FRIARS attending.

POPE. My Lord of Lorrain, will't please you draw near?

FAUSTUS. Fall to, and the devil choke you, an you spare!

POPE. How now! who's that which spake?–Friars, look about.

FIRST FRIAR. Here's nobody, if it like your Holiness.

POPE. My lord, here is a dainty dish was sent me from the Bishop of Milan.

FAUSTUS. I thank you, sir.
[Snatches the dish.]

POPE. How now! who's that which snatched the meat from me? will no man look?–My lord, this dish was sent me from the Cardinal of Florence.

FAUSTUS. You say true; I'll ha't.
[Snatches the dish.]

POPE. What, again!–My lord, I'll drink to your grace.

FAUSTUS. I'll pledge your grace.
[Snatches the cup.]

C. OF LOR. My lord, it may be some ghost, newly crept out of Purgatory, come to beg a pardon of your Holiness.

POPE. It may be so.–Friars, prepare a dirge to lay the fury of this ghost.–Once again, my lord, fall to.
[The POPE crosses himself.]

FAUSTUS. What, are you crossing of yourself?
Well, use that trick no more, I would advise you.
[The POPE crosses himself again.]

Well, there's the second time. Aware the third;
I give you fair warning.
[The POPE crosses himself again, and FAUSTUS hits him a box of the ear; and they all run away.]

Come on, Mephistophilis; what shall we do?

MEPHIST. Nay, I know not: we shall be cursed with bell, book, and candle.

FAUSTUS. How! bell, book, and candle,–candle, book, and bell,–
Forward and backward, to curse Faustus to hell!
Anon you shall hear a hog grunt, a calf bleat, and an ass bray,
Because it is Saint Peter's holiday.

Re-enter all the FRIARS to sing the Dirge.

FIRST FRIAR.
Come, brethren, let's about our business with good devotion.

They sing.

CURSED BE HE THAT STOLE AWAY HIS HOLINESS' MEAT FROM THE TABLE! maledicat Dominus!
CURSED BE HE THAT STRUCK HIS HOLINESS A BLOW ON THE FACE! maledicat Dominus!
CURSED BE HE THAT TOOK FRIAR SANDELO A BLOW ON THE PATE! maledicat Dominus!
CURSED BE HE THAT DISTURBETH OUR HOLY DIRGE! maledicat Dominus!

CURSED BE HE THAT TOOK AWAY HIS HOLINESS' WINE! maledicat Dominus? ['?' sic]
Et omnes Sancti! Amen!

[MEPHISTOPHILIS and FAUSTUS beat the FRIARS, and fling fire-works among them; and so exeunt.]

Enter CHORUS.

CHORUS. When Faustus had with pleasure ta'en the view
Of rarest things, and royal courts of kings,
He stay'd his course, and so returned home;
Where such as bear his absence but with grief,
I mean his friends and near'st companions,
Did gratulate his safety with kind words,
And in their conference of what befell,
Touching his journey through the world and air,
They put forth questions of astrology,
Which Faustus answer'd with such learned skill
As they admir'd and wonder'd at his wit.
Now is his fame spread forth in every land:
Amongst the rest the Emperor is one,
Carolus the Fifth, at whose palace now
Faustus is feasted 'mongst his noblemen.
What there he did, in trial of his art,
I leave untold; your eyes shall see['t] perform'd.
[Exit.]

Enter ROBIN[123] the Ostler, with a book in his hand.

ROBIN. O, this is admirable! here I ha' stolen one of Doctor Faustus' conjuring-books, and, i'faith, I mean to search some circles for my own use. Now will I make all the maidens in our parish dance at my pleasure, stark naked, before me; and so by that means I shall see more than e'er I felt or saw yet.

Enter RALPH, calling ROBIN.

RALPH. Robin, prithee, come away; there's a gentleman tarries to have his horse, and he would have his things rubbed and made clean: he keeps such a chafing with my mistress about it; and she has sent me to look thee out; prithee, come away.

ROBIN. Keep out, keep out, or else you are blown up, you are dismembered, Ralph: keep out, for I am about a roaring piece of work.

RALPH. Come, what doest thou with that same book? thou canst not read?

ROBIN. Yes, my master and mistress shall find that I can read, he for his forehead, she for her private study; she's born to bear with me, or else my art fails.

RALPH. Why, Robin, what book is that?

ROBIN. What book! why, the most intolerable book for conjuring that e'er was invented by any brimstone devil.

RALPH. Canst thou conjure with it?

ROBIN. I can do all these things easily with it; first, I can make thee drunk with ippocras[124] at any tabern[125] in Europe for nothing; that's one of my conjuring works.

RALPH. Our Master Parson says that's nothing.

ROBIN. True, Ralph: and more, Ralph, if thou hast any mind to Nan Spit, our kitchen-maid, then turn her and wind her to thy own use, as often as thou wilt, and at midnight.

RALPH. O, brave, Robin! shall I have Nan Spit, and to mine own use? On that condition I'll feed thy devil with horse-bread as long as he lives, of free cost.

ROBIN. No more, sweet Ralph: let's go and make clean our boots, which lie foul upon our hands, and then to our conjuring in the devil's name.
[Exeunt.]

Enter ROBIN and RALPH[126] with a silver goblet.

ROBIN. Come, Ralph: did not I tell thee, we were for ever made by this Doctor Faustus' book? ecce, signum! here's a simple purchase[127] for horse-keepers: our horses shall eat no hay as long as this lasts.

RALPH. But, Robin, here comes the Vintner.

ROBIN. Hush! I'll gull him supernaturally.

Enter VINTNER.

Drawer,[128] I hope all is paid; God be with you!–Come, Ralph.

VINTNER. Soft, sir; a word with you. I must yet have a goblet paid from you, ere you go.

ROBIN. I a goblet, Ralph, I a goblet!–I scorn you; and you are but a, &c. I a goblet! search me.

VINTNER. I mean so, sir, with your favour.
[Searches ROBIN.]

ROBIN. How say you now?

VINTNER. I must say somewhat to your fellow.–You, sir!

RALPH. Me, sir! me, sir! search your fill. [VINTNER searches him.] Now, sir, you may be ashamed to burden honest men with a matter of truth.

VINTNER. Well, tone[129] of you hath this goblet about you.

ROBIN. You lie, drawer, 'tis afore me [Aside].–Sirrah you, I'll teach you to impeach honest men;–stand by;–I'll scour you for a goblet;–stand aside you had best, I charge you in the name of Belzebub.–Look to the goblet, Ralph [Aside to RALPH].

VINTNER. What mean you, sirrah?

ROBIN. I'll tell you what I mean. [Reads from a book] Sanctobulorum Periphrasticon–nay, I'll tickle you, Vintner.–Look to the goblet, Ralph [Aside to RALPH].–[Reads] Polypragmos Belseborams framanto pacostiphos tostu, Mephistophilis, &c.

Enter MEPHISTOPHILIS, sets squibs at their backs, and then exit. They run about.

VINTNER. O, nomine Domini! what meanest thou, Robin? thou hast no goblet.

RALPH. Peccatum peccatorum!–Here's thy goblet, good Vintner. [Gives the goblet to VINTNER, who exit.]

ROBIN. Misericordia pro nobis! what shall I do? Good devil, forgive me now, and I'll never rob thy library more.

Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS.

MEPHIST. Monarch of Hell,[130] under whose black survey
Great potentates do kneel with awful fear,
Upon whose altars thousand souls do lie,
How am I vexed with these villains' charms?
From Constantinople am I hither come,
Only for pleasure of these damned slaves.

ROBIN. How, from Constantinople! you have had a great journey: will you take sixpence in your purse to pay for your supper, and be gone?

MEPHIST. Well, villains, for your presumption, I transform thee into an ape, and thee into a dog; and so be gone! [Exit.]

ROBIN. How, into an ape! that's brave: I'll have fine sport with the boys; I'll get nuts and apples enow.

RALPH. And I must be a dog.

ROBIN. I'faith, thy head will never be out of the pottage-pot. [Exeunt.]

Enter EMPEROR,[131] FAUSTUS, and a KNIGHT, with ATTENDANTS.

EMPEROR. Master Doctor Faustus,[132] I have heard strange report of thy knowledge in the black art, how that none in my empire nor in the whole world can compare with thee for the rare effects of magic: they say thou hast a familiar spirit, by whom thou canst accomplish what thou list. This, therefore, is my request, that thou let me see some proof of thy skill, that mine eyes may be witnesses to confirm what mine ears have heard reported: and here I swear to thee, by the honour of mine imperial crown, that, whatever thou doest, thou shalt be no ways prejudiced or endamaged.

KNIGHT. I'faith, he looks much like a conjurer. [Aside.]

FAUSTUS. My gracious sovereign, though I must confess myself far inferior to the report men have published, and nothing answerable to the honour of your imperial majesty, yet, for that love and duty binds me thereunto, I am content to do whatsoever your majesty shall command me.

EMPEROR. Then, Doctor Faustus, mark what I shall say.
As I was sometime solitary set
Within my closet, sundry thoughts arose
About the honour of mine ancestors,
How they had won[133] by prowess such exploits,
Got such riches, subdu'd so many kingdoms,
As we that do succeed,[134] or they that shall
Hereafter possess our throne, shall
(I fear me) ne'er attain to that degree
Of high renown and great authority:
Amongst which kings is Alexander the Great,
Chief spectacle of the world's pre-eminence,
The bright[135] shining of whose glorious acts
Lightens the world with his reflecting beams,
As when I hear but motion made of him,
It grieves my soul I never saw the man:
If, therefore, thou, by cunning of thine art,
Canst raise this man from hollow vaults below,
Where lies entomb'd this famous conqueror,
And bring with him his beauteous paramour,
Both in their right shapes, gesture, and attire
They us'd to wear during their time of life,
Thou shalt both satisfy my just desire,
And give me cause to praise thee whilst I live.

FAUSTUS. My gracious lord, I am ready to accomplish your request, so far forth as by art and power of my spirit I am able to perform.

KNIGHT. I'faith, that's just nothing at all.
[Aside.]

FAUSTUS. But, if it like your grace, it is not in my ability[136] to present before your eyes the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes, which long since are consumed to dust.

KNIGHT. Ay, marry, Master Doctor, now there's a sign of grace in you, when you will confess the truth.
[Aside.]

FAUSTUS. But such spirits as can lively resemble Alexander and his paramour shall appear before your grace, in that manner that they both[137] lived in, in their most flourishing estate; which I doubt not shall sufficiently content your imperial majesty.

EMPEROR. Go to, Master Doctor; let me see them presently.

KNIGHT. Do you hear, Master Doctor? you bring Alexander and his paramour before the Emperor!

FAUSTUS. How then, sir?

KNIGHT. I'faith, that's as true as Diana turned me to a stag.

FAUSTUS. No, sir; but, when Actaeon died, he left the horns for you.–Mephistophilis, be gone.
[Exit MEPHISTOPHILIS.]

KNIGHT. Nay, an you go to conjuring, I'll be gone.
[Exit.]

FAUSTUS. I'll meet with you anon for interrupting me so.
–Here they are, my gracious lord.

Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with SPIRITS in the shapes of ALEXANDER and his PARAMOUR.

EMPEROR. Master Doctor, I heard this lady, while she lived, had a wart or mole in her neck: how shall I know whether it be so or no?

FAUSTUS. Your highness may boldly go and see.

EMPEROR. Sure, these are no spirits, but the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes.
[Exeunt Spirits.]

FAUSTUS. Wilt please your highness now to send for the knight that was so pleasant with me here of late?

EMPEROR. One of you call him forth.
[Exit ATTENDANT.]

Re-enter the KNIGHT with a pair of horns on his head.

How now, sir knight! why, I had thought thou hadst been a bachelor, but now I see thou hast a wife, that not only gives thee horns, but makes thee wear them. Feel on thy head.



Figure **5.4.1.5**: Faust Line Drawing. (CC0 1.0; Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, via Wikimedia Commons)

KNIGHT. Thou damned wretch and execrable dog,
Bred in the concave of some monstrous rock,
How dar'st thou thus abuse a gentleman?
Villain, I say, undo what thou hast done!

FAUSTUS. O, not so fast, sir! there's no haste: but, good, are you remembered how you crossed me in my conference with the Emperor? I think I have met with you for it.

EMPEROR. Good Master Doctor, at my entreaty release him: he hath done penance sufficient.

FAUSTUS. My gracious lord, not so much for the injury he offered me here in your presence, as to delight you with some mirth, hath Faustus worthily requited this injurious knight; which being all I desire, I am content to release him of his horns:–and, sir knight, hereafter speak well of scholars.–Mephistophilis, transform him straight.[138] [MEPHISTOPHILIS removes the horns.] –Now, my good lord, having done my duty, I humbly take my leave.

EMPEROR. Farewell, Master Doctor: yet, ere you go,
Expect from me a bounteous reward.
[Exeunt EMPEROR, KNIGHT, and ATTENDANTS.]

FAUSTUS. Now, Mephistophilis,[139] the restless course
That time doth run with calm and silent foot,
Shortening my days and thread of vital life,
Calls for the payment of my latest years:
Therefore, sweet Mephistophilis, let us
Make haste to Wertenberg.

MEPHIST. What, will you go on horse-back or on foot[?]

FAUSTUS. Nay, till I'm past this fair and pleasant green,
I'll walk on foot.

Enter a HORSE-COURSER.[140]

HORSE-COURSER. I have been all this day seeking one Master Fustian: mass, see where he is!–God save you, Master Doctor!

FAUSTUS. What, horse-courser! you are well met.

HORSE-COURSER. Do you hear, sir? I have brought you forty dollars for your horse.

FAUSTUS. I cannot sell him so: if thou likest him for fifty, take him.

HORSE-COURSER. Alas, sir, I have no more!–I pray you, speak for me.

MEPHIST. I pray you, let him have him: he is an honest fellow, and he has a great charge, neither wife nor child.

FAUSTUS. Well, come, give me your money [HORSE-COURSER gives FAUSTUS the money]: my boy will deliver him to you. But I must tell you one thing before you have him; ride him not into the water, at any hand.

HORSE-COURSER. Why, sir, will he not drink of all waters?

FAUSTUS. O, yes, he will drink of all waters; but ride him not into the water: ride him over hedge or ditch, or where thou wilt, but not into the water.

HORSE-COURSER. Well, sir.–Now am I made man for ever: I'll not leave my horse for forty:[141] if he had but the quality of hey-ding-ding, hey-ding-ding, I'd make a brave living on him: he has a buttock as slick as an eel [Aside].–Well, God b'wi'ye, sir: your boy will deliver him me: but, hark you, sir; if my horse

be sick or ill at ease, if I bring his water to you, you'll tell me what it is?

FAUSTUS. Away, you villain! what, dost think I am a horse-doctor? [Exit HORSE-COURSER.]

What art thou, Faustus, but a man condemn'd to die?
Thy fatal time doth draw to final end;
Despair doth drive distrust into[142] my thoughts:
Confound these passions with a quiet sleep:
Tush, Christ did call the thief upon the Cross;
Then rest thee, Faustus, quiet in conceit.
[Sleeps in his chair.]

Re-enter HORSE-COURSER, all wet, crying.

HORSE-COURSER. Alas, alas! Doctor Fustian, quoth a? mass, Doctor Lopus[143] was never such a doctor: has given me a purgation, has purged me of forty dollars; I shall never see them more. But yet, like an ass as I was, I would not be ruled by him, for he bade me I should ride him into no water: now I, thinking my horse had had some rare quality that he would not have had me know of,[144] I, like a venturous youth, rid him into the deep pond at the town's end. I was no sooner in the middle of the pond, but my horse vanished away, and I sat upon a bottle of hay, never so near drowning in my life. But I'll seek out my doctor, and have my forty dollars again, or I'll make it the dearest horse!–O, yonder is his snipper-snapper.–Do you hear? you, hey-pass,[145] where's your master?

MEPHIST. Why, sir, what would you? you cannot speak with him.

HORSE-COURSER. But I will speak with him.

MEPHIST. Why, he's fast asleep: come some other time.

HORSE-COURSER. I'll speak with him now, or I'll break his glass-windows about his ears.

MEPHIST. I tell thee, he has not slept this eight nights.

HORSE-COURSER. An he have not slept this eight weeks, I'll speak with him.

MEPHIST. See, where he is, fast asleep.

HORSE-COURSER. Ay, this is he.–God save you, Master Doctor, Master Doctor, Master Doctor Fustian! forty dollars, forty dollars for a bottle of hay!

MEPHIST. Why, thou seest he hears thee not.

HORSE-COURSER. So-ho, ho! so-ho, ho! [Hollows in his ear.] No, will you not wake? I'll make you wake ere I go. [Pulls FAUSTUS by the leg, and pulls it away.] Alas, I am undone! what shall I do?

FAUSTUS. O, my leg, my leg!–Help, Mephistophilis! call the officers.–My leg, my leg!

MEPHIST. Come, villain, to the constable.

HORSE-COURSER. O Lord, sir, let me go, and I'll give you forty dollars more!

MEPHIST. Where be they?

HORSE-COURSER. I have none about me: come to my ostry,[146] and I'll give them you.

MEPHIST. Be gone quickly.
[HORSE-COURSER runs away.]

FAUSTUS. What, is he gone? farewell he! Faustus has his leg again, and the Horse-courser, I take it, a bottle of hay for his labour: well, this trick shall cost him forty dollars more.

Enter WAGNER.

How now, Wagner! what's the news with thee?

WAGNER. Sir, the Duke of Vanholt doth earnestly entreat your company.

FAUSTUS. The Duke of Vanholt! an honourable gentleman, to whom I must be no niggard of my cunning.[147]–Come, Mephistophilis, let's away to him.
[Exeunt.]

Enter the DUKE OF VANHOLT, the DUCHESS, and FAUSTUS.[148]

DUKE. Believe me, Master Doctor, this merriment hath much pleased me.

FAUSTUS. My gracious lord, I am glad it contents you so well. –But it may be, madam, you take no delight in this. I have heard that great-bellied women do long for some dainties or other: what is it, madam? tell me, and you shall have it.

DUCHESS. Thanks, good Master Doctor: and, for I see your courteous intent to pleasure me, I will not hide from you the thing my heart desires; and, were it now summer, as it is January and the dead time of the winter, I would desire no better meat than a dish of ripe grapes.

FAUSTUS. Alas, madam, that's nothing!–Mephistophilis, be gone. [Exit MEPHISTOPHILIS.] Were it a greater thing than this, so it would content you, you should have it.

Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with grapes.

Here they be, madam: wilt please you taste on them?

DUKE. Believe me, Master Doctor, this makes me wonder above the rest, that being in the dead time of winter and in the month of January, how you should come by these grapes.

FAUSTUS. If it like your grace, the year is divided into two circles over the whole world, that, when it is here winter with us, in the contrary circle it is summer with them, as in India, Saba,[149] and farther countries in the east; and by means of a

swift spirit that I have, I had them brought hither, as you see.
–How do you like them, madam? be they good?

DUCHESS. Believe me, Master Doctor, they be the best grapes that e'er I tasted in my life before.

FAUSTUS. I am glad they content you so, madam.

DUKE. Come, madam, let us in, where you must well reward this learned man for the great kindness he hath shewed to you.

DUCHESS. And so I will, my lord; and, whilst I live, rest beholding[150] for this courtesy.

FAUSTUS. I humbly thank your grace.

DUKE. Come, Master Doctor, follow us, and receive your reward.
[Exeunt.]

Enter WAGNER.[151]

WAGNER. I think my master means to die shortly,
For he hath given to me all his goods:[152]
And yet, methinks, if that death were near,
He would not banquet, and carouse, and swill
Amongst the students, as even now he doth,
Who are at supper with such belly-cheer
As Wagner ne'er beheld in all his life.
See, where they come! belike the feast is ended.
[Exit.]

Enter FAUSTUS with two or three SCHOLARS, and MEPHISTOPHILIS.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Master Doctor Faustus, since our conference about fair ladies, which was the beautifulest in all the world, we have determined with ourselves that Helen of Greece was the admirablest lady that ever lived: therefore, Master Doctor, if you will do us that favour, as to let us see that peerless dame of Greece, whom all the world admires for majesty, we should think ourselves much beholding unto you.

FAUSTUS. Gentlemen,
For that I know your friendship is unfeign'd,
And Faustus' custom is not to deny
The just requests of those that wish him well,
You shall behold that peerless dame of Greece,
No otherways for pomp and majesty
Than when Sir Paris cross'd the seas with her,
And brought the spoils to rich Dardania.
Be silent, then, for danger is in words.
[Music sounds, and HELEN passeth over the stage.[153]]

SECOND SCHOLAR. Too simple is my wit to tell her praise,
Whom all the world admires for majesty.

THIRD SCHOLAR. No marvel though the angry Greeks pursu'd
With ten years' war the rape of such a queen,
Whose heavenly beauty passeth all compare.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Since we have seen the pride of Nature's works,
And only paragon of excellence,
Let us depart; and for this glorious deed
Happy and blest be Faustus evermore!

FAUSTUS. Gentlemen, farewell: the same I wish to you.
[Exeunt SCHOLARS.]

Enter an OLD MAN.[154]

OLD MAN. Ah, Doctor Faustus, that I might prevail
To guide thy steps unto the way of life,
By which sweet path thou mayst attain the goal
That shall conduct thee to celestial rest!
Break heart, drop blood, and mingle it with tears,
Tears falling from repentant heaviness
Of thy most vile[155] and loathsome filthiness,
The stench whereof corrupts the inward soul
With such flagitious crimes of heinous sin[156]
As no commiseration may expel,
But mercy, Faustus, of thy Saviour sweet,
Whose blood alone must wash away thy guilt.

FAUSTUS. Where art thou, Faustus? wretch, what hast thou done?
Damn'd art thou, Faustus, damn'd; despair and die!
Hell calls for right, and with a roaring voice
Says, "Faustus, come; thine hour is almost[157] come;"
And Faustus now[158] will come to do thee right.
[MEPHISTOPHILIS gives him a dagger.]

OLD MAN. Ah, stay, good Faustus, stay thy desperate steps!
I see an angel hovers o'er thy head,
And, with a vial full of precious grace,
Offers to pour the same into thy soul:
Then call for mercy, and avoid despair.

FAUSTUS. Ah, my sweet friend, I feel
Thy words to comfort my distressed soul!
Leave me a while to ponder on my sins.

OLD MAN. I go, sweet Faustus; but with heavy cheer,
Fearing the ruin of thy hopeless soul.
[Exit.]

FAUSTUS. Accursed Faustus, where is mercy now?
I do repent; and yet I do despair:
Hell strives with grace for conquest in my breast:
What shall I do to shun the snares of death?

MEPHIST. Thou traitor, Faustus, I arrest thy soul
For disobedience to my sovereign lord:
Revolt, or I'll in piece-meal tear thy flesh.

FAUSTUS. Sweet Mephistophilis, entreat thy lord
To pardon my unjust presumption,

And with my blood again I will confirm
My former vow I made to Lucifer.

MEPHIST. Do it, then, quickly,[159] with unfeigned heart,
Lest greater danger do attend thy drift.

FAUSTUS. Torment, sweet friend, that base and crooked age,
That durst dissuade me from thy Lucifer,
With greatest torments that our hell affords.

MEPHIST. His faith is great; I cannot touch his soul;
But what I may afflict his body with
I will attempt, which is but little worth.

FAUSTUS. One thing, good servant,[160] let me crave of thee,
To glut the longing of my heart's desire,--
That I might have unto my paramour
That heavenly Helen which I saw of late,
Whose sweet embracings may extinguish clean
Those[161] thoughts that do dissuade me from my vow,
And keep mine oath I made to Lucifer.

MEPHIST. Faustus, this,[162] or what else thou shalt desire,
Shall be perform'd in twinkling of an eye.

Re-enter HELEN.

FAUSTUS. Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless[163] towers of Ilium--
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.--
[Kisses her.]
Her lips suck forth my soul: see, where it flies!--
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is[164] in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wertenberg be sack'd;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
O, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appear'd to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azur'd arms;
And none but thou shalt[165] be my paramour!
[Exeunt.]

Enter the OLD MAN.[166]

OLD MAN. Accursed Faustus, miserable man,
That from thy soul exclud'st the grace of heaven,
And fly'st the throne of his tribunal-seat!

Enter DEVILS.

Satan begins to sift me with his pride:
As in this furnace God shall try my faith,
My faith, vile hell, shall triumph over thee.
Ambitious fiends, see how the heavens smile
At your repulse, and laugh your state to scorn!
Hence, hell! for hence I fly unto my God.
[Exeunt,--on one side, DEVILS, on the other, OLD MAN.]

Enter FAUSTUS,[167] with SCHOLARS.

FAUSTUS. Ah, gentlemen!

FIRST SCHOLAR. What ails Faustus?

FAUSTUS. Ah, my sweet chamber-fellow, had I lived with thee,
then had I lived still! but now I die eternally. Look, comes
he not? comes he not?

SECOND SCHOLAR. What means Faustus?

THIRD SCHOLAR. Belike he is grown into some sickness by being
over-solitary.

FIRST SCHOLAR. If it be so, we'll have physicians to cure him.
--'Tis but a surfeit; never fear, man.

FAUSTUS. A surfeit of deadly sin, that hath damned both body
and soul.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Yet, Faustus, look up to heaven; remember God's
mercies are infinite.

FAUSTUS. But Faustus' offence can ne'er be pardoned: the serpent
that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus. Ah, gentlemen,
hear me with patience, and tremble not at my speeches! Though
my heart pants and quivers to remember that I have been a student
here these thirty years, O, would I had never seen Wertenberg,
never read book! and what wonders I have done, all Germany can
witness, yea, all the world; for which Faustus hath lost both
Germany and the world, yea, heaven itself, heaven, the seat of
God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom of joy; and must
remain in hell for ever, hell, ah, hell, for ever! Sweet friends,
what shall become of Faustus, being in hell for ever?

THIRD SCHOLAR. Yet, Faustus, call on God.

FAUSTUS. On God, whom Faustus hath abjured! on God, whom Faustus
hath blasphemed! Ah, my God, I would weep! but the devil draws in
my tears. Gush forth blood, instead of tears! yea, life and soul!
O, he stays my tongue! I would lift up my hands; but see, they
hold them, they hold them!

ALL. Who, Faustus?

FAUSTUS. Lucifer and Mephistophilis. Ah, gentlemen, I gave them
my soul for my cunning![168]

ALL. God forbid!

FAUSTUS. God forbade it, indeed; but Faustus hath done it: for vain pleasure of twenty-four years hath Faustus lost eternal joy and felicity. I writ them a bill with mine own blood: the date is expired; the time will come, and he will fetch me.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Why did not Faustus tell us of this before,[169] that divines might have prayed for thee?

FAUSTUS. Oft have I thought to have done so; but the devil threatened to tear me in pieces, if I named God, to fetch both body and soul, if I once gave ear to divinity: and now 'tis too late. Gentlemen, away, lest you perish with me.

SECOND SCHOLAR. O, what shall we do to save[170] Faustus?

FAUSTUS. Talk not of me, but save yourselves, and depart.

THIRD SCHOLAR. God will strengthen me; I will stay with Faustus.

FIRST SCHOLAR. Tempt not God, sweet friend; but let us into the next room, and there pray for him.

FAUSTUS. Ay, pray for me, pray for me; and what noise soever ye hear,[171] come not unto me, for nothing can rescue me.

SECOND SCHOLAR. Pray thou, and we will pray that God may have mercy upon thee.

FAUSTUS. Gentlemen, farewell: if I live till morning, I'll visit you; if not, Faustus is gone to hell.

ALL. Faustus, farewell.
[Exeunt SCHOLARS.--The clock strikes eleven.]

FAUSTUS. Ah, Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come;
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!
O lente,[172] lente currite, noctis equi!
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.
O, I'll leap up to my God!--Who pulls me down?--
See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ!--
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet will I call on him: O, spare me, Lucifer!--
Where is it now? 'tis gone: and see, where God
Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows!
Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!
No, no!
Then will I headlong run into the earth:

Earth, gape! O, no, it will not harbour me!
You stars that reign'd at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
Now draw up Faustus, like a foggy mist.
Into the entrails of yon labouring cloud[s],
That, when you[173] vomit forth into the air,
My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths,
So that my soul may but ascend to heaven!
[The clock strikes the half-hour.]
Ah, half the hour is past! 'twill all be past anon
O God,
If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
Yet for Christ's sake, whose blood hath ransom'd me,
Impose some end to my incessant pain;
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
A hundred thousand, and at last be sav'd!
O, no end is limited to damned souls!
Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
Ah, Pythagoras' metempsychosis, were that true,
This soul should fly from me, and I be chang'd
Unto some brutish beast![174] all beasts are happy,
For, when they die,
Their souls are soon dissolv'd in elements;
But mine must live still to be plagu'd in hell.
Curs'd be the parents that engender'd me!
No, Faustus, curse thyself, curse Lucifer
That hath depriv'd thee of the joys of heaven.
[The clock strikes twelve.]
O, it strikes, it strikes! Now, body, turn to air,
Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell!
[Thunder and lightning.]
O soul, be chang'd into little water-drops,
And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found!

Enter DEVILS.

My God, my god, look not so fierce on me!
Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while!
Ugly hell, gape not! come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books!--Ah, Mephistophilis!
[Exeunt DEVILS with FAUSTUS.][175]

Enter CHORUS.

CHORUS. Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burned is Apollo's laurel-bough,
That sometime grew within this learned man.
Faustus is gone: regard his hellish fall,
Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise,
Only to wonder at unlawful things,
Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits

To practice more than heavenly power permits.
[Exit.]

Terminat hora diem; terminat auctor opus.

Original Comments on the preparation of the E-Text:

SQUARE BRACKETS:

The square brackets, i.e. [ ] are copied from the printed book, without change. The open [Exit brackets use in the book have been closed [by mh].

For this E-Text version of the book, the footnotes have been consolidated at the end of the play.

Numbering of the footnotes has been changed, and each footnote is given a unique identity in the form [XXX].

CHANGES TO THE TEXT:

Character names were expanded. For Example, SECOND SCHOLAR was SEC. SCHOL.

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1. mate-- i.e. confound, defeat. ↵
2. So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "daunt." ↵
3. All the 4tos "his." ↵
4. Whereas-- i.e. where. ↵
5. cunning-- i.e. knowledge. ↵
6. So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "more." ↵
7. FAUSTUS discovered in his study-- Most probably, the Chorus, before going out, drew a curtain, and discovered Faustus sitting. In B. Barnes's DIVILS CHARTER, 1607, we find; "SCEN. VLTIMA. ALEXANDER VNBRACED BETWIXT TWO CARDINALLS in his study LOOKING VPON A BOOKE, whilst a groome draweth the Curtaine." Sig. L 3. ↵
8. Analytics, 'tis thou, &c.-- Qy. "Analytic"? (but such phraseology was not uncommon). ↵
9. So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "the" (the printer having mistaken "yt" for "ye"). ↵
10. So the later 4tos (with various spelling).--2to 1604 "Oncaymaeon." ↵
11. and-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
12. Couldst-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "Wouldst." ↵
13. men-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "man." ↵
14. legatur-- All the 4tos "legatus." ↵
15. &c.-- So two of the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
16. law-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "Church." ↵
17. This-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "His." ↵
18. Too servile-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "The deuill." ↵
19. Che sera, sera-- Lest it should be thought that I am wrong in not altering the old spelling here, I may quote from Panizzi's very critical edition of the ORLANDO FURIOSO, "La satisfazion ci SERA pronta." C. xviii. st. 67. ↵
20. scenes-- "And sooner may a gulling weather-spie By drawing forth heavens SCEANES tell certainly," &c. Donne's FIRST SATYRE,--p. 327, ed. 1633. ↵
21. tire-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "trie." ↵
22. Enter WAGNER, &c.-- Perhaps the proper arrangement is,] "Wagner! Enter WAGNER. Commend me to my dearest friends," &c. ↵
23. treasure-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "treasury." ↵
24. Jove-- So again, p. 84, first col.,[See Note 59] : "Seeing Faustus hath incurr'd eternal death By desperate thoughts against JOVE'S deity," &c.: and I may notice that Marlowe is not singular in applying the name JOVE to the God of Christians:] "Beneath our standard of JOUES powerfull sonne [i.e. Christ--". MIR. FOR MAGISTRATES, p. 642, ed. 1610. "But see the

judgement of almightie JOUE," &c. Id. p. 696. "O sommo GIOVE per noi crocifisso," &c. Pulci,--MORGANTE MAG. C. ii. st. 1. ↵

25. these elements-- So again, "Within the bowels of THESE elements," &c., p. 87, first col,[See Note 90----"THESE" being equivalent to THE. (Not unfrequently in our old writers THESE is little more than redundant.) ↵
26. resolve-- i.e. satisfy, inform. ↵
27. silk-- All the 4tos "skill" (and so the modern editors!). ↵
28. the-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "our." ↵
29. the fiery keel at Antwerp's bridge-- During the blockade of Antwerp by the Prince of Parma in 1585, "They of Antuerpe knowing that the bridge and the Stocadoes were finished, made a great shippe, to be a meanes to breake all this worke of the prince of Parmaes: this great shippe was made of masons worke within, in the manner of a vaulted caue: vpon the hatches there were layed myll-stones, graue-stones, and others of great weight; and within the vault were many barrels of powder, ouer the which there were holes, and in them they had put matches, hanging at a thred, the which burning vntill they came vnto the thred, would fall into the powder, and so blow vp all. And for that they could not haue any one in this shippe to conduct it, Lanckhaer, a sea captaine of the Hollanders, being then in Antuerpe, gaue them counsell to tye a great beame at the end of it, to make it to keepe a straight course in the middest of the streame. In this sort floated this shippe the fourth of Aprill, vntill that it came vnto the bridge; where (within a while after) the powder wrought his effect, with such violence, as the vessell, and all that was within it, and vpon it, flew in pieces, carrying away a part of the Stocado and of the bridge. The marquesse of Roubay Vicont of Gant, Gaspar of Robles lord of Billy, and the Seignior of Torchies, brother vnto the Seignior of Bours, with many others, were presently slaine; which were torne in pieces, and dispersed abroad, both vpon the land and vpon the water." Grimeston's GENERALL HISTORIE OF THE NETHERLANDS, p. 875, ed. 1609. ↵
30. only-- Qy. "alone"? (This line is not in the later 4tos.) ↵
31. vile-- Old ed. "vild": but see note ||, p. 68.--(This line is not in the later 4tos. vile-- Old ed. "vild": but see note ||, p. 68.--(This line is not in the later 4tos.) [Note || from page 68 (The Second Part of Tamburlaine the Great):] Vile-- The 8vo "Vild"; the 4to "Wild" (Both eds. a little before, have "VILE monster, born of some infernal hag", and, a few lines after, "To VILE and ignominious servitude":--the fact is, our early writers (or rather transcribers), with their usual inconsistency of spelling, give now the one form, and now the other: compare the folio SHAKESPEARE, 1623, where we sometimes find "vild" and sometimes "VILE.")-- ↵
32. concise syllogisms-- Old ed. "Consissylogismes." ↵
33. cunning-- i.e. knowing, skilful. ↵
34. Agrippa-- i.e. Cornelius Agrippa. ↵
35. shadow-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "shadowes." ↵
36. spirits-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "subiects." ↵
37. Almain rutters-- See note †, p. 43. Almain rutters-- See note †, p. 43.] [Note † from p. 43. (The Second Part of Tamburlaine the Great): Almains, Rutters-- Rutters are properly--German troopers (reiter, reuter). In the third speech after the present one this line is repeated VERBATIM: but in the first scene of our author's FAUSTUS we have, "Like ALMAIN RUTTERS with their horsemen's staves."--] ↵
38. have the-- So two of the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "in their." ↵
39. From-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "For." ↵
40. in-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
41. renowm'd-- See note ||, p. 11.] [Note || from p. 11. (The First Part of Tamburlaine the Great): renowmed-- i.e. renowned.--So the 8vo.--The 4to "renowned." --The form "RENOWMED" (Fr. RENOMME) occurs repeatedly afterwards in this play, according to the 8vo. It is occasionally found in writers posterior to Marlowe's time. e.g. "Of Constantines great towne RENOUM'D in vaine." Verses to King James, prefixed to Lord Stirling's MONARCHICKE TRAGEDIES, ed. 1607.--] ↵
42. Albertus'-- i.e. Albertus Magnus.--The correction of I. M. in Gent. Mag. for Jan. 1841.--All the 4tos "Albanus." ↵
43. cunning-- i.e. skill. ↵
44. Enter two SCHOLARS-- Scene, perhaps, supposed to be before Faustus's house, as Wagner presently says, "My master is within at dinner." ↵
45. upon-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "vpon't." ↵
46. speak, would-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "speake, IT would." ↵
47. my dear brethren-- This repetition (not found in the later 4tos) is perhaps an error of the original compositor. ↵

48. Enter FAUSTUS to conjure-- The scene is supposed to be a grove; see p. 81, last line of sec. col. [Page 81, second column, last line: "VALDES. Then haste thee to some solitary grove,"--] ↵
49. anagrammatiz'd-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "and Agramithist." ↵
50. Th' abbreviated-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "The breuiated." ↵
51. erring-- i.e. wandering. ↵
52. surgat Mephistophilis, quod tumeraris-- The later 4tos have "surgat Mephistophilis DRAGON, quod tumeraris."--There is a corruption here, which seems to defy emendation. For "quod TUMERARIS," Mr. J. Crossley, of Manchester, would read (rejecting the word "Dragon") "quod TU MANDARES" (the construction being "quod tu mandares ut Mephistophilis appareat et surgat"): but the "tu" does not agree with the preceding "vos."--The Revd. J. Mitford proposes "surgat Mephistophilis, per Dragon (or Dagon) quod NUMEN EST AERIS."] ↵
53. dicatus-- So two of the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "dicatis." ↵
54. Re-enter Mephistophilis, &c.-- According to THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS, on which this play is founded, Faustus raises Mephistophilis in "a thicke wood neere to Wittenberg, called in the German tongue Spisser Wolt..... Presently, not three fathom above his head, fell a flame in manner of a lightning, and changed itselfe into a globe..... Suddenly the globe opened, and sprung up in the height of a man; so burning a time, in the end it converted to the shape of a fiery man[?-- This pleasant beast ran about the circle a great while, and, lastly, appeared in the manner of a Gray Fryer, asking Faustus what was his request?" Sigs. A 2, A 3, ed. 1648. Again; "After Doctor Faustus had made his promise to the devill, in the morning betimes he called the spirit before him, and commanded him that he should alwayes come to him like a fryer after the order of Saint Francis, with a bell in his hand like Saint Anthony, and to ring it once or twice before he appeared, that he might know of his certaine coming." Id. Sig. A 4.] ↵
55. came hither-- So two of the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "came NOW hither." ↵
56. accidens-- So two of the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "accident." ↵
57. Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it-- Compare Milton, Par. Lost, iv. 75; "Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell." ↵
58. these-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "those." ↵
59. Jove's-- See note ‡, p. 80. [i.e. Note 24] ↵
60. four and twenty-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "24." ↵
61. resolve-- i.e. satisfy, inform. ↵
62. thorough-- So one of the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "through." ↵
63. country-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "land." ↵
64. desir'd-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "desire." ↵
65. Enter WAGNER, &c.-- Scene, a street most probably. ↵
66. pickadevaunts-- i.e. beards cut to a point. ↵
67. by'r lady-- i.e. by our Lady. ↵
68. Qui mihi discipulus-- The first words of W. Lily's AD DISCIPULOS CARMEN DE MORIBUS, "Qui mihi discipulus, puer, es, cupis atque doceri, Huc ades," &c.] ↵
69. staves-acre-- A species of larkspur. ↵
70. vermin-- Which the seeds of staves-acre were used to destroy. ↵
71. familiars-- i.e. attendant-demons. ↵
72. their-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "my." ↵
73. slop-- i.e. wide breeches. ↵
74. vile-- Old ed. "vild." See note || p. 68. [Note || from page 68 (The Second Part of Tamburlaine the Great): Vile-- The 8vo "Vild"; the 4to "Wild" (Both eds. a little before, have "VILE monster, born of some infernal hag", and, a few lines after, "To VILE and ignominious servitude":--the fact is, our early writers (or rather transcribers), with their usual inconsistency of spelling, give now the one form, and now the other: compare the folio SHAKESPEARE, 1623, where we sometimes find "vild" and sometimes "VILE.") ↵
75. vestigiis nostris-- All the 4tos "vestigias nostras." ↵
76. of-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
77. me-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
78. he lives-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "I liue." ↵
79. why-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵

80. Solamen miseris, &c.-- An often-cited line of modern Latin poetry: by whom it was written I know not. ↵
81. Why-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
82. So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "tortures." ↵
83. So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
84. Bill-- i.e. writing, deed. ↵
85. Here's fire; come, Faustus, set it on-- This would not be intelligible without the assistance of THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS, the sixth chapter of which is headed,--"How Doctor Faustus set his blood in a saucer on warme ashes, and writ as followeth." Sig. B, ed. 1648.] ↵
86. But what is this inscription, &c.-- "He [Faustus-- tooke a small penknife and prickt a veine in his left hand; and for certainty thereupon were seen on his hand these words written, as if they had been written with blood, O HOMO, FUGE." THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS, Sig. B, ed. 1648. ↵
87. me-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "thee." ↵
88. he desires-- Not in any of the four 4tos. In the tract just cited, the "3d Article" stands thus,--"That Mephostophiles should bring him any thing, and doe for him whatsoever." Sig. A 4, ed. 1648. A later ed. adds "he desired." Marlowe, no doubt, followed some edition of the HISTORY in which these words, or something equivalent to them, had been omitted by mistake. (2to 1661, which I consider as of no authority, has "he requireth.")] ↵
89. that, &c.-- So all the 4tos, ungrammatically. ↵
90. these-- See note §, p. 80.[i.e. Note 25] ↵
91. there-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
92. are-- So two of the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "is." ↵
93. fond-- i.e. foolish. ↵
94. What! walking, disputing, &c.-- The later 4tos have "What, SLEEPING, EATING, walking, AND disputing!" But it is evident that this speech is not given correctly in any of the old eds. ↵
95. let me have a wife, &c.-- The ninth chapter of THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS narrates "How Doctor Faustus would have married, and how the Devill had almost killed him for it," and concludes as follows. "It is no jesting [said Mephistophilis-- with us: hold thou that which thou hast vowed, and we will peforme as we have promised; and more shall that, thou shalt have thy hearts desire of what woman soever thou wilt, be she alive or dead, and so long as thou wilt thou shalt keep her by thee.--These words pleased Faustus wonderfull well, and repented himself that he was so foolish to wish himselfe married, that might have any woman in the whole city brought him at his command; the which he practised and persevered in a long time." Sig. B 3, ed. 1648. ↵
96. me-- Not in 4to 1604. (This line is wanting in the later 4tos.) ↵
97. no-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
98. Saba-- i.e. Sabaea--the Queen of Sheba. ↵
99. iterating-- i.e. reciting, repeating. ↵
100. And argue of divine astrology, &c.-- In THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS, there are several tedious pages on the subject; but our dramatist, in the dialogue which follows, has no particular obligations to them. ↵
101. erring-- i.e. wandering. ↵
102. freshmen's-- "A Freshman, tiro, novitius." Coles's DICT. Properly, a student during his first term at the university. ↵
103. resolve-- i.e. satisfy, inform. ↵
104. Seek to save-- Qy. "Seek THOU to save"? But see note ||, p. 18. [Note ||, from page 18 (The First Part of Tamburlaine The Great): Barbarous-- Qy. "O Barbarous"? in the next line but one, "O treacherous"? and in the last line of the speech, "O bloody"? But we occasionally find in our early dramatists lines which are defective in the first syllable; and in some of these instances at least it would almost seem that nothing has been omitted by the transcriber or printer.--] ↵
105. Enter the SEVEN DEADLY SINS-- In THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS, Lucifer amuses Faustus, not by calling up the Seven Deadly Sins, but by making various devils appear before him, "one after another, in forme as they were in hell." "First entered Beliall in forme of a beare," &c.--"after him came Beelzebub, in curled haire of a horseflesh colour," &c.--"then came Astaroth, in the forme of a worme," &c. &c. During this exhibition, "Lucifer himselfe sate in manner of a man all hairy, but of browne colour, like a squirrell, curled, and his tayle turning upward on his backe as the squirrels use: I think he could crack nuts too like a squirrell." Sig. D, ed. 1648. ↵
106. case-- i.e. couple. ↵

107. bevers-- i.e. refreshments between meals. ↵
108. L.-- All the 4tos "Lechery."--Here I have made the alteration recommended by Mr. Collier in his Preface to COLERIDGE'S SEVEN LECTURES ON SHAKESPEARE AND MILTON, p. cviii. ↵
109. Away, to hell, to hell-- In 4to 1604, these words stand on a line by themselves, without a prefix. (In the later 4tos, the corresponding passage is as follows; "------ begins with Lechery. LUCIFER. Away to hell, away! On, piper! [Exeunt the SINS. FAUSTUS. O, how this sight doth delight my soul!" &c.)] ↵
110. I will send for thee at midnight-- In THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS, we have a particular account of Faustus's visit to the infernal regions, Sig. D 2, ed. 1648. ↵
111. Enter CHORUS-- Old ed. "Enter WAGNER solus." That these lines belong to the Chorus would be evident enough, even if we had no assistance here from the later 4tos.--The parts of Wagner and of the Chorus were most probably played by the same actor: and hence the error. ↵
112. Learned Faustus, To know the secrets of astronomy, &c.-- See the 21st chapter of THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS,--"How Doctor Faustus was carried through the ayre up to the heavens, to see the whole world, and how the sky and planets ruled," &c. ↵
113. Enter FAUSTUS and MEPHISTOPHILIS-- Scene, the Pope's privy-chamber. ↵
114. Trier-- i.e. Treves or Triers. ↵
115. From Paris next, &c.-- This description is from THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS; "He came from Paris to Mentz, where the river of Maine falls into the Rhine: notwithstanding he tarried not long there, but went into Campania, in the kingdome of Neapol, in which he saw an innumerable sort of cloysters, nunries, and churches, and great houses of stone, the streets faire and large, and straight forth from one end of the towne to the other as a line; and all the pavement of the city was of bricke, and the more it rained into the towne, the fairer the streets were: there saw he the tombe of Virgill, and the highway that he cu[t] through the mighty hill of stone in one night, the whole length of an English mile," &c. Sig. E 2, ed. 1648. ↵
116. The way he cut, &c.-- During the middle ages Virgil was regarded as a great magician, and much was written concerning his exploits in that capacity. The LYFE OF VIRGILIUS, however, (see Thoms's EARLY PROSE ROMANCES, vol. ii.,) makes no mention of the feat in question. But Petrarch speaks of it as follows. "Non longe a Puteolis Falernus collis attollitur, famoso palmite nobilis. Inter Falernum et mare mons est saxeus, hominum manibus confossus, quod vulgus insulsum a Virgilio magicis cantaminibus factum putant: ita clarorum fama hominum, non veris contenta laudibus, saepe etiam fabulis viam facit. De quo cum me olim Robertus regno clarus, sed praeclarus ingenio ac literis, quid sentirem, multis astantibus, percunctatus esset, humanitate fretus regia, qua non reges modo sed homines vicit, jocans nusquam me legisse magicarium fuisse Virgilium respondi: quod ille severissimae nutu frontis approbans, non illic magici sed ferri vestigia confessus est. Sunt autem fauces excavati montis angustae sed longissimae atque atrae: tenebrosa inter horrifica semper nox: publicum iter in medio, mirum et religioni proximum, belli quoque immolatum temporibus, sic vero populi vox est, et nullis unquam latrociniis attentatum, patet: Criptam Neapolitanam dicunt, cujus et in epistolis ad Lucilium Seneca mentionem fecit. Sub finem fusci tramitis, ubi primo videri coelum incipit, in aggere edito, ipsius Virgilii busta visuntur, pervetusti operis, unde haec forsan ab illo perforati montis fluxit opinio." ITINERARIUM SYRIACUM,--OPP. p. 560, ed. Bas.] ↵
117. From thence to Venice, Padua, and the rest, In one of which a sumptuous temple stands, &c.-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "In MIDST of which," &c.--THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS shews WHAT "sumptuous temple" is meant: "From thence he came to Venice....He wondred not a little at the fairenesse of S. Marks Place, and the sumptuous church standing thereon, called S. Marke, how all the pavement was set with coloured stones, and all the rood or loft of the church double gilded over." Sig. E 2, ed. 1648. ↵
118. Just through the midst, &c.-- This and the next line are not in 4to 1604. I have inserted them from the later 4tos, as being absolutely necessary for the sense. ↵
119. Ponte-- All the 4tos "Ponto." ↵
120. of-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
121. Then charm me, that I, &c.-- A corrupted passage.--Compare THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS, Sig. E 3, ed. 1648; where, however, the Cardinal, whom the Pope entertains, is called the Cardinal of PAVIA. ↵
122. Sonnet-- Variously written, SENNET, SIGNET, SIGNATE, &c.--A particular set of notes on the trumpet, or cornet, different from a flourish. See Nares's GLOSS. in V. SENNET. ↵
123. Enter ROBIN, &c.-- Scene, near an inn. ↵

124. ippocras-- Or HIPPOCRAS,--a medicated drink composed of wine (usually red) with spices and sugar. It is generally supposed to have been so called from HIPPOCRATES (contracted by our earliest writers to HIPPOCRAS); perhaps because it was strained,--the woollen bag used by apothecaries to strain syrups and decoctions for clarification being termed HIPPOCRATES' SLEEVE. ↵
125. tabern-- i.e. tavern. ↵
126. Exeunt. Enter ROBIN and RALPH, &c.-- A scene is evidently wanting after the Exeunt of Robin and Ralph. ↵
127. purchase-- i.e. booty--gain, acquisition. ↵
128. Drawer-- There is an inconsistency here: the Vintner cannot properly be addressed as "Drawer." The later 4tos are also inconsistent in the corresponding passage: Dick says, "THE VINTNER'S BOY follows us at the hard heels," and immediately the "VINTNER" enters. ↵
129. tone-- i.e. the one. ↵
130. MEPHIST-- Monarch of hell, &c.-- Old ed. thus:--] "MEPHIST. Vanish vilaines, th' one like an Ape, an other like a Beare, the third an Asse, for doing this enterprise. Monarch of hell, vnder whose blacke suruey," &c. What follows, shews that the words which I have omitted ought to have no place in the text; nor is there any thing equivalent to them in the corresponding passage of the play as given in the later 4tos. ↵
131. Enter EMPEROR, &c.-- Scene--An apartment in the Emperor's Palace. According to THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS, the Emperor "was personally, with the rest of the nobles and gentlemen, at the towne of Inzbrack, where he kept his court." Sig. G, ed. 1648. ↵
132. Master Doctor Faustus, &c-- The greater part of this scene is closely borrowed from the history just cited: e.g. "Faustus, I have heard much of thee, that thou art excellent in the black art, and none like thee in mine empire; for men say that thou hast a familiar spirit with thee, and that thou canst doe what thou list; it is therefore (said the Emperor) my request of thee, that thou let me see a proofe of thy experience: and I vow unto thee, by the honour of my emperiall crowne, none evill shall happen unto thee for so doing," &c. Ibid. ↵
133. won-- May be right: but qy. "done"? ↵
134. As we that do succeed, &c.-- A corrupted passage (not found in the later 4tos). ↵
135. The bright, &c.-- See note ||, p. 18. [Note ||, from page 18 (The First Part of Tamburlaine The Great): Barbarous-- Qy. "O Barbarous"? in the next line but one, "O treacherous"? and in the last line of the speech, "O bloody"? But we occasionally find in our early dramatists lines which are defective in the first syllable; and in some of these instances at least it would almost seem that nothing has been omitted by the transcriber or printer.--] ↵
136. But, if it like your grace, it is not in my ability, &c.] "D. Faustus answered, My most excellent lord, I am ready to accomplish your request in all things, so farre forth as I and my spirit are able to performe: yet your majesty shall know that their dead bodies are not able substantially to be brought before you; but such spirits as have seene Alexander and his Paramour alive shall appeare unto you, in manner and form as they both lived in their most flourishing time; and herewith I hope to please your Imperiall Majesty. Then Faustus went a little aside to speake to his spirit; but he returned againe presently, saying, Now, if it please your Majesty, you shall see them; yet, upon this condition, that you demand no question of them, nor speake unto them; which the Emperor agreed unto. Wherewith Doctor Faustus opened the privy-chamber doore, where presently entered the great and mighty emperor Alexander Magnus, in all things to looke upon as if he had beene alive; in proportion, a strong set thicke man, of a middle stature, blacke haire, and that both thicke and curled, head and beard, red cheekes, and a broad face, with eyes like a basiliske; he had a compleat harnesse (i.e. suit of armour) burnished and graven, exceeding rich to look upon: and so, passing towards the Emperor Carolus, he made low and reverend courtesie: whereat the Emperour Carolus would have stood up to receive and greet him with the like reverence; but Faustus tooke hold on him, and would not permit him to doe it. Shortly after, Alexander made humble reverence, and went out againe; and comming to the doore, his paramour met him. She comming in made the Emperour likewise reverence: she was cloathed in blew velvet, wrought and imbroidered with pearls and gold; she was also excellent faire, like milke and blood mixed, tall and slender, with a face round as an apple. And thus passed [she-- certaine times up and downe the house; which the Emperor marking, said to himselfe, Now have I seene two persons which my heart hath long wished to behold; and sure it cannot otherwise be (said he to himselfe) but that the spirits have changed themselves into these formes, and have but deceived me, calling to minde the woman that raised the prophet Samuel: and for that the Emperor would be the more satisfied in the matter, he said, I have often heard that behind, in her neck, she had a great wart or wen; wherefore he tooke Faustus by the hand without any words, and went to see if it were also to be seene on her or

not; but she, perceiving that he came to her, bowed downe her neck, when he saw a great wart; and hereupon she vanished, leaving the Emperor and the rest well contented." THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS, Sig. G, ed. 1648.] ↵

137. both-- Old ed. "best." ↵
138. Mephistophilis, transform him straight-- According to THE HISTORY OF DR. FAUSTUS, the knight was not present during Faustus's "conference" with the Emperor; nor did he offer the doctor any insult by doubting his skill in magic. We are there told that Faustus happening to see the knight asleep, "leaning out of a window of the great hall," fixed a huge pair of hart's horns on his head; "and, as the knight awaked, thinking to pull in his head, he hit his hornes against the glasse, that the panes thereof flew about his eares: thinke here how this good gentleman was vexed, for he could neither get backward nor forward." After the emperor and the courtiers, to their great amusement, had beheld the poor knight in this condition, Faustus removed the horns. When Faustus, having taken leave of the emperor, was a league and a half from the city, he was attacked in a wood by the knight and some of his companions: they were in armour, and mounted on fair palfreys; but the doctor quickly overcame them by turning all the bushes into horsemen, and "so charmed them, that every one, knight and other, for the space of a whole moneth, did weare a paire of goates hornes on their browes, and every palfry a paire of oxe hornes on his head; and this was their penance appointed by Faustus." A second attempt of the knight to revenge himself on Faustus proved equally unsuccessful. Sigs. G 2, I 3, ed. 1648. ↵
139. FAUSTUS. Now Mephistophilis, &c.-- Here the scene is supposed to be changed to the "fair and pleasant green" which Faustus presently mentions. ↵
140. Horse-courser-- i.e. Horse-dealer.--We are now to suppose the scene to be near the home of Faustus, and presently that it is the interior of his house, for he falls asleep in his chair.--"How Doctor Faustus deceived a Horse-courser" is related in a short chapter (the 34th) of THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS: "After this manner he served a horse-courser at a faire called Pheiffering," &c. ↵
141. for forty-- Qy. "for TWICE forty DOLLARS"? ↵
142. into-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "vnto." ↵
143. Doctor Lopus-- i.e. Doctor Lopez, domestic physician to Queen Elizabeth, who was put to death for having received a bribe from the court of Spain to destroy her. He is frequently mentioned in our early dramas: see my note on Middleton's WORKS, iv. 384. ↵
144. know of-- The old ed. has "KNOWNE of"; which perhaps is right, meaning--acquainted with. ↵
145. hey-pass-- Equivalent to--juggler. ↵
146. ostry-- i.e. inn,--lodging. ↵
147. cunning-- i.e. skill. ↵
148. Exeunt. Enter the DUKE OF VANHOLT, the DUCHESS, and FAUSTUS-- Old ed.; "Exeunt. Enter to them the DUKE, the DUTCHESS, the DUKE speakes." In the later 4tos a scene intervenes between the "Exeunt" of Faustus, Mephistophilis, and Wagner, and the entrance of the Duke of Vanholt, &c.--We are to suppose that Faustus is now at the court of the Duke of Vanholt: this is plain, not only from the later 4tos, --in which Wagner tells Faustus that the Duke "hath sent some of his men to attend him, with provision fit for his journey,"--but from THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS, the subjoined portion of which is closely followed in the present scene. "Chap. xxxix. HOW DOCTOR FAUSTUS PLAYED A MERRY JEST WITH THE DUKE OF ANHOLT IN HIS COURT. Doctor Faustus on a time went to the Duke of Anholt, who welcommed him very courteously; this was the moneth of January; where sitting at the table, he perceived the dutchess to be with child; and forbearing himselfe untill the meat was taken from the table, and that they brought in the banqueting dishes [i.e. the dessert--, Doctor Faustus said to the dutchesse, Gratious lady, I have alwayes heard that great-bellied women doe alwayes long for some dainties; I beseech therefore your grace, hide not your minde from me, but tell me what you desire to eat. She answered him, Doctor Faustus, now truly I will not hide from you what my heart doth most desire; namely, that, if it were now harvest, I would eat my bellyfull of grapes and other dainty fruit. Doctor Faustus answered hereupon, Gracious lady, this is a small thing for me to doe, for I can doe more than this. Wherefore he tooke a plate, and set open one of the casements of the window, holding it forth; where incontinent he had his dish full of all manner of fruit, as red and white grapes, peares, and apples, the which came from out of strange countries: all these he presented the dutchesse, saying, Madam, I pray you vouchsafe to taste of this dainty fruit, the which came from a farre countrey, for there the summer is not yet ended. The dutchesse thanked Faustus highly, and she fell to her fruit with full appetite. The Duke of Anholt notwithstanding could not withhold to ask Faustus with what reason there were such young fruit to be had at that time of the yeare. Doctor Faustus told him, May it please your grace to understand that the year is divided into two circles of the whole world, that when with us it is winter, in the contrary circle it is

notwithstanding summer; for in India and Saba there falleth or setteth the sunne, so that it is so warm that they have twice a yeare fruit; and, gracious lord, I have a swift spirit, the which can in the twinkling of an eye fulfill my desire in any thing; wherefore I sent him into those countries, who hath brought this fruit as you see: whereat the duke was in great admiration." ↵

149. Saba-- i.e. Sabaea. ↵
150. beholding-- i.e. beholden. ↵
151. Enter WAGNER-- Scene, a room in the house of Faustus. ↵
152. he hath given to me all his goods-- Compare chap. lvi. of THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS,--"How Doctor Faustus made his will, in which he named his servant Wagner to be his heire." ↵
153. HELEN passeth over the stage-- In THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS we have the following description of Helen. "This lady appeared before them in a most rich gowne of purple velvet, costly imbrodered; her haire hanged downe loose, as faire as the beaten gold, and of such length that it reached downe to her hammes; having most amorous cole-black eyes, a sweet and pleasant round face, with lips as red as a cherry; her cheekes of a rose colour, her mouth small, her neck white like a swan; tall and slender of personage; in summe, there was no imperfect place in her: she looked round about with a rolling hawkes eye, a smiling and wanton countenance, which neere-hand inflamed the hearts of all the students; but that they perswaded themselves she was a spirit, which made them lightly passe away such fancies." Sig. H 4, ed. 1648. ↵
154. Enter an OLD MAN-- See chap. xlviii of THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS,--"How an old man, the neighbour of Faustus, sought to perswade him to amend his evil life and to fall into repentance," --according to which history, the Old Man's exhortation is delivered at his own house, whither he had invited Faustus to supper. ↵
155. vild-- Old ed. "vild." See note ||, p. 68. [Note || from page 68 (The Second Part of Tamburlaine the Great): Vile-- The 8vo "Vild"; the 4to "Wild" (Both eds. a little before, have "VILE monster, born of some infernal hag", and, a few lines after, "To VILE and ignominious servitude":--the fact is, our early writers (or rather transcribers), with their usual inconsistency of spelling, give now the one form, and now the other: compare the folio SHAKESPEARE, 1623, where we sometimes find "vild" and sometimes "VILE.")--] ↵
156. sin-- Old ed. "sinnes" (This is not in the later 4tos). ↵
157. almost-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
158. now-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
159. MEPHIST. Do it, then, quickly, &c.-- After this speech, most probably, there ought to be a stage-direction, "FAUSTUS STABS HIS ARM, AND WRITES ON A PAPER WITH HIS BLOOD. Compare THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS, chap. xlix,--"How Doctor Faustus wrote the second time with his owne blood, and gave it to the Devill." ↵
160. One thing, good servant, &c.-- "To the end that this miserable Faustus might fill the lust of his flesh and live in all manner of voluptuous pleasure, it came in his mind, after he had slept his first sleepe, and in the 23 year past of his time, that he had a great desire to lye with faire Helena of Greece, especially her whom he had seen and shewed unto the students at Wittenberg: wherefore he called unto his spirit Mephostophiles, commanding him to bring to him the faire Helena; which he also did. Whereupon he fell in love with her, and made her his common concubine and bed-fellow; for she was so beautifull and delightfull a peece, that he could not be one houre from her, if he should therefore have suffered death, she had so stoln away his heart: and, to his seeming, in time she was with childe, whom Faustus named Justus Faustus. The childe told Doctor Faustus many things which were don in forraign countrys; but in the end, when Faustus lost his life, the mother and the childe vanished away both together." THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS, Sig. I 4, ed. 1648. ↵
161. Those-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "These." ↵
162. Faustus, this-- Qy. "This, Faustus"? ↵
163. topless-- i.e. not exceeded in height by any. ↵
164. is-- So the later 4tos.--2to 1604 "be." ↵
165. shalt-- So all the 4tos; and so I believe Marlowe wrote, though the grammar requires "shall." ↵
166. Enter the OLD MAN-- Scene, a room in the Old Man's house. --In THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS the Old Man makes himself very merry with the attempts of the evil powers to hurt him. "About two dayes after that he had exhorted Faustus, as the poore man lay in his bed, suddenly there was a mighty rumbling in the chamber, the which he was never wont to heare, and he heard as it had beene the groaning of a sow, which lasted long: whereupon the good old man began to jest and mocke, and said, Oh, what a barbarian cry is this? Oh faire bird, what foul musicke is this? A[h--, faire angell, that could not tarry two dayes in his place! beginnest thou now to runne into a poore mans house, where thou hast no power, and wert not able to keepe thy owne two dayes? With these and such like words the spirit departed," &c. Sig. I 2, ed. 1648. ↵

167. Enter Faustus, &c.-- Scene, a room in the house of Faustus. ↵
168. cunning-- i.e. knowledge, skill. ↵
169. Why did not Faustus tell us of this before, &c.-- "Wherefore one of them said unto him, Ah, friend Faustus, what have you done to conceale this matter so long from us? We would, by the helpe of good divines and the grace of God, have brought you out of this net, and have torne you out of the bondage and chaines of Satan; whereas now we feare it is too late, to the utter ruine both of your body and soule. Doctor Faustus answered, I durst never doe it, although I often minded to settle my life [myself?-- to godly people to desire counsell and helpe; and once mine old neighbour counselled me that I should follow his learning and leave all my conjurations: yet, when I was minded to amend and to follow that good mans counsell, then came the Devill and would have had me away, as this night he is like to doe, and said, so soone as I turned againe to God, he would dispatch me altogether." THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS, Sig. K 3, ed. 1648. ↵
170. save-- So the later 4tos.--Not in 4to 1604. ↵
171. and what noise soever ye hear, &c.-- "Lastly, to knit up my troubled oration, this is my friendly request, that you would go to rest, and let nothing trouble you; also, if you chance heare any noyse or rumbling about the house, be not therewith afraid, for there shall no evill happen unto you," &c. THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS, ubi supra. ↵
172. O lente, &c. "At si, quem malles, Cephalum complexa teneres, Clamares, LENTE CURRITE, NOCTIS EQUI." Ovid,--AMOR. i. xiii. 39. ↵
173. That, when you, &c.-- So all the old eds.; and it is certain that awkward changes of person are sometimes found in passages of our early poets: but qy.,"That, when THEY vomit forth into the air, My limbs may issue from THEIR smoky mouths," &c.? ↵
174. and I be chang'd Unto some brutish beast-- "Now, thou Faustus, damned wretch, how happy wert thou, if, as an unreasonable beast, thou mightest dye without [a-- soule! so shouldst thou not feele any more doubts," &c. THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS, Sig. K. ed. 1648. ↵
175. Exeunt DEVILS with FAUSTUS-- In THE HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS, his "miserable and lamentable end" is described as follows: it took place, we are informed, at "the village called Rimlich, halfe a mile from Wittenberg."--"The students and the other that were there, when they had prayed for him, they wept, and so went forth; but Faustus tarried in the hall; and when the gentlemen were laid in bed, none of them could sleepe, for that they att[e--nded to heare if they might be privy of his end. It happened that betweene twelve and one a clocke at midnight, there blew a mighty storme of winde against the house, as though it would have blowne the foundation thereof out of his place. Hereupon the students began to feare and goe out of their beds, comforting one another; but they would not stirre out of the chamber; and the host of the house ran out of doores, thinking the house would fall. The students lay neere unto the hall wherein Doctor Faustus lay, and they heard a mighty noyse and hissing, as if the hall had beene full of snakes and adders. With that, the hall-doore flew open, wherein Doctor Faustus was, that he began to cry for helpe, saying, Murther, murther! but it came forth with halfe a voyce, hollowly: shortly after, they heard him no more. But when it was day, the students, that had taken no rest that night, arose and went into the hall, in the which they left Doctor Faustus; where notwithstanding they found not Faustus, but all the hall lay sprinkled with blood, his braines cleaving to the wall, for the devill had beaten him from one wall against another; in one corner lay his eyes, in another his teeth; a pittifull and fearefull sight to behold. Then began the students to waile and weepe for him, and sought for his body in many places. Lastly, they came into the yard, where they found his body lying on the horse-dung, most monstrously torne and fearefull to behold, for his head and all his joynts were dashed in peeces. The fore-named students and masters that were at his death, have obtained so much, that they buried him in the village where he was so grievously tormented. After the which they returned to Wittenberg; and comming into the house of Faustus, they found the servant of Faustus very sad, unto whom they opened all the matter, who tooke it exceeding heavily. There found they also this history of Doctor Faustus noted and of him written, as is before declared, all save only his end, the which was after by the students thereto annexed; further, what his servant had noted thereof, was made in another booke. And you have heard that he held by him in his life the spirit of faire Helena, the which had by him one sonne, the which he named Justus Faustus: even the same day of his death they vanished away, both mother and sonne. The house before was so darke that scarce any body could abide therein. The same night Doctor Faustus appeared unto his servant lively, and shewed unto him many secret things, the which he had done and hidden in his lifetime. Likewise there were certaine which saw Doctor Faustus looke out of the window by night, as they passed by the house." Sig. K 3, ed. 1648. ↵

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6.1.1: Introduction to Writing About Literature

The best of a book is not the thought which it contains, but the thought which it suggests; just as the charm of music dwells not in the tones but in the echoes of our hearts. – Oliver Wendell Holmes

Learning Outcomes



Figure **6.1.1.1**: Writing? Yeah. (CC BY 2.0; Caleb Roenigk, via Flickr)

- Find and use historical sources to discuss the historical context of a literary work
- Find and use literary criticism in your analysis of literary works
- Cite sources correctly using MLA format

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6.1.2: Distinguish Between Primary and Secondary Sources

1. Introduction

Whether conducting research in the social sciences, humanities (especially history), arts, or natural sciences, the ability to distinguish between **primary** and **secondary source material** is essential. Basically, this distinction illustrates the degree to which the author of a piece is removed from the actual event being described, informing the reader as to whether the author is reporting impressions *first hand* (or is first to record these immediately following an event), or conveying the experiences and opinions of others—that is, *second hand*.

2. Primary Sources

These are **contemporary accounts** of an event, written by someone who experienced or witnessed the event in question. These **original documents** (i.e., they are not about another document or account) are often diaries, letters, memoirs, journals, speeches, manuscripts, interviews and other such unpublished works. They may also include published pieces such as newspaper or magazine articles (as long as they are written soon after the fact and not as historical accounts), photographs, audio or video recordings, research reports in the natural or social sciences, or original literary or theatrical works.

3. Secondary Sources

The function of these is to **interpret primary sources**, and so can be described as at least one step removed from the event or phenomenon under review. Secondary source materials, then, interpret, assign value to, conjecture upon, and draw conclusions about the events reported in primary sources. These are usually in the form of published works such as journal articles or books, but may include radio or television documentaries, or conference proceedings.

4. Defining Questions

When evaluating primary or secondary sources, the following questions might be asked to help ascertain the nature and value of material being considered:

- How does the author know these details (names, dates, times)? Was the author present at the event or soon on the scene?
- Where does this information come from—personal experience, eyewitness accounts, or reports written by others?
- Are the author's conclusions based on a single piece of evidence, or have many sources been taken into account (e.g., diary entries, along with third-party eyewitness accounts, impressions of contemporaries, newspaper accounts)?

Ultimately, all source materials of whatever type must be assessed critically and even the most scrupulous and thorough work is viewed through the eyes of the writer/interpreter. This must be taken into account when one is attempting to arrive at the 'truth' of an event.

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6.1.3: Annotated List of Useful Online Resources

These days, we're finding more and more information for free online. The following eight websites (or types of websites) are recommended for first-year undergraduate students. Most of the websites are broad-based and interdisciplinary, useful for searching any topic or subject. A few of the websites are subject-specific (such as health/medicine or controversial issues) or type-specific (such as primary sources or writing lab handouts). The following annotated list provides:



Figure **6.1.3.1**: Wet Web. (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0; Shaun Wood, via Flickr)

1. the names of the websites (and authors, if not the same as the publishers or providers),
2. the associated publishers or providers,
3. URLs to the home pages for the websites,
4. and summaries that describe the websites' content and coverage as well as suggested research use.

All of these websites are free and open access.

CIA World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency.

> "The *World Factbook* provides information on the history, people, government, economy, geography, communications, transportation, military, and transnational issues for 267 world entities." It provides maps and flags for each country, along with detailed statistics in each of the main categories. For example, the "People and Society" category provides a variety of demographic statistics ranging from ethnic groups to languages to birth and death rates. This is a good site for both foundational and statistical information at the broad, national level for countries around the world.

Government Statistical Sites

Government bodies publish more and more statistical information online, both to save printing costs and to allow for greater transparency. These sites can be treasure troves for students looking for supporting documentation regarding current events, controversial issues, and other topics. Here are two examples to give you an idea of what you can find.

Bureau of Labor Statistics. U.S. Department of Labor.

> The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) focuses on "measuring labor market activity, working conditions, and price changes in the economy." This is the place to go to research employment, occupational information, salary and benefits, and other labor-related information. Students researching careers will find a lot of information in the Occupational Outlook Handbook.

National Center for Education Statistics. Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

> The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) "collect[s] and analyz[es] data related to education in the U.S. and other nations." It reports statistics and publishes reports from early childhood education all the way up to higher education. It also collects and publishes data about libraries. This is the place to go to research assessment scores, school programs, enrollment figures, tuition costs, financial aid, graduation rates, and other similar topics.

Internet Archive. Internet Archive.

> The *Internet Archive* is more than just an archive of web pages. (Even though looking up older versions of web pages can be a pretty cool thing!) It also includes "texts, audio, moving images, and software." It is international in scope and offers "specialized services for adaptive reading and information access for the blind and other persons with disabilities." This site

would be a good place to check for media archives for video and music events. It's also a good source for public domain works (i.e., works that are no longer in copyright).

National Archives and Records Administration. U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

The *National Archives* holds a variety of records and other important documents as "the nation's record keeper." Many of these sources are digitized and available online. Even if the documents aren't digitized, the National Archives provides records to tell you where you can locate or request a print copy. You can search the site for "documents, photos, and records," or you can review educational material. This site is also the place to research military records. Because of the site's emphasis on recording information of historical significance, it's best used for historical or genealogical research.

National Institutes of Health. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The *National Institutes of Health* (NIH) "is the nation's medical research agency." It's actually "made up of 27 Institutes and Centers, each with a specific research agenda, often focusing on particular diseases or body systems." Some of the institutes include the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, along with the National Library of Medicine. Each of these institutes has its own site where it provides information about its specialization in the forms of documents, pamphlets, training materials, consumer-focused data, and statistics. These sites would be good sources for locating information related to the biological sciences: biology, anatomy, disease, environment, aging, nursing research, etc.

ProCon.org: Pros and Cons of Controversial Issues. ProCon.org.

ProCon.org is a non-profit site that focuses on covering both sides of controversial issues. It organizes topics according to subject, with some topics containing additional subtopics. Each argument includes citations to supporting documentation. In this way, students are able to use the site as both a brainstorming tool and a source of relevant articles and online sources.

Purdue University Writing Lab. *Purdue Online Writing Lab [Purdue OWL]*. Purdue University.

The *Purdue Online Writing Lab* [OWL] is one of the most well-known online writing labs. The site contains sections for writing (both general and subject-specific), research, and citation. It also provides detailed guides for writing and citing in both MLA and APA styles. This is a good site for students seeking more information about writing and citation styles, as well as the general mechanics of writing.

The Writing Center at UNC Chapel Hill. *Handouts & Demos*. College of Arts and Sciences, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Handouts & Demos is a collection of materials to help students with the writing process. The site is organized into four sections: "Writing the Paper," "Citation, Style, and Sentence Level Concerns," "Specific Writing Assignments/Contexts," and "Writing for Specific Fields." This is a good site for students needing more information about the mechanics and background of writing.

Reflection Questions

- What skill does this content help you develop?
- What are the key topics covered in this content?
- How can the content in this section help you demonstrate mastery of a specific skill?
- What questions do you have about this content?

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6.1.4: Using Databases- Periodical Indexes and Abstracts

Search Magazine Articles, Research Reports, Journal Articles, and Abstracts Published in Magazines, Newspapers, and Scholarly Journals.

Magazines, newspapers, and scholarly journals provide contemporary material that is often on very narrow topics. Magazines are written in a more popular style and aimed at a general audience. The term “journals” is used for scholarly research publications. (Librarians use the term “periodicals” to include both magazines and journals.) Often journals are peer-reviewed, which means that the articles are read by a number of scholars in the field before being approved for publication. There are thousands of journals, magazines, and newspapers published annually. Instead of leafing through journals, magazines, and newspapers themselves, you can consult a periodical database to find out what articles have appeared on a given topic.

Before the Internet, printed indexes listed articles by subject headings. Entries included author, title of article, magazine or journal title, volume, issue, and page numbers. Given the researching habits of today’s scholars and students, it’s highly likely that your library has incorporated online resources into their collections. Produced by the same publishers who once provided print indexes, these online databases are proprietary and you will probably need to go through an authorization procedure in order to use them when you are off-campus. Check with your library to find out the procedures you need to follow.

Full-Text Databases

Not every article ever published is available with full text online. Some databases provide indexing only. However, even those services can be useful. If you have enough time, you can look first in your own library to see if the articles are available and then ask about the possibility of using interlibrary loan services to obtain the articles.

Databases can be searched by author, title, keywords, or subject headings (or descriptors). Increasingly, full-text PDFs are available for you to download, although it’s important to keep in mind that planning ahead is the best policy; most university libraries have a lag-time of about one year before converting print to online text/PDFs (meaning that the most up-to-date academic journal articles, for instance, may only be available in the print version until a year or so after their publication).

If you have never used a computerized index, then you will probably come away shocked and delighted by their potential. Rather than shuffling through mountains of books and periodicals and becoming distracted by tangential or irrelevant ideas, you can sift through a world of information in minutes by accessing the appropriate databases.

No indexing service covers every journal published in the world. Databases range from Art Abstracts to Zoological Records. There are general, multidisciplinary databases such as EBSCOHost, InfoTrac, Wilson Select Plus, and Readers Guide Abstracts. (Some of these have corresponding printed indexes and some are available online only.) How to Choose the Appropriate Database

How do you know which ones to use? Your library’s Web site will have a subject-oriented listing of the databases and indexes available. If you are having trouble deciding where to look, this is a good time to ask your librarian!

Although they differ in searching procedures, most databases can be searched by authors, titles of articles, keywords, and subject headings—most often referred to as descriptors. Every database has its own list of descriptors. A thesaurus of these descriptors may be available in print form as well as online. Looking up “classroom management” in ERIC, an education database, indicates that the preferred descriptor used by ERIC for this concept is “classroom techniques.” PsycINFO—an excellent indexing service produced by the American Psychological Association—uses descriptors such as “classroom behavior” and “classroom discipline” for the same concept. When using indexes online, first try a few keywords of your own, and then look carefully at the complete entries to see if you can identify other useful descriptors to use as research keywords/descriptors.



Once you have found the citations for the articles, you may find that the database you have selected includes online full text of all the articles indexed. If not, you will want to check your library's catalog to see if the journal is available in print or electronically through another service. Libraries often provide a list of all of the journals that are made available electronically in the databases they license.

Online indexing can also provide additional filtering features, to make searching for specific keywords/descriptors/articles, etc. even more specific – for instance, you can usually search using limited publication dates. You may be able to limit your search to articles in a specific language. Some databases such as EXPANDED ACADEMIC ASAP allow users to limit their search to "peer-reviewed journals" (i.e. scholarly journals rather than popular magazines). Some databases provide a table of contents feature so that you can choose the name of a journal and then browse through each issue. Your library may license a large (and expensive) database called ISI Web of Science. Web of Science has a special "cited reference" feature. You can identify an article and then find out what other writers are citing that article! Then, if you wish, you can review what these other scholars have written about this particular source.

Given the remarkable capabilities of ISI Web of Science (and other databases), you can see why more and more researchers depend on them to locate all of the essays written by a particular scholar or to determine what studies are being referred to most frequently or to obtain a complete listing of all of the articles on a subject that have been cited in a prominent journal.

Next are some examples of databases that you may be able to access at your library. (The producers of these databases are continually updating their products. The years of coverage and the number of journals indexed may have changed.)

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6.1.5: Annotated List of Useful Databases

While internet search engines have made locating sources online easier, there are still many digital sources beyond websites. Databases contract with publishers and other content providers to package access to articles, reports, conference proceedings, ebooks, films, images, and other material. Using databases and having access to such a variety of source material is an important part of the research process.

Search Engines vs. Databases vs. Catalogs

Most libraries provide links to different types of search systems, which contain the information, data, and search interfaces used to locate sources. The most common types of search systems are internet search engines, databases, and catalogs. They each search different types of information in different ways.

- How Databases and Search Engines Differ. Created by Undergraduate Library, University Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- How Databases and Online Catalogs Differ. Created by Undergraduate Library, University Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Libraries subscribe to the databases to provide access to their users (students, faculty, staff, etc.), and because libraries subscribe to dozens (if not hundreds) of databases, it's often helpful to evaluate both the database and the sources within the database. The following annotated list of databases helps with preliminary evaluation by describing the types of sources with the databases. Some of the databases are broad-based, interdisciplinary systems that can be used to search any topic or subject. Other databases provide sources according to specific type (such as newspaper or video) or specific subjects (such as literature or science).

Most academic libraries should subscribe to these databases. Please be sure to check your library's database aggregator or list of databases for availability and access.

Broad-Based Databases

Academic Search™ Complete. EBSCO Publishing.

> *Academic Search Complete*™ is a multidisciplinary database that offers indexing and abstracts as well as full-text and scholarly sources. It also contains popular sources, such as magazines and newspapers. The variety of subjects includes "anthropology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, civil engineering, engineering, ethnic & multicultural studies, geology, law, materials science, mathematics, music, pharmaceutical sciences, physics, psychology, religion & theology, veterinary science, women's studies, zoology, and many other fields." This database works well for interdisciplinary searches as well as being a starting place for subject-specific searches.

JSTOR. ITHAKA.

> *JSTOR* is a multidisciplinary database that offers indexing and abstracts as well as full-text and scholarly sources. It also contains books and primary sources. The database offers both the usual search options along with a subject browse tool for the following areas: area studies, arts, business and economics, history, humanities, law, medicine and allied health, science and mathematics, and social sciences. This database works well for interdisciplinary searches, but may be better for students with more experience searching databases. For example, it has a more unique search interface that does not allow for subject heading (also known as subject term) searches. However, it contains high-quality sources that are worth the effort of searching.

ProQuest Research Library™. ProQuest.

> *ProQuest Research Library*™ is a multidisciplinary database that offers indexing and abstracts as well as full-text and scholarly sources. It also contains popular sources, such as magazines and newspapers. Specific subjects range from business to education to humanities to sciences, plus many more. This database supports interdisciplinary searches while still providing a good starting point for subject-specific searches. (ProQuest developed a LibGuide tutorial for this database, which is located here.)

Web of Science®. Thomson Reuters.

Web of Science® is a multidisciplinary database that offers indexing and abstracts for sources. It offers links to full-text availability from other sources—either directly from the publishers (at cost) or through a library's OpenURL connector to other databases. The database's interdisciplinary nature comes from the combination of its indexes: Science Citation Index Expanded®, Social Sciences Citation Index®, Arts & Humanities Citation Index®, Conference Proceedings Citation Index, Index Chemicus®, and Current Chemical Reactions®. It also integrates EndNote Web® for managing articles and references online. This database works well for interdisciplinary searches as well as citation mapping, which is a form of search that locates articles based on their citations in other articles.

Source-Type Databases

ARTstor Digital Library. *ARTstor*.

"*The ARTstor Digital Library* is a nonprofit resource that provides more than one million digital images in the arts, architecture, humanities, and sciences with an accessible suite of software tools for teaching and research." It allows users to search for, view, and download images related to a variety of topics, such as: art, architecture, religion, anthropology, history, and literature. The database also provides image credit information for properly citing the images. Students can use these images in papers, presentations, and other assignments.

CQ Researcher. CQ Press, SAGE Publications.

CQ Researcher is a topics-focused database that "covers a wide range of social, economic, political, and environmental issues." The database's standardized reports review current events as researched by journalists. The reports include twelve sections, some of which are: an overview, background, outlook, pro/con, and bibliography. Students will be able to use these reports to research current events and controversial issues. The reports also provide broad background information to aid students in developing the foundations for their research.

Films on Demand. Films Media Group.

Films on Demand is a database of streaming videos. It includes both a search function and browsing ability by subject and collection. The collections come from a variety of well-known film production companies, such as the BBC, PBS, and other news organizations, as well as National Geographic and TED. Subject browsing begins with broad categories, such as biology and political science, and narrows down to more specific subtopics, such as genetics and political institutions. This database is a good option for visual learners and researchers who want a broad range of source types. The videos can be embedded into presentations, and many videos include transcripts and closed captioning, which helps for quoting material.

ProQuest Newsstand™. ProQuest.

ProQuest Newsstand™ focuses on news sources, including newspapers and wire services. It offers indexing, abstracts, and full-text availability. Its newspaper coverage "includes international, national and regional papers." This database would be useful for researching current events or opinions, such as controversial topics. It also assists with historical, human interest, and genealogical searches.

Subject-Specific Databases

ABI/INFORM®. ProQuest.

ABI/INFORM® is a business research database that provides indexing and abstracts, full text, images, and graphics. Sources include articles from journals and conference proceedings, market reports, business news, business cases, and dissertations. This would be a good database choice for students researching topics in business, economics, corporate strategies, management, business trends, accounting, finance, etc.

ACM Digital Library. Association for Computing Machinery.

The *ACM Digital Library* focuses on computing, computer systems, and related subjects. The database contains "full text of every article ever published by ACM and bibliographic citations from major publishers in computing." This means that it is both an indexing and abstracting database (for non-ACM publishers) and a full-text database (for ACM-published sources). Sources include articles, conference proceedings, books, interviews, and other sources. Students should be able to locate

sources to support research involving information technology, computers, software, computer and/or software engineering, programming, technical communication, telecommunications, and other related fields.

History Reference Center®. EBSCO Publishing.

History Reference Center® is a history research database. It is created specifically for researchers ranging from high school students to undergraduates. Sources include reference materials, biographies, documents, photos, maps, videos, and scholarly articles. Students should be able to locate sources to support research involving historical events, specific time periods, figures, military history, and other related historical topics.

IEEE Xplore® Digital Library. IEEE [Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers].

IEEE Xplore® is a subject-specific database for "scientific and technical content published by the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) and its publishing partners." Sources include journals, conference proceedings, reports, standards, and electronic books. Students should be able to locate sources to support research involving engineering, computer science, electronics, and related fields. For a better idea of the range of related fields, review the IEEE Society Memberships page, which includes: IEEE Broadcast Technology Society, IEEE Education Society, IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society, IEEE Professional Communications Society, etc. All of these groups have publications included in the database.

Literature Resource Center. Gale, Cengage Learning.

Literature Resource Center is a subject-specific database for literature, literary criticism, and the humanities. It offers a variety of types of searches for both specific works and authors. Sources include critical essays, interviews, reviews, and other scholarly articles. This database would be a good choice for students researching literature, literary theory, poetry, and drama.

MathSciNet®. American Mathematical Society.

MathSciNet® is a mathematical literature review database. It includes the literature reviews along with abstracts, indexing, and links to articles. This database would be most useful for students researching the mathematical sciences: algebra, trigonometry, geometry, calculus, etc.

PsycINFO®. American Psychological Association.

PsycINFO® is a subject-specific database that focuses on behavioral sciences and mental health studies (such as psychology, neuroscience, social work, medicine, nursing, etc.) along with related fields (such as forensics, business, engineering, etc.). It is an indexing and abstracting database that also provides either links to full text or the actual full text, depending on the platform. (The database is available from several vendors, including the APA, EBSCO, and ProQuest.) This database would be a good source for students studying behaviors, social sciences, psychology, medicine, and related fields.

ScienceDirect. Elsevier.

ScienceDirect is a science and technology database that provides indexing and abstracts along with full-text access to journal articles and book chapters published by Elsevier and its imprints. It carries very few third-party sources. The majority of the information contained in the database focuses on the sciences—physical sciences and engineering (such as chemistry, computer science, engineering, mathematics), life sciences (such as agriculture, biology, neuroscience), and health sciences (medicine, pharmacology, nursing, veterinary science). It also includes some articles from related fields in the social sciences and humanities, but in general, it's not a social science or humanities database. Students should be able to locate sources in the sciences, technical fields, and related subjects.

Further Reading

Please view these links for related search, database, and library information:

- Boolean Operators from Database Search Tips. MIT Libraries.
- Web Search Strategies
- Using Databases
- Search the Library Catalog

- Seek Help from Librarians
- Understanding Library Resources

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6.1.6: Finding and Evaluating Research Sources

Introduction

In order to create rhetorically effective and engaging pieces, research writers must be able to find appropriate and diverse sources and to evaluate those sources for usefulness and credibility. This chapter discusses how to locate such sources and how to evaluate them. On the one hand, this is a chapter about the nuts and bolts of research. If you have written research papers before, searching for sources and citing them in your paper may, at times, have appeared to you as purely mechanical processes, chores necessary to produce a paper. On the other hand, when writers work with research sources, first finding and then evaluating them, they do rhetorical work. Finding good sources and using them effectively helps you to create a message and a persona that your readers are more likely to accept, believe, and be interested in than if unsuitable and unreliable sources are used. This chapter covers the various kinds of research sources available to writers. It discusses how to find, evaluate, and use primary and secondary sources, printed and online ones.

Types of Research Sources

It is a well-known cliché: we live in an information age. Information has become a tangible commodity capable of creating and destroying wealth, influencing public opinion and government policies, and effecting social change. As writers and citizens, we have unprecedented access to different kinds of information from different sources. Writers who hope to influence their audiences need to know what research sources are available, where to find them, and how to use them.

Primary and Secondary Sources

Definition of Primary Sources

Let us begin with the definition of primary and secondary sources. A primary research sources is one that allows you to learn about your subject “firsthand.” Primary sources provide direct evidence about the topic under investigation. They offer us “direct access” to the events or phenomena we are studying. For example, if you are researching the history of World War II and decide to study soldiers’ letters home or maps of battlefields, you are working with primary sources. Similarly, if you are studying the history of your hometown in a local archive that contains documents pertaining to that history, you are engaging in primary research. Among other primary sources and methods are interviews, surveys, polls, observations, and other similar “firsthand” investigative techniques. The fact that primary sources allow us “direct access” to the topic does not mean that they offer an objective and unbiased view of it. It is therefore important to consider primary sources critically and, if possible, gather multiple perspectives on the same event, time period, or questions from multiple primary sources.

Definition of Secondary Sources

Secondary sources describe, discuss, and analyze research obtained from primary sources or from other secondary sources. Using the previous example about World War II, if you read other historians’ accounts of it, government documents, maps, and other written documents, you are engaging in secondary research. Some types of secondary sources with which you are likely to work include books, academic journals, popular magazines and newspapers, websites, and other electronic sources. The same source can be both primary and secondary, depending on the nature and purpose of the project. For example, if you study a culture or group of people by examining texts they produce, you are engaging in primary research. On the other hand, if that same group published a text analyzing some external event, person, or issue and if your focus is not on the text’s authors but on their analysis, you would be doing secondary research. Secondary sources often contain descriptions and analyses of primary sources. Therefore, accounts, descriptions, and interpretations of research subjects found in secondary sources are at least one step further removed from what can be found in primary sources about the same subject. And while primary sources do not give us a completely objective view of reality, secondary sources inevitably add an extra layer of opinion and interpretation to the views and ideas found in primary sources. All texts are rhetorical creations, and writers make choices about what to include and what to omit. As researchers, we need to understand that and not rely on either primary or secondary sources blindly.

Writing Activity: Examining the Same Topic through Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary and secondary sources can offer writers different views of the same topic. This activity invites you to explore the different perspectives that you may get after investigating the same subject through primary and secondary sources. It should help us see

how our views of different topics depend on the kinds of sources we use. Find several primary sources on a topic that interests you. Include archival documents, first- hand accounts, lab experiment results, interviews, surveys, and so on. Depending on how much time you have for this project, you may or may not be able to consult all of the above source types. In either case, try to consult sources of three or four different kinds. Next, write a summary of what you learned about your subject as a result of your primary-source investigation. Mention facts, dates, important people, opinions, theories, and anything that seems important or interesting. Now, conduct a brief secondary-source search on the same subject. Use books, journals, popular magazines and newspapers, Internet sites, and so on. Write a summary of your findings. Finally, compare the two summaries. What differences do you see? What new ideas, perspectives, ideas, or opinions did your secondary-source search yield? As a result of these two searches, have you obtained different accounts of the same research subject? Pay special attention to the differences in descriptions, accounts, or interpretations of the same subject. Notice what secondary sources add to the treatment of the subject and what they take away, compared to the primary sources.

Print and Electronic Sources

Researcher have at their disposal both printed and electronic sources. Before the advent of the Internet, most research papers were written with the use of printed sources only. Until fairly recently, one of the main stated goals of research writing instruction was to give students practice in the use of the library. Libraries are venerable institutions, and therefore printed sources have traditionally been seen (with good reason, usually,) as more solid and reliable than those found on the Internet. With the growing popularity of the Internet and other computerized means of storing and communicating information, traditional libraries faced serious competition for clients. It has become impractical if not impossible for researchers to ignore the massive amount of information available to them on the Internet or from other online sources. As a result, it is not uncommon for many writers beginning a research project to begin searching online rather than at a library or a local archive. For example, several times in the process of writing this essay, when I found myself in need of information fast, I opened my Web browser and researched online. With the popularity of the Internet ever increasing, it has become common practice for many student writers to limit themselves to online research and to ignore the library. While there are some cases when a modified version of such an approach to searching may be justifiable (more about that later), it is clear that by using only online research sources, a writer severely limits his or her options. This section covers three areas. First, we will discuss the various types of printed and online sources as well the main similarities and differences between them. Next, I'd like to offer some suggestions on using your library effectively and creatively. Finally, we will examine the topic of conducting online searches, including methods of evaluating information found on the Internet.

Know Your Library

It is likely that your college or university library consists of two parts. One is the brick and mortar building, often at a central location on campus, where you can go to look for books, magazines, newspapers, and other publications. The other part is online. Most good libraries keep a collection of online research databases that are supported, at least in part, by your tuition and fees, and to which only people who are affiliated with the college or the university that subscribes to these databases have access. Let us begin with the brick and mortar library. If you have not yet been to your campus library, visit it soon. Larger colleges and universities usually have several libraries that may specialize in different academic disciplines. As you enter the library, you are likely to find a circulation desk (place where you can check out materials) and a reference desk. Behind the reference desk you will find reference librarians. Instead of wandering around the library alone, hoping to hit the research sources that you need for your project, it is a good idea to talk to a reference librarian at the beginning of every research project, especially if you are at a loss for a topic or research materials. Your brick and mortar campus library is likely to house the following types of materials:

- Books (these include encyclopedias, dictionaries, indexes, and so on)
- Academic Journals
- Popular magazines
- Newspapers
- Government documents
- A music and film collection (on CDs, VHS tapes, and DVDs)
- A CD-Rom collection
- A microfilm and microfiche collection
- Special collections, such as ancient manuscripts or documents related to local history and culture.

According to librarian Linda M. Miller, researchers need to "gather relevant information about a topic or research question thoroughly and efficiently. To be thorough, it helps to be familiar with the kinds of resources that the library holds, and the services it provides to enable access to the holdings of other libraries" (2001, 61). Miller's idea is a simple one, yet it is amazing how many inexperienced writers prefer to use the first book or journal they come across in the library as the basis for their writing and do not take the time to learn what the library has to offer. Here are some practical steps that will help you learn about your library:

Take a tour of the library with your class or other groups if such tours are available. While such group tours are generally less effective than conducting your own searches of a topic that interests you, they will give you a good introduction to the library and, perhaps, give you a chance to talk to a librarian.

Check your library's website to see if online "virtual" tours are available. At James Madison University where I work, the librarians have developed a series of interactive online activities and quizzes which anyone wishing to learn about the JMU libraries can take in their spare time.

Talk to reference librarians! They are truly your best source of information. They will not get mad at you if you ask them too many questions. Not only are they paid to answer your questions, but most librarians love what they do and are eager to share their expertise with others.

Go from floor to floor and browse the shelves. Learn where different kinds of materials are located and what they look like.

Pay attention to the particulars of your campus library's architecture. I am an experienced library user, but it look me some time, after I arrived at my university for the first time, to figure out that our library building has an annex that can only be accessed by taking a different elevator from the one leading to the main floors.

Use the library not only as a source of knowledge but as a source of entertainment and diversion. I like going to the library to browse through new fiction acquisitions. Many campus libraries also have excellent film and music collections.

The items on the list above will help you to acquire a general understanding of your campus library. However, the only way to gain an in-depth and meaningful knowledge of your library is to use it for specific research and writing projects. No matter how attentive you are during a library tour or while going from floor to floor and learning about all the different resources your library has to offer, it is during searchers that you conduct for your research projects that you will become most interested and involved in what you are doing. Here, therefore, is an activity that combines the immediate goal of finding research sources for a research project with the more long-term goal of knowing what your campus library has to offer.

Activity: Conducting a Library Search for a Writing Project

If you have a research and writing topic in mind for your next project, head for your brick-and-mortar campus library. As soon as you enter the building, go straight to the reference desk and talk to a reference librarian. Be aware that some of the people behind the reference desk may be student assistants working there. As a former librarian assistant myself and as a current library user, I know that most student assistants know their job rather well, but sometimes they need help from the professionals. So, don't be surprised if the first person you approach refers you to someone else. Describe your research interests to the librarian. Be proactive. The worst disservice you can do yourself at this point is to look, sound, and act disinterested. Remember that the librarian can be most helpful if you are passionate about the subject of your research and if—this is very important—the paper you are writing is not due the next day. So, before you go to the library, try to narrow your topic or formulate some specific research questions. For example, instead of saying that you are interested in dolphins, you might explain that you are looking for information about people who train dolphins to be rescue animals. If the librarian senses that you have a rather vague idea about what to research and write about, he or she may point you to general reference sources such as indexes, encyclopedias, and research guides. While those may prove to be excellent thought-triggering publications, use them judiciously and don't choose the first research topic you find just because your library has a lot of resources on it. After all, your research and writing will be successful only when you are deeply interested in and committed to your investigation. If you have a more definite idea about what you would like to research and write about, the reference librarian will likely point you to the library's online catalog. I have often seen librarians working alongside students to help them identify or refine a writing topic. Find several different types of materials pertaining to your topic. Include books and academic articles. Don't forget popular magazines and newspapers—the popular press covers just about any subject, event, or phenomena, and such articles may bring a unique perspective not found in academic sources. Also, don't neglect to look in the government documents section to see if there has been any legislation or government regulation relevant to your research

subject. Remember that at this stage your goal is to learn as much as you can about your topic by casting your research net as far and wide as you can. So, do not limit yourself to the first few sources you will find. Keep looking, and remember that your goal is to find the best information available. You will probably have to look in a variety of sources. If you are pressed for time you may not be able to study the books dedicated to your topic in detail. In this case, you may decide to focus your research entirely on shorter texts, such as journal and magazine articles, websites, government documents, and so on. However it is always a good idea to at least browse through the books on your topic to see whether they contain any information or leads worth investigating further.

Cyber Library

Besides the brick and mortar buildings, nearly all college and university libraries have a Web space that is a gateway to more documents, resources, and information than any library building can house. From your library's website, you can not only search the library's holdings but also access millions of articles, electronic books, and other resources available on the Internet. It is a good idea to conduct a search from your campus library page rather than from your favorite search engine. There are three reasons for that. First, most of the materials you will find through your library site are accessible to paying subscribers only and cannot be found via any search engine. Second, online library searches return organized and categorized results, complete with the date of publication and source—something that cannot be said about popular search engines. Finally, by searching online library databases you can be reasonably sure that the information you retrieve is reliable.

So, what might you expect to find on your library's website? The site of the library at James Madison University where I work offers several links. In addition to the link to the library catalog, there is a Quick Reference link, a link called Research Databases, a Periodical Locator, Research Guides, and Internet Search. There are also links to special collections and to the featured or new electronic databases to which the library has recently subscribed. While your school library may use other names for these links, the kinds of resources they offer will be similar to what JMU's library has to offer. Most of these links are self-explanatory. Obviously, the link to the library catalog allows you to search your brick and mortar library's collection. A periodical locator search will tell you what academic journals, popular magazines, and newspapers are available at your library. The Internet search option will allow you to search the World Wide Web, except that your library's Internet searching function will probably allow you to conduct meta-searches—i.e., searches using many search engines simultaneously. Where a link like Research Databases or Research Guides will take you is a little less obvious. Therefore I will cover these two types of library resources in some detail. Let us start with the research databases. An average-size college or university subscribes to hundreds, if not thousands, of online databases on just about every subject. These databases contain, at a minimum, information about titles, authors, and sources of relevant newspaper and journal articles, government documents, online archive materials, and other research sources. Most databases provide readers with abstracts (short summaries) of those materials, and a growing number of online databases offer full texts of articles. From the research-database home page, it is possible to search for a specific database or by subject. Research-guide websites are similar to the database home pages, except that, in addition to database links, they often offer direct connections to academic journals and other relevant online resources on the research subject. Searching online is a skill that can only be learned through frequent practice and critical reflection. Therefore, in order to become a proficient user of your library's electronic resources, you will need to visit the library's website often and conduct many searches. Although most library websites are organized according to similar principles and offer similar types of resources, it will be up to you as a researcher and learner to find out what your school library has to offer and to learn to use those resources. I hope that the following activities will help you in that process.

Activity: Exploring your Cyber Library

Go to your school library's website and explore the kinds of resources it has to offer.

Conduct searches on a subject you are currently investigating or interested in investigating in the future, using the a periodical locator resource (if your library has one). Then, conduct similar searches of electronic databases and research guides.

Summarize, whether in an oral presentation or in writing, your search process and the kinds of sources you have found. Pay attention to particular successes and failures that occurred as you searched.

Print Sources or Electronic?

In the early years of the Internet, there was widespread mistrust of the World Wide Web and the information it had to offer. While some of this mistrust is still present (and justifiable), the undeniable fact is that the authority of the Internet as a legitimate and

reliable source of information has increased considerably in recent years. For example, academic journals in almost every discipline complement their printed volumes with Web versions, and some are now only available online. These online journals employ the same rigorous submission review processes as their printed counterparts. Complete texts of academic and other books are sometimes available on the Internet. Respected specialized databases and government document collections are published entirely and exclusively online. Print and electronic sources are not created equal, and although online and other electronic texts are gaining ground as legitimate research resources, there is still a widespread and often justified opinion among academics and other writers that printed materials make better research sources. Some materials available in some libraries simply cannot be found online and vice versa. For example, if you are a Shakespeare scholar wishing to examine manuscripts from the Elizabethan times, you will not find them online. To get to them, you will have to visit the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC, or a similar repository of Elizabethan manuscripts. On the other hand, if you are researching the Creative Commons movement, which is a community dedicated to reforming copyright laws in this country, then your best bet is to begin your search on the Internet at http://www.creativecommons.org/. Surely, after reading the website, you will need to augment your research by reading other related materials, both online and in print, but in this case, starting online rather than in the library is a reasonable idea. As a researching writer, you should realize that printed and electronic sources are not inherently bad or good. Either type can be reliable or unreliable; either can be appropriate or inappropriate for a specific research project. It is up to researchers and writers to learn how to select both print and electronic sources judiciously and how to evaluate them for their reliability and appropriateness for particular purposes.

Determining the Suitability and Reliability of Research Sources

Much of the discussion about the relative value of printed and electronic—especially Internet—sources revolves around the issue of reliability. When it comes to libraries, the issue is more or less clear. Libraries keep books, journals, ands other publications that usually undergo a rigorous pre- and post-publication review process. It is reasonable to assume that your campus library contains very few or no materials that are blatantly unreliable or false, unless those materials are kept there precisely to demonstrate their unreliability and falsehood. As a faculty member, I am sometimes asked by my university librarians to recommend titles in my academic field that our university library should own. Of course my opinion (or that of another faculty member) does not completely safeguard against the library acquiring materials that contain errors and or misleading information; we use our experience and knowledge in the field to recommend certain titles and omit certain others. Faculty recommendations are the last stage of long process before a publication gets to a campus library. Before that, every book, journal article, or other material undergoes a stringent review from the publisher's editors and other readers. And while researchers still need to use sound judgment in deciding which library sources to use in their project, the issue is usually one of relevance and suitability for a specific research project and specific research questions rather than one of whether the information presented in the source is truthful or not. The same is true of some electronic sources. Databases and other research sources published on CD-ROMs, as well as various online research websites that accompany many contemporary writing textbooks, for example, are subject to the same strict review process as their printed counterparts. Information contained in specialized academic and professional databases is also screened for reliability and accuracy. If, as we have established, most of the materials you are likely to encounter in your campus library are generally trustworthy, then your task as a researcher is to determine the relevance of the information contained in books, journals, and other materials for your particular research project. It is a simple question, really: will my research sources help me answer the research questions that I am posing in my project? Will they help me learn as much as I can about my topic and create a rhetorically effective and interesting text for my readers? Consider the following example. Recently, the topic of the connection between certain antidepressant drugs and suicidal tendencies among teenagers who take those drugs has received a lot of media coverage. Suppose you are interested in researching this topic further. Suppose, too, that you want not only to give statistical information about the problem in your paper but also to study firsthand accounts of the people who have been negatively affected by the antidepressants. When you come to your campus library, you have no trouble locating the latest reports and studies that give you a general overview of your topic, including rates of suicidal behavior in teenagers who took the drugs, tabulated data on the exact relationships between the dosage of the drugs and the changes in the patients' moods, and so on. All this may be useful information, and there is a good chance that, as a writer, you will still find a way to use it in your paper. You could, for example, provide the summary of the statistics in order to introduce the topic to your readers. However, this information does not fulfill your research purpose completely. You want to understand what it is like to be a teenager whose body and mind have been affected by the antidepressants, yet the printed materials you have found so far offer no such insight. They fulfill your goal only partially. To find such firsthand

accounts, then, you will either have to keep looking in the library or conduct interviews with people who have been affected by these drugs.

Suitability of Sources

Determine how suitable a particular source is for your current research project. To do this, consider the following factors:

- Scope: What topics and subtopics does the source cover? Is it a general overview of your subject or it is a specialized resource?
- Audience: Who is the intended audience for the text? If the text itself is too basic or too specialized, it may not match the expectations and needs of your own target audience.
- Timeliness: When was the source published? Does it represent the latest information, theories, and views? Bear in mind, though, that if you are conducting a historical investigation, you will probably need to consult older materials, too.

Authority

What are credentials of the author(s)? This may be particularly important when you use Internet sources, since there are so few barriers to publishing online. One needn't have an academic degree or credentials to make one's writing publicly available. As part of your evaluation of the source's authority, you should also pay attention to the kinds of external sources that were used during its creation. Look through the bibliography or list of works cited attached to the text. Not only will it help you determine how reliable and suitable the source is, but it may also provide you with further leads for your own research. Try asking the above questions of any source you are using for a research project you are currently conducting.

Reliability of Internet Sources

Charles Lowe, the author of the essay "The Internet Can Be a Wonderful Place, but . . ." offers the following opinion of the importance of the Internet as a research source for contemporary researchers:

To a generation raised in the electronic media culture, the Internet is an environment where you feel more comfortable, more at home than the antiquated libraries and research arenas of the pre-electronic, print culture. To you, instructors just don't get it when they advise against using the Internet for research or require the bulk of the sources for a research paper to come from the library (129-130).

Indeed, the Internet has become the main source of information not only for college students, but also for many people outside academia. And while I do not advise you to stay away from the Internet when researching and I generally do not require my own students to use only printed sources, I do know that working with Internet sources places additional demands on the researcher and the writer. Because much of the Internet is a democratic, open space, and because anyone with a computer can post materials online, evaluating online sources is not always easy. A surprisingly large number of people believe much of the information on the Internet, even if this information is blatantly misleading or its authors have a self-serving agenda. I think many students uncritically accept information they find on the Internet because some of the sites on which this information appears look and sound very authoritative. Used to believing the published word, inexperienced writers often fall for such information as legitimate research data. So, what are some of strategies you can use to determine that reliability? The key to successful evaluation of Internet research sources, as any other research sources, is application of your critical reading and thinking skills. In order to determine the reliability of any source, including online sources, it is advisable to conduct a basic rhetorical analysis of that source. When deciding whether to use a particular website as a research source, every writer should ask and answer the following questions:

1. Who is the author (or, authors) of the website and the materials presented on it? What is known about the site's author(s) and its publishers and their agendas and goals?
2. What is the purpose of the website?
3. Who is the target audience of the website
4. How do the writing style and the design of the website contribute to (or detract from) its meaning?

Website Authors and Publishers

As with a printed source, first we need to consider the author and the publisher of a website. Lowe suggests that we start by looking at the tag in the website's URL. Whether it is a ".com," an ".org," a ".net, "or an ".edu" site can offer useful clues about the types and credibility of materials located on the site. In addition to the three most common URL tags listed above, websites of military

organizations use the extension ".mil" while websites hosted in other countries have other tags that are usually abbreviations of those countries' names. Sites of government agencies end in ".gov." For example, most sites hosted in Great Britain have the tag ".uk," which stands for "United Kingdom." Websites based in Italy usually have the tag ".it," and so on. Typically, a ".com" site is set up to sell or promote a product or service. Therefore, if you are researching Nike shoes, you will probably *not* want to rely on http://www.nike.com/ if you want to get a more objective review of the product. While Nike's website may provide some useful information about the products it sells, the site's main purpose is to sell Nike's goods, playing up the advantages of their products. Keep in mind that not all ".com" websites try to sell something. Sometimes academics and other professionals obtain ".com" addresses because they are easy to obtain. For example, the professional website of Charles Lowe (cited above) is located at http://www.cyberdash.com/. Political candidates running for office often also choose ".com" addresses for their campaign websites. In every case, you need to apply your critical reading skills and your judgment when evaluating a website. The ".org" sites usually belong to organizations, including political groups. These sites can present some specific challenges to researchers trying to evaluate their credibility and usefulness. To understand these challenges, let us consider the ".org" sites of two political research organizations, also known as "think tanks." One is the conservative Heritage Foundation (http://www.heritage.org), and the other is the traditionally liberal Center for National Policy (http://www.cnponline.org). Both sites have "About" pages intended to explain to their readers the goals and purposes of the organizations they represent. The Heritage Foundation's site contains the following information:

. . . The Heritage Foundation is a research and educational institute—a think tank—whose mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense. (http://www.heritage.org/about)

This statement can tell a researcher a lot about the research articles and other materials contained in the site. It tells us that the authors of the site are not neutral, nor do they pretend to be. Instead, they are advancing a particular political agenda, so, when used as research sources, the writings on the site should not be seen as unbiased "truths" but as arguments. The same is true of the Center for National Policy's website, although its authors use a different rhetorical strategy to explain their political commitments. They write:

The Center for National Policy (CNP) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy organization located in Washington, DC. Founded in 1981, the center's mission is to engage national leaders with new policy options and innovative programs designed to advance progressive ideas in the interest of all Americans (http://www.cnponline.org/people_and_programs.html)

It takes further study of the center's website, as well as sure knowledge of the American political scene, to realize that the organization leans toward the left of the political spectrum. The websites of both organizations contain an impressive amount of research, commentary, and other materials designed to advance the groups' causes. When evaluating ".org" sites, it is important to realize that they belong to organizations, and each organization has a purpose or a cause. Therefore, each organizational website will try to advance that cause and fulfill that purpose by publishing appropriate materials. Even if the research and arguments presented on those sites are solid (and they often are), there is no such thing as an unbiased and disinterested source. This is especially true of political and social organizations whose sole purpose is to promote agendas. The Internet addresses ending in ".edu" are rather self-evident—they belong to universities and other educational institutions. On these sites we can expect academic articles and other writings, as well as papers and other works created by students. These websites are also useful resources if you are looking for information on a specific college or university. Be aware, though, that typically any college faculty member or student can obtain Web space from their institution and publish materials of their own choosing there. Thus some of the texts that appear on ".edu" sites may be personal rather than academic. In recent years, some political research organizations have begun to use Web addresses with the ".edu" tag. One of these organizations is The Brookings Institution, whose address is http://www.brookings.edu. Government websites that end in ".gov" can be useful sources of information on the latest legislation and other regulatory documents. The website with a ".net" extension can belong to commercial organizations or online forums.

Website Content

Now that we have established principles for evaluating the authors and publishers of Web materials, let us look at the content of the writing. As I have stated above, like all writing, Web writing is argumentative; therefore it is important to recognize that authors of Web texts work to promote their agendas or highlight the events, organizations, and opinions that they consider right, important,

and worthy of public attention. Different writers work from different assumptions and try to reach different audiences. Websites of political organizations are prime examples of that.

Activity: Evaluating Website Content

Go to one of the following websites: The Heritage Foundation (http://www.heritage.org), The Center for National Policy (http://www.cnponline.org), The Brookings Institution (http://www.brookings.edu), or The American Enterprise Institute (http://www.aei.org). Or choose another website suggested by your instructor. Browse through the site's content and consider the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of the site?
2. What is its intended audience? How do we know?
3. What are the main subjects discussed on the sites?
4. What assumptions and biases do the authors of the publications on the site seem to have? How do we know?
5. What research methods and sources do the authors of these materials use? How does research help the writers of the site state their case?

Apply the same analysis to any online sources you are using for one of your research projects.

Website Design and Style

The style and layout of any text is a part of that text's message, and online research sources are no exception. Well-designed and written websites add to the ethos (credibility) of their authors while badly designed and poorly written ones detract from it. Sometimes, however, a website with a good-looking design can turn out to be an unreliable or unsuitable research source.

In Place of a Conclusion: Do Not Accept A Source Just Because It Sounds or Looks Authoritative

Good writers try to create authoritative texts. Having authority in their writing helps them advance their arguments and influence their audiences. To establish such authority, writers use a variety of methods. As has been discussed throughout this essay, it is important for any researcher to recognize authoritative and credible research sources. On the other hand, it is also important *not* to accept authoritative sources without questioning them. After all, the purpose of every researched piece of writing is to create new views and new theories on the subject, not to repeat the old ones, however good and well presented those old theories may be. Therefore, when working with reliable and suitable research sources, consider them solid foundations that will help you to achieve a new understanding of your subject, which will be your own. Applying the critical source-evaluation techniques discussed in this essay will help you to accomplish this goal.

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6.1.7: Finding Literary Criticism

Literary criticism is writing that explores the meaning of works of literature. Among other things, literary criticism analyzes works of literature in terms of their historical and literary context. It can also examine a particular type of literature or compare different works by the same author or works by different authors.

Literary criticism analyzes fiction, poetry, drama and some types of non-fiction by considering key issues such as plot, character, setting, theme, imagery, and voice. Literary criticism may also consider the effectiveness of a work of literature, but it's important to note that in this context the word "criticism" doesn't simply mean finding fault with the writing but rather looking at it from a critical or analytical viewpoint in order to understand it better.

It's also important to note that literary criticism involves more than just summarizing the plot or offering biographical information about the author.

Evaluating Sources of Literary Criticism

If you're asked to find *scholarly* sources of literary criticism, you should look for journals that are peer-reviewed. In other words, before articles are accepted for publication in the journal, they're reviewed by other scholars. Articles in a scholarly journal will also include citations for other works that are referenced. Scholarly books, likewise, will document their sources and are usually written by someone affiliated with a college or university and published by a university press. Sometimes a book of literary criticism is actually a compilation of articles that have previously appeared in journals. If that's the case, you can try to ascertain the nature of the journal in question.

Even if you know an article has come from a peer-reviewed journal, you may still wonder about its relevance, particularly if the work or author you're researching is one that's been studied extensively. One way to get more information about a source is to type the title of the article into Google Scholar and see how many times it's been cited. The higher the number, the more likely it is that the article is influential—or at least controversial. You can do a similar search to learn more about the reputation of a journal, book, or author.

Finally, when looking for critical work, don't rely on sources like SparkNotes, which provide help for students but are not considered reputable scholarly sources.

Sources of Literary Criticism

An ideal place to begin your search for literary criticism is the English subject guide on the TAMU libraries' website: library.tamu.edu/subject-guides/English. We also recommend their handout "Starting Points for Literary Criticism."

Here are some of the useful links you'll find on the library website:

ABELL (Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature): This database includes English-language articles, books, and reviews published since 1920 on English language and literature, traditional culture and bibliography. It also includes unpublished dissertations from the years 1920-1999. It covers English, American and Commonwealth writers.

Academic Search Complete: EBSCO: This online database, a general source for scholarly works in a variety of disciplines, covers works on the literature of all languages. The database covers almost 11,000 publications and offers full text on about 5,000 of those.

Modern Language Association (MLA) International Bibliograghy: This is a key resource for information on literature, linguistics, and folklore. The database includes more than 4,000 journals in the field, as well as books, collections of essays, dissertations and other bibliographies. It covers work from 1920 to the present. When searching, you can specify the kind of references you want, i.e. books, journals, websites. You can also choose only those listings that link to a full text version of the material. You can also set the search parameters to show you only scholarly (peer reviewed) journals or you can request entries within a certain timeframe, such as only those published after the year 2000.

The TAMU library's English subject page also links to databases geared to specific time periods (such as Brepolis Medieval Bibliographies) and those pertaining to certain types of literature (such as the Children's Literature Database).

A few other resources you may want to investigate:

African American Review: This online journal specifically focuses on African American literature and ethnic studies, "[providing] a lively exchange between writers and scholars in the arts, humanities, and social sciences who hold diverse perspectives on African American literature and culture." The website features full-text online access to back issues.

American Literary Scholarship: This journal offers current critical analysis of American literature. Among the writers discussed are Whitman, Hawthorne, Poe, Melville, Twain, and Faulkner. It is available in print at PS3.A47 or electronically.

A Handbook to Literature: A collection of defined literary terms, movements, and theories, this text is edited by William Harmon and C. Hugh Holman and is easy to use. It is available in print at PN41 .H355 2000.

Literary Research: A Guide to Reference Sources for the Study of Literature in English and Related Topics: This book, published in 1993, is helpful for locating other bibliographies for English and American literature by period. It also provides a list of related topics (music, science, art, etc.) that may also be useful. The book is edited by James Harner and is available in print at Z2011.H34 1993.

The Year's Work in English Studies: This bibliography lists and assesses the scholarly literary criticism published in a given year. The information is presented according to major literary periods, such as "American Literature to 1900" and can also be searched by author. It can be accessed at: ywes.oxfordjournals.org/

Also recommended for you:

Literary Terms

Analyzing Novels & Short Stories

Analyzing Plays

Analyzing Poetry

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6.1.8: Using Modern Language Association (MLA) Style

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the major components of a research paper written using MLA style.
2. Apply general Modern Language Association (MLA) style and formatting conventions in a research paper.

We have addressed American Psychological Association (APA) style, as well as the importance of giving credit where credit is due, so now let's turn our attention to the formatting and citation style of the Modern Language Association, known as MLA style.

MLA style is often used in the liberal arts and humanities. Like APA style, it provides a uniform framework for consistency across a document in several areas. MLA style provides a format for the manuscript text and parenthetical citations, or in-text citations. It also provides the framework for the works cited area for references at the end of the essay. MLA style emphasizes brevity and clarity. As a student writer, it is to your advantage to be familiar with both major styles, and this section will outline the main points of MLA as well as offer specific examples of commonly used references. Remember that your writing represents you in your absence. The correct use of a citation style demonstrates your attention to detail and ability to produce a scholarly work in an acceptable style, and it can help prevent the appearance or accusations of plagiarism.

If you are taking an English, art history, or music appreciation class, chances are that you will be asked to write an essay in MLA format. One common question goes something like "What's the difference?" referring to APA and MLA style, and it deserves our consideration. The liberal arts and humanities often reflect works of creativity that come from individual and group effort, but they may adapt, change, or build on previous creative works. The inspiration to create something new, from a song to a music video, may contain elements of previous works. Drawing on your fellow artists and authors is part of the creative process, and so is giving credit where credit is due.

A reader interested in your subject wants not only to read what you wrote but also to be aware of the works that you used to create it. Readers want to examine your sources to see if you know your subject, to see if you missed anything, or if you offer anything new and interesting. Your new or up-to-date sources may offer the reader additional insight on the subject being considered. It also demonstrates that you, as the author, are up-to-date on what is happening in the field or on the subject. Giving credit where it is due enhances your credibility, and the MLA style offers a clear format to use.

Uncredited work that is incorporated into your own writing is considered plagiarism. In the professional world, plagiarism results in loss of credibility and often compensation, including future opportunities. In a classroom setting, plagiarism results in a range of sanctions, from loss of a grade to expulsion from a school or university. In both professional and academic settings, the penalties are severe. MLA offers artists and authors a systematic style of reference, again giving credit where credit is due, to protect MLA users from accusations of plagiarism.

MLA style uses a citation in the body of the essay that links to the works cited page at the end. The in-text citation is offset with parentheses, clearly calling attention to itself for the reader. The reference to the author or title is like a signal to the reader that information was incorporated from a separate source. It also provides the reader with information to then turn to the works cited section of your essay (at the end) where they can find the complete reference. If you follow the MLA style, and indicate your source both in your essay and in the works cited section, you will prevent the possibility of plagiarism. If you follow the MLA guidelines, pay attention to detail, and clearly indicate your sources, then this approach to formatting and citation offers a proven way to demonstrate your respect for other authors and artists.

Five Reasons to Use MLA Style

1. To demonstrate your ability to present a professional, academic essay in the correct style
2. To gain credibility and authenticity for your work
3. To enhance the ability of the reader to locate information discussed in your essay
4. To give credit where credit is due and prevent plagiarism
5. To get a good grade or demonstrate excellence in your writing

Before we transition to specifics, please consider one word of caution: consistency. If you are instructed to use the MLA style and need to indicate a date, you have options. For example, you could use an international or a US style:

- **International style:** 18 May 1980 (day/month/year)

- **US style:** May 18, 1980 (month/day/year)

If you are going to the US style, be consistent in its use. You'll find you have the option on page 83 of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th edition. You have many options when writing in English as the language itself has several conventions, or acceptable ways of writing particular parts of speech or information.

You are welcome to look in the *MLA Handbook* and see there is one preferred style or convention (you will also find the answer at end of this section marked by an asterisk [*]). Now you may say to yourself that you won't write that term and it may be true, but you will come to a term or word that has more than one way it can be written. In that case, what convention is acceptable in MLA style? This is where the *MLA Handbook* serves as an invaluable resource. Again, your attention to detail and the professional presentation of your work are aspects of learning to write in an academic setting.

Now let's transition from a general discussion on the advantages of MLA style to what we are required to do to write a standard academic essay. We will first examine a general "to do" list, then review a few "do not" suggestions, and finally take a tour through a sample of MLA features. Links to sample MLA papers are located at the end of this section.

General MLA List

1. Use standard white paper (8.5 × 11 inches).
2. Double space the essay and quotes.
3. Use Times New Roman 12-point font.
4. Use one-inch margins on all sides
5. Indent paragraphs (five spaces or 1.5 inches).
6. Include consecutive page numbers in the upper-right corner.
7. Use italics to indicate a title, as in *Writing for Success*.
8. On the first page, place your name, course, date, and instructor's name in the upper-left corner.
9. On the first page, place the title centered on the page, with no bold or italics and all words capitalized.
10. On all pages, place the header, student's name + one space + page number, 1.5 inches from the top, aligned on the right.

Tip

Depending on your field of study, you may sometimes write research papers in either APA or MLA style. Recognize that each has its advantages and preferred use in fields and disciplines. Learn to write and reference in both styles with proficiency.

Title Block Format

You never get a second chance to make a first impression, and your title block (not a separate title page; just a section at the top of the first page) makes an impression on the reader. If correctly formatted with each element of information in its proper place, form, and format, it says to the reader that you mean business, that you are a professional, and that you take your work seriously, so it should, in turn, be seriously considered. Your title block in MLA style contributes to your credibility. Remember that your writing represents you in your absence, and the title block is the tailored suit or outfit that represents you best. That said, sometimes a separate title page is necessary, but it is best both to know how to properly format a title block or page in MLA style and to ask your instructor if it is included as part of the assignment.

Your name

Instructor

Course number

Date

Title of Paper

Paragraphs and Indentation

Make sure you indent five spaces (from the left margin). You'll see that the indent offsets the beginning of a new paragraph. We use paragraphs to express single ideas or topics that reinforce our central purpose or thesis statement. Paragraphs include topic

sentences, supporting sentences, and conclusion or transitional sentences that link paragraphs together to support the main focus of the essay.

Tables and Illustrations

Place tables and illustrations as close as possible to the text they reinforce or complement. Here's an example of a table in MLA.

Table 1

Sales Figures by Year	Sales Amount ($)
2007	100,000
2008	125,000
2009	185,000
2010	215,000

As we can see in Table 1, we have experienced significant growth since 2008.

This example demonstrates that the words that you write and the tables, figures, illustrations, or images that you include should be next to each other in your paper.

Parenthetical Citations

You must cite your sources as you use them. In the same way that a table or figure should be located right next to the sentence that discusses it (see the previous example), parenthetical citations, or citations enclosed in parenthesis that appear in the text, are required. You need to cite all your information. If someone else wrote it, said it, drew it, demonstrated it, or otherwise expressed it, you need to cite it. The exception to this statement is common, widespread knowledge. For example, if you search online for MLA resources, and specifically MLA sample papers, you will find many similar discussions on MLA style. MLA is a style and cannot be copyrighted because it is a style, but the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook* can be copyright protected. If you reference a specific page in that handbook, you need to indicate it. If you write about a general MLA style issue that is commonly covered or addressed in multiple sources, you do not. When in doubt, reference the specific resource you used to write your essay.

Your in-text, or parenthetical, citations should do the following:

- Clearly indicate the specific sources also referenced in the works cited
- Specifically identify the location of the information that you used
- Keep the citation clear and concise, always confirming its accuracy

Works Cited Page

After the body of your paper comes the works cited page. It features the reference sources used in your essay. List the sources alphabetically by last name, or list them by title if the author is not known as is often the case of web-based articles. You will find links to examples of the works cited page in several of the sample MLA essays at the end of this section.

As a point of reference and comparison to our APA examples, let's examine the following three citations and the order of the information needed.

Citation Type	MLA Style	APA Style
Website	Author's Last Name, First Name. Title of the website. Publication Date. Name of Organization (if applicable). Date you accessed the website. <URL>.	Author's Last Name, First Initial. (Date of publication). Title of document. Retrieved from URL
Online article	Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." Title of the website. Date of publication. Organization that provides the website. Date you accessed the website.	Author's Last name, First Initial. (Date of publication). Title of article. *Title of Journal, Volume*(Issue). Retrieved from URL
Book	Author's Last Name, First Name. *Title of the Book*. Place of Publication: Publishing Company, Date of publication.	Author's Last Name, First Initial. (Date of publication). *Title of the book*. Place of Publication: Publishing Company.
Note: The items listed include proper punctuation and capitalization according to the style's guidelines.		

Exercise 1

In Chapter 13 "APA and MLA Documentation and Formatting", Section 13.1 "Formatting a Research Paper", you created a sample essay in APA style. After reviewing this section and exploring the resources linked at the end of the section (including California State University–Sacramento's clear example of a paper in MLA format), please convert your paper to MLA style using the formatting and citation guidelines. You may find it helpful to use online applications that quickly, easily, and at no cost convert your citations to MLA format.

Exercise 2

Please convert the APA-style citations to MLA style. You may find that online applications can quickly, easily, and at no cost convert your citations to MLA format. There are several websites and applications available free (or as a free trial) that will allow you to input the information and will produce a correct citation in the style of your choice. Consider these two sites:

- http://www.noodletools.com
- http://citationmachine.net

Hint: You may need access to the Internet to find any missing information required to correctly cite in MLA style. This demonstrates an important difference between APA and MLA style—the information provided to the reader.

	Sample Student Reference List in APA Style
1	Brent, D. A., Poling, K. D., & Goldstein, T. R. (2010). *Treating depressed and suicidal adolescents: A clinician's guide.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.
MLA	
2	Dewan, S. (2007, September 17). Using crayons to exorcise Katrina. *The New York Times.*Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/17/ar...gn/17ther.html
MLA	
3	Freud, S. (1955). Beyond the pleasure principle. In *The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud.* (Vol. XVII, pp. 3–66). London, England: Hogarth.
MLA	
4	Henley, D. (2007). Naming the enemy: An art therapy intervention for children with bipolar and comorbid disorders. *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, *24*(3), 104–110.
MLA	
5	Hutson, M. (2008). Art therapy: The healing arts. *Psychology Today.* Retrieved from http://www.psychologytoday.com/artic...e-healing-arts
MLA	
6	Isis, P. D., Bus, J., Siegel, C. A., & Ventura, Y. (2010). Empowering students through creativity: Art therapy in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*, *27*(2), 56–61.
MLA	
7	Johnson, D. (1987). The role of the creative arts therapies in the diagnosis and treatment of psychological trauma. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, *14*, 7–13.
MLA	
8	Malchiodi, C. (2006). *Art therapy sourcebook*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
MLA	
9	Markel, R. (Producer). (2010). *I'm an artist* [Motion picture]. United States: Red Pepper Films.
MLA	
10	Kelley, S. J. (1984). The use of art therapy with sexually abused children. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health*, *22*(12), 12–28.
MLA	
11	Pifalo, T. (2008). Why art therapy? *Darkness to light: Confronting child abuse with courage.* Retrieved from

	Sample Student Reference List in APA Style
	http://www.darkness2light.org/KnowAb...rt_therapy.asp
MLA	
12	Rubin, J. A. (2005). *Child art therapy* (25th ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.
MLA	
13	Schimek, J. (1975). A critical re-examination of Freud's concept of unconscious mental representation. *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, *2*, 171–187.
MLA	
14	Strauss, M. B. (1999). *No talk therapy for children and adolescents*. New York, NY: Norton.
MLA	
15	Thompson, T. (2008). *Freedom from meltdowns: Dr. Thompson's solutions for children with autism*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
MLA	

Useful Sources of Examples of MLA Style

- Arizona State University Libraries offers an excellent resource with clear examples.
  - http://libguides.asu.edu/content.php?pid=122697&sid=1132964
- Purdue Online Writing Lab includes sample pages and works cited.
  - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01
- California State University–Sacramento's Online Writing Lab has an excellent visual description and example of an MLA paper.
  - https://web.archive.org/web/20170810064714/http://www.csus.edu/owl/index/mla/mla_format.htm
- SUNY offers an excellent, brief, side-by-side comparison of MLA and APA citations.
  - /@api/deki/files/187251/MLA_APA_08.03.10.pdf
- Cornell University Library provides comprehensive MLA information on its Citation Management website.
  - http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/mla
- The University of Kansas Writing Center is an excellent resource.
  - https://writing.ku.edu/writing-guides

* (a) is the correct answer to the question at the beginning of this section. The *MLA Handbook* prefers "twentieth century."

Key Takeaways

- MLA style is often used in the liberal arts and humanities.
- MLA style emphasizes brevity and clarity.
- A reader interested in your subject wants not only to read what you wrote but also to be informed of the works you used to create it.
- MLA style uses a citation in the body of the essay that refers to the works cited section at the end.
- If you follow MLA style, and indicate your source both in your essay and in the works cited section, you will prevent the possibility of plagiarism.

Attribution

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6.1.9: Additional Resources

Note

All assignments for this course must be formatted properly in MLA. This link will help you practice this all important skill: Introduction to MLA Documentation by Wren Mills, Bowling Green Technical College

Examples

Here you will find an exceptional student literary analysis as well as an explanation to the main body of her paper. Her introduction and conclusion were examined earlier in this competency.

Monica Platten

Professor Ryan Cordell

Introduction to Literature

December 17, 20–

"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow": An Allegory for a Young America

When one hears the title "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," they might shiver a little and think of the infamous spectre, "the apparition of a figure on horseback without a head … known, at all the country firesides, by the name of The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow" (Irving 966). It is this legendary phantom that grants Washington Irving's tale the label of ghost story. As such, readers would expect the legend to be overflowing with superstition and opposing forces—good vs. evil, known vs. unknown, supernatural vs. reality. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" can be read as a tale of opposing forces, but not in the same way as ghost story. It is a legend of rivalry, a rivalry between the characters Ichabod Crane and Brom Van Brunt. Readers may benefit by understanding that the opposing forces presented here are these two characters, the victim and the victor, the underdog and the front-runner—not those of supernatural and reality—in order to understand a major significance of Irving's tale. Ichabod Crane and Brom Van Brunt are meant to be more than just two characters with a rivalry—they are actually representations of the young American nation and its "motherland," Great Britain. When these allegories are understood, and these opposing forces are revealed, readers will finally be able to understand a central message behind Irving's tale—it is an allegory for the goals, the problems, and the livelihood of an adolescent America.

The glen of Sleepy Hollow itself embodies the characteristics of the fresh, new land of America. It is a little valley in which "a small brook glides through [it], with just murmur enough to lull you to repose, and the occasional whistle of a quail, or the tapping of a woodpecker, is almost the only sound that ever breaks in upon the uniform tranquility" (956). This place is tranquil and beautiful, just as the new land of America was perceived by all who settled there. Not only is the beauty ample, but the natural resources are overflowing: there are "fat meadow lands, the rich fields of wheat, of rye, of buckwheat, and Indian corn, and the orchard burthened with ruddy fruit" (971); in this place "nature wore that rich and golden livery which we always associate with the idea of abundance" (976). Sleepy Hollow is a valley of bounty, a land of plenty. But like any other wild and largely uncharted territory, this land possesses an air of mystery. "A drowsy, dreamy influence seems to hang over the land, and pervade the very atmosphere" (965), and any who dally long enough while passing through or decide to call the place home "begin to grow imaginative—to dream dreams, and see apparitions" (966). Likewise, the first settlers in America came as dreamers, searching for a new world, a new life, riches, and freedom.

Ichabod Crane is essential to this allegory of the new nation, because he is the representation of the American nation itself. The description of this character does not conform to one of a strong favorite, but to that of an underdog: "He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and leg, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole fame most loosely hung together" (967). He is not a well-built man but an awkward one. As a schoolteacher he is intelligent, but does not hold a prestigious position in society; this reflects the rank of the new nation in a world order of countries. Nonetheless, he is optimistic and determined: "He had, however, a happy mixture of pliability and perseverance in his nature; he was in form and spirit like a supple jack—yielding, but tough; though he bent, he never broke;

and though he bowed beneath the slightest pressure, yet, the moment it was away—jerk!—he was as erect, and carried his head as high as ever" (973). The personality of Ichabod Crane reflects the same qualities of the newly independent states of America—he is, like they are, an optimistic underdog.

The personality of Ichabod Crane also reflects the status of the American nation in his want for maturity. Crane, although a grown man, displays certain qualities of youth in his superstitious beliefs and his "his appetite for the marvelous, and his powers of digesting it, [which] were equally extraordinary" (969). These traits imply that he is still young and childish, not yet mature like an adult: "No tale was too gross or monstrous for his capacious swallow" (969). Nothing pleases him more than to "listen to marvellous tales of ghosts and goblins, and haunted fields and haunted brooks, and haunted bridges and haunted house, and particularly of the headless horseman" (969). Terence Martin breaks these ideas down: "By fitting the notion of gullibility into the dominant metaphor of Ichabod's oral preoccupation, Irving emphasizes the childlike quality of his protagonist. Ichabod can swallow and digest anything; therefore he is always and increasingly gullible.… Irving couples the oral stage and imaginative indulgence; both signify childhood" (143). The young colonies of America are certainly lacking the wisdom and maturity of their relative, Great Britain; "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," published in 1820, just over 40 years after the Declaration of Independence, is set in "a remote period of American history, that is to say, some thirty year since" (Irving 967).

Martin agrees that "America … was a new nation which saw itself … [as] fresh and innocent" (137), but explains that it wanted to become an "adult" as quickly as possible, and therefore needed to stay away from child-like obsessions of fancy and the imagination. "A childish (primitive) society might legitimately take an interest in things imaginative; such a society, however, was precisely what America wanted not to be" (Martin 139). Washington Irving obviously shared this belief, because in the end of his tale, Crane's excessive imagination leads to embarrassment and failure. This is, in a way, a warning for adolescent America. Martin concurs: "It would appear that for Irving there is no place, or a very limited place, for the hero of the imagination in the culture of early America. A nation of [Rips and] Ichabods, Americans might reason, would soon be no nation at all" (144).

Crane and the American nation have in common one more imperative attribute: ambition. This ambition is demonstrated in many ways. Just as the colonists of this new nation hungered for a better life, Ichabod Crane hungers: "In his devouring mind's eye, he pictured to himself every roasting pig running about with a pudding in its belly, and an apple in its mouth; the pigeons were snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie, and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese were swimming in their own gravy; and the ducks pairing cosily in dishes" (Irving 971). Delicious food is not the only luxury Crane hungers for; he longs for material possessions, too, such as land and the many animals that provide his scrumptious meals: "His heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his imagination expanded with the idea, how they might be readily turned into cash, and the money invested in immense tracts of wild land, and shingle palaces in the wilderness.… He beheld himself bestriding a pacing mare, with a colt at her heel, setting out for Kentucky, Tennessee, or the Lord knows where"! (971).

This desire and ambition to possess and expand reflects the American initiative of Manifest Destiny. Crane is ambitious and confident that he is meant to fulfill these big plans: "He could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he eat, and chuckling with the possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of almost unimaginable luxury and splendor" (977). Lloyd Daigrepont states that "Ichabod [also] represents the modern debasement of imagination by materialism, a pious utilitarianism, and the idea of progress, particularly as these were supported in early 19th-century America" (72) and goes so far as to call Crane himself "a representative of progress" (73). However, this ambition and desire for progress borders on greed. Crane is overly confident that he will one day acquire for himself the beautiful daughter and land of Baltus Van Tassel, a wealthy Dutch farmer. His motives for this possession are not supported by any reasons but personal desire. This same kind of greed and personal desire was demonstrated by the American states, as their motives for Manifest Destiny (although the particular term had not been coined quite yet) transformed from those of exploration and expansion to dominance and control over the native people and their land.

Brom Van Brunt, nicknamed appropriately Brom Bones, represents the strength of America's motherland, Great Britain. He is a formidable man, "a burley, roaring, roystering blade … the hero of the country round, which rung with his feats of strength and hardihood" (Irving 972). He is powerful and skilled, always coming out on top: "He was famed for great knowledge and skill [in horsemanship] … he was foremost at all races and cockfights, and with the ascendancy which bodily strength always acquires in rustic life, was the umpire of all disputes" (972). This strength, knowledge, and skill—along with his competing

interest in Katrina Van Tassel, the "apple" of Crane's eye—makes him "the formidable rival with whom Ichabod Crane had to contend" (973). And although he is respected and admired—"The neighbours looked upon him with a mixture of awe, admiration, and good-will" (973)—he can be a bit of a bully, especially in said rivalry:

Ichabod became the object of whimsical persecution to Bones, and his gang of rough riders. They harried his hitherto peaceful domain; smoked out his singing school, by stopping up the chimney; broke in to the school-house at night, in spite of its formidable fastening of withe and window stakes, and turned everything topsy-turvy, so that the poor schoolmaster began to think all the witches in the country held their meetings there. But what was still more annoying, Brom took all opportunities of turning him into ridicule in the presence of his mistress, and had a scoundrel dog, whom he taught to whine in the most ludicrous manner, and introduced as a rival of Ichabod's, to instruct her in psalmody. (974)

This list of grievances against Ichabod is reminiscent of the list of grievances claimed in the Declaration of Independence. Brom Bones is the powerful, respected rival of Crane, the slightly awkward underdog. And just as Great Britain used its power and strength to worry the colonies and then later the young American states, Brom uses his to harass Crane.

Katrina Van Tassel, daughter of the aforementioned Baltus Van Tassel, completes this allegory of an adolescent America because she is the prize, the treasure coveted by each nation—she represents power, honor, respect, and abundant resources. She is described as "blooming … plump as a partridge; ripe and melting and rosy cheeked as one of her father's peaches, and universally famed" (970). The land of America is likewise copious in beauty, nature and wildlife abounding, the land is lush, fresh, and immense. People from all around the world would soon be immigrating to this new world in hopes of building a better life. "So tempting a morsel" (970) she was, yes, but also difficult to conquer: "Ichabod … had to win his way to the heart of a country coquette, beset with a labyrinth of whims and caprices, which were forever presenting new difficulties and impediments, and he had to encounter a host of fearful adversaries of real flesh and blood … keeping a watchful and angry eye upon each other" (972). Not only did many different countries and groups of people lust over the ample land, but this new world also created a struggle for power. Great Britain, the motherland, had been disowned by its young child. The American colonies decided to break away from this unfair and oppressive parent and start a life of their own, as a new nation. This budding nation, youthful and inexperienced as it was, found it necessary to work its way up in the world. This adolescent American had proved its ambition to be free, but now hoped to gain the respect of the world, power in the world order, pride in itself, and a sense of nationalism to infuse its people. Great Britain, however, was struggling to maintain its own pride and power after its defeat to the adolescent America; this once all-powerful empire wanted to uphold the respect it had earned throughout history. Which country would ultimately prove itself to be superior? This was the rivalry between the two nations. And that is the rivalry between Ichabod Crane and Brom Bones: who is the better man, who will win the girl and all her treasures, the respect, and the power?

While it appears clear that Irving's tale is an allegory for a budding America and the rivalry between this underdog and its stronger, older relative Great Britain, some would disagree. Many critics, in fact, depict the rivalry as one between the regions and cultures in New England, and label *Ichabod* as the "threat," or the bully. Donald Ringe boldly claims that "Ichabod Crane is clearly a Connecticut Yankee invading—and threatening—a New York Dutch society" (455). Following suit, Daniel Hoffman calls Brom Bones Irving's "realistic Dutch frontiersman, who meets and bests a Yankee" (427). Their idea of Irving's tale is summed up by Lloyd Daigrepont, who argues that "Brom is no musclebound bully, but rather a vigorous youth with a puckish spirit and a joyful exuberance for life" (75), who simply "wishes to rid Sleepy Hollow of the threat of Ichabod Crane" (76–77).

This claim that Brom Bones is the story's hero and Crane the threatening force, while intriguing, seems misguided, especially as Irving himself described Bones as Crane's "formidable rival" (973), as previously mentioned. In addition, Jeffrey Insko points out that Irving's "body of work includes 'serious' histories (notably, biographies of George Washington and Christopher Columbus) and fictional sketches—among them 'Rip Van Winkle' and 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow'—that are themselves deeply concerned with matters historiographical" (609). Regional conflicts in an adolescent America's New England were much more recent and current for Irving's time than conflicts between America and Great Britain. Levine and Krupat note these concerns: "There was a sense during the 1790s and early 1800s … that American nationalism was provisional, vulnerable, fragile. The War of 1812, which emerged from trade disputes with England, can therefore be seen as a war that, at least in part, spoke to Americans' desires to put an end to such anxiety by in effect reenacting the American Revolution against England and winning a victory once and for all" (931). Although the rivalry between America and its overseas lineage was

indeed current and ongoing, it extended a bit farther back into history. Before there could be conflict between regions of the American nation, it had to become a nation. The first major conflict was between America and Great Britain.

When readers understand that the rivalry in Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy of Hollow" is not only between the opposing forces of two characters, but also between an underdog and a powerful bully, then they can understand a central allegory of the story: an allegory of a young and developing America. Irving meant his tale to convey a warning to the budding nation: it is a reminder of its vulnerability, its problems, and the obstacles and hardships that stand in the way of its success. While Irving and other members of "the American literary nationalism of the 1820s … ultimately raised tough questions about the nation's future, about its strengths and vulnerabilities, and about its character and potential as a democratic republic" (Levine and Krupat 934), these questions and criticisms, along with "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," are not without a sense of hope or optimism. Readers should remember that "Ichabod is not ultimately the loser in this legend. All he has lost is a farm girl's love and a measure of self-respect; the former was no real passion, the latter can be repaired" (Hoffman 433–34). The American nation, like Ichabod, has the potential to succeed: to grow up, to learn from mistakes, and then to thrive against all odds.

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Ringe, Donald. "New York and New England: Irving's Criticism of American Society." *American Literature* 38.4 (1967):455–67. *JSTOR*. Web. 9 Dec. 2010.

Understanding the Body of Monica's Argument

Remember that the primary question readers ask of writers is "What do you think?" Because claims are specific and debatable, however, writers cannot simply state their claim. They must anticipate their readers' new questions: "Why do you think that?" and "How do you know?" To explain why she thinks as she does about "Sleepy Hollow," Monica begins each section of her paper with a subclaim, which is a specific, debatable statement that supports the global claim from the introduction. Let's pull the subclaims out of the body of Monica's paper so we can look at them more closely:

- SC1: "The glen of Sleepy Hollow itself embodies the characteristics of the fresh, new land of America."
- SC2: "Ichabod Crane is essential to this allegory of the new nation, because he is the representation of the American nation itself. The description of this character does not conform to one of a strong favorite, but to that of an underdog."
- SC3: "Brom Van Brunt, nicknamed appropriately Brom Bones, represents the strength of America's motherland, Great Britain. He is a formidable man … powerful and skilled, always coming out on top."
- SC4: "Katrina Van Tassel, daughter of the aforementioned Baltus Van Tassel, completes this allegory of an adolescent America because she is the prize, the treasure coveted by each nation—she represents power, honor, respect, and abundant resources."

Each of these subclaims advances one aspect of the global claim, helping round out the ideas that Monica broaches in her introduction. Monica believes that Irving's story "is an allegory for the goals, the problems, and the livelihood of an adolescent America" because "the description of [Ichabod] does not conform to one of a strong favorite, but to that of an underdog." She also believes as she does because "Katrina Van Tassel…is the prize, the treasure coveted by each nation—she represents power, honor,

respect, and abundant resources." We could say the same thing about Monica's other subclaims. None of these statements is self-evidently true; like the global claim in the paper's introduction, the subclaims are debatable statements.

Now that Monica has answered her readers' questions, "What do you think?" and "Why do you think that?" she must explain how she knows her ideas are true. To answer "How do you know?" Monica supports each of her subclaims with a range of evidence, both primary evidence (quotations from "Sleepy Hollow" itself) and secondary evidence (quotations from scholars writing about the story or its historical period). To demonstrate Ichabod's "ambition," for instance, Monica quotes from Irving's story directly: "'In his devouring mind's eye, he pictured to himself every roasting pig running about with a pudding in its belly, and an apple in its mouth; the pigeons were snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie, and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese were swimming in their own gravy; and the ducks pairing cosily in dishes'" (Irving 971). This textual evidence grounds Monica's claims, helping readers see why she thinks what she thinks about Irving's tale.

You should think carefully about how the evidence you quote supports the subclaims you make. While the connections between your claims and evidence may seem self-evident to you they may not be evident to your readers. Imagine, for instance, if a report came out saying students from a particular school were underperforming on their standardized tests. One person might see the report as evidence the school needs more funding. Another person might see the same report as evidence the school should be closed and its students sent elsewhere. Still another might see the report as evidence that the system of standardized testing doesn't fairly evaluate students and should be changed. Readers interpret evidence in light of their social, political, religious, and cultural values and assumptions. Writing scholars call these underlying values and assumptions warrants. When you use evidence, you should consider how different readers might interpret it, and if you foresee dramatic differences, you should carefully explain how you arrived at the connections you've drawn.

The following is one example that will show you how warrants provide the logical connection between claim and evidence. Most warrants are not directly stated but implied, which makes it useful for you to articulate your warrants so that you can concretely see the logical connection between claim and evidence:

Understanding the Body of Monica's Argument

- SC1: "The glen of Sleepy Hollow itself embodies the characteristics of the fresh, new land of America."
- Warrant: The glen symbolizes the new America, which is central to the thesis since landscape, the geography, is essential to the allegory of Crane as representative of the new America.

In addition, Monica supplements her direct textual evidence in her paper with insights from other scholars, which also become counterclaims to her argument: "Lloyd Daigrepont states that 'Ichabod [also] represents the modern debasement of imagination by materialism, a pious utilitarianism, and the idea of progress, particularly as these were supported in early 19th-century America' and goes so far as to call Crane himself 'a representative of progress' (72, 73)." Secondary evidence grants authority to Monica's argument, demonstrating that she has studied scholarly conversations around this work and is now engaging in those conversations in her own writing.

The word "conversation" tells us quite a bit about why Monica's argument works so well. She maintains a tone of engagement with other scholars throughout the paper, even when she disagrees with their ideas. In short, she answers yet another question readers are likely to ask of writers: "Have you considered this other point of view?" Note the way Monica explains potential objections to her argument, anticipating her readers' skepticism about her argument.

> While it appears clear that Irving's tale is an allegory for a budding America and the rivalry between this underdog and its stronger, older relative Great Britain, some would disagree. Many critics, in fact, depict the rivalry as one between the regions and cultures in New England, and label *Ichabod* as the "threat," or the bully. Donald Ringe boldly claims that "Ichabod Crane is clearly a Connecticut Yankee invading—and threatening—a New York Dutch society" (455). Following suit, Daniel Hoffman calls Brom Bones Irving's "realistic Dutch frontiersman, who meets and bests a Yankee" (427). Their idea of Irving's tale is summed up by Lloyd Daigrepont, who argues that "Brom is no musclebound bully, but rather a vigorous youth with a puckish spirit and a joyful exuberance for life," who simply "wishes to rid Sleepy Hollow of the threat of Ichabod Crane" (75, 76–77).

As in her introduction, Monica outlines an alternative argument carefully and fairly. She quotes directly from scholars she disagrees with. Doing this doesn't undermine the points Monica wants to make about "Sleepy Hollow." Instead, by demonstrating her awareness of other possibilities, Monica demonstrates that her argument comes from close consideration of the story and many potential interpretations. Because Monica demonstrates her thorough research in the paragraph just quoted, her rebuttal of those opinions in the following paragraph has more force and authority.

> This claim that Brom Bones is the story's hero and Crane the threatening force, while intriguing, seems misguided, especially as Irving himself described Bones as Crane's "formidable rival" (973), as previously mentioned. In addition, Jeffrey Insko points out that Irving's "body of work includes 'serious' histories (notably, biographies of George Washington and Christopher Columbus) and fictional sketches—among them 'Rip Van Winkle' and 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow'—that are themselves deeply concerned with matters historiographical" (609). Regional conflicts in an adolescent America's New England were much more recent and current for Irving's time than conflicts between America and Great Britain. Levine and Krupat note these concerns:
>
> There was a sense during the 1790s and early 1800s … that American nationalism was provisional, vulnerable, fragile. The War of 1812, which emerged from trade disputes with England, can therefore be seen as a war that, at least in part, spoke to Americans' desires to put an end to such anxiety by in effect reenacting the American Revolution against England and winning a victory once and for all. (931)
>
> Although the rivalry between America and its overseas lineage was indeed current and ongoing, it extended a bit farther back into history. Before there could be conflict between regions of the American nation, it had to become a nation. The first major conflict was between America and Great Britain.

An effective academic writer considers multiple points of view in his or her writing. Such writers persuade their readers to follow their opinions about literature through carefully considered, well-organized claims, subclaims, and evidence.

Attributions

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6.2: Creating Literary Analysis

Most literature students are introduced to literary theory and writing about literature as separate subjects, though the two are intimately linked in the practice of literary scholarship. Literary scholarship is guided by literary theories and expressed through writing; it doesn't make sense to learn each in isolation. Literary theories are intellectual models that scholars use to understand stories, novels, poems, plays, and other texts. Different theories prioritize different historical, social, or methodological concerns. The authors believe students of literature should learn about many literary theories so they can discover which interpretive tools work best for them when they write about literature in their classes (and beyond). This book aims to help students build up a personal toolbox of interpretive possibilities.

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6.2.1: Introduction - What Is Literary Theory and Why Should I Care?

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6.2.2: Writing about Form - Developing the Foundations of Close Reading

Learning Objectives

- Understand the theory of New Criticism as the foundation for close reading.
- Apply the New Critical methodology to works of literature.
- Engage in the writing process of a peer writer, including peer review.
- Review and evaluate a variety of New Critical papers by peer writers.
- Draft and revise a New Critical paper on a literary work.

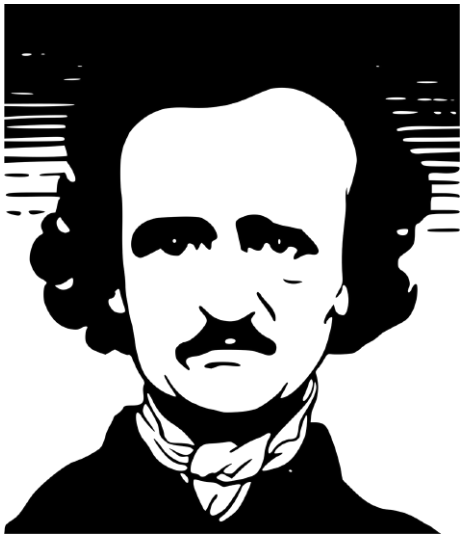


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SECTION OVERVIEW

6.2.3: Writing about Character and Motivation - Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism

Learning Objectives

- Understand the varieties of psychoanalytic literary theories.
- Apply a psychoanalytic theory to a literary work.
- Engage in the writing process of a peer writer, including peer review.
- Review and evaluate a variety of model papers by peer writers.
- Draft and revise a psychoanalytic paper on a literary work.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

6.2.4: Writing about Gender and Sexuality - Applying Feminist and Gender Criticism

Learning Objectives

- Understand the theory of feminism.
- Understand the theory of gender criticism, including queer theory and masculinity studies.
- Apply a feminist and/or gender methodology to works of literature.
- Engage in the writing process of a peer writer, including peer review.
- Review and evaluate a variety of feminist and gender papers by peer writers.
- Draft and revise a feminist or gender paper on a literary work.

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6.2.5: Writing about Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Identity

Learning Objectives

- Examine the concerns of scholars working with African American, ethnic, and postcolonial theories.
- Apply various cultural theories to works of literature.
- Review works of poetry and fiction that explore issues of racial, ethnic, and cultural identity.
- Learn how to respectfully disagree with other scholars within an academic argument.
- Draft and revise a critique of a work of literature based on racial, ethnic, or cultural issues within the work.



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6.2.6: Writing about Readers - Applying Reader-Response Theory

Learning Objectives

- Understand the theory of reader response, which focuses on the reader's reading experience.
- Apply the reader-response methodology to works of literature.
- Engage in the writing process of a peer writer, including peer review.
- Review and evaluate a variety of reader-response papers by peer writers.
- Draft and revise a reader-response paper on a literary work.

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6.2.7: Writing about History and Culture from a New Historical Perspective

Learning Objectives

- Examine methods that scholars use to write about literature as a historical text.
- Apply New Historical theory to works of literature.
- Research and synthesize primary and secondary sources for a historical research paper.
- Review and evaluate the research and writing process of a peer writer.
- Draft and revise a historical critique of a literary work.



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6.2.8: Writing about the Natural World

Learning Objectives

- Examine the concerns of scholars working to understand literary representations of the natural world.
- Apply ecocriticism to works of literature.
- Review works of poetry and fiction that explore the relationships between human beings and animals, plants, natural features, and natural phenomena.
- Learn how to revise an academic argument for clarity, persuasiveness, and stylistic grace.
- Draft and revise a critique of a work of literature based on environmental concerns.



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SECTION OVERVIEW

6.2.9: Reading and Writing in the Digital Age

Learning Objectives

- Examine the ways literary scholars are using new technologies to investigate literary works.
- Contrast the conventions of writing for the web with the conventions of typical research-paper writing.
- Review the process of creating a thematic research collection.
- Explore the uses of geospatial technology in understanding literary works.
- Develop a plan for a digital research project focusing on a specific literary work.

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6.2.10: Appendix - Peer Review Sheets

A key guiding principle of *Writing about Literature through Theory* is that peer review is central to the writing process. As you compose your papers, you will want to receive feedback from your fellow students. The benefits of peer review are twofold: (1) peer view provides you with feedback on your paper, which will help you as you revise your paper; and (2) as a peer reviewer of others' papers, you develop the skills of an editor, which will help you with the revision of your own papers. In other words, participating in peer review will help you become a stronger, more confident writer.

The following peer-review guides are inspired by the work of Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff in *Sharing and Responding*: http://academic.evergreen.edu/s/stilsonr/Academic%20Research/Readings/elbow.htm.

Elbow and Belanoff provide a variety of peer-review guides that you might want to consider for your class. We have chosen the organizational peer-review guide (what they call "skeleton" peer review) for each chapter in this book, but you may find other peer-review approaches work better in your class. We have added a "warrant" section to each guide to help you articulate the connections between supporting claims and overall thesis for each paper.Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff, eds., "Summary of Ways of Responding," in *Sharing and Responding* (New York: Random House, 1989), http://academic.evergreen.edu/s/stilsonr/Academic%20Research/Readings/elbow.htm.

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6.3.1: Introduction

Module 6 – Research for Literary Analysis

Module Introduction

Introduction

Writing analytically takes time, both for complex reasoning and for writing. Students and scholars alike strongly benefit from a writing process that involves multiple drafts—either through the creation of outlines, journaling, the writing of partial or full drafts, the preparation of abstracts, or a combination thereof—prior to final editing.

Approaching writing as a multi-phase process allows us to accomplish smaller steps along the way and build off our successes. By making time to focus on key aspects of analytical writing over several work sessions, we can build strong, well-developed final papers. In this module you will develop a literary analysis paper by completing pre-writing journal assignment in which you begin to develop a topic and thesis, by preparing a rough draft of your paper to submit to your instructor for feedback and research guidance, and finally by completing a final draft of your paper that includes appropriate academic citations and references.

This approach to writing and research as a process is not something only asked of students. Professional writers, whether journalists or literary authors, engage in similar multi-phase approaches to creating and polishing their best work. Most, if not all, professional writers will admit that frustration and fatigue will occur at some point during the writing process. Such feelings are deeply human and are not signs of limited ability. Indeed, the best writers learn to acknowledge and work with these feelings or perceptions as they steadily craft their next great piece. The activities in this module are designed to encourage you to work in at least a few stages to build your major essay for the course. Doing so will not only help ensure your final paper is of higher quality; working in this way also will help instill good habits for future writing, research and project completion [1].

Course Learning Outcomes

This module addresses the following Course Learning Outcomes listed in the Syllabus for this course:

- Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
- Demonstrate understanding of Global Sociocultural Responsibility
- Recognize the relationships between cultural expressions and their contexts
- Understand cultural expressions
- Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance
- Understand basic literary elements of specific genres: short story, poetry, and drama
- Analyze and evaluate selected works of literature in classroom or online settings
- Analyze and evaluate both in class discussions (whether face-to-face or electronic) and in class writing, selected works of literature
- Recognize selected major critical approaches to works of literature
- Analyze selected text from one or more critical perspectives
- Demonstrate and understand how literature is relevant to their personal, social, and historical awareness [1]

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Draft original thesis statements for analytical writing
- Identify relevant sources of quality through online research
- Incorporate diverse sources into a full-length essay
- Document sources using MLA, APA, or Chicago style
- Apply critical approaches to literature to specific texts [1]

Readings and Resources

- No additional readings are required in this Module.

Optional Further Reading

- Bate, Jonathan. *English Literature: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction* . Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008.

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6.3.2: Developing Analysis

Developing Analysis

The root of the word **essay** comes from the French verb essayer, meaning ‘to attempt’ or ‘to try.’ Like anything we may ‘attempt’ or ‘try,’ effort — sometimes significant effort — is involved and it is highly unlikely our first attempt or first try will yield perfection, nor should it. If you can approach the writing of analysis more as a journey of discovery, a series of attempts or tries at more and more complex levels of understanding, then it will be more likely that you may feel some sense of satisfaction about wherever you find yourself in the process. Students who approach writing analytical essays as a task to complete or a thing to produce are less likely to find the twists and turns during the process of critical thinking, writing, research, and revision at all enjoyable.

As we discussed in the introductory module for this course, academic writing requires **active reading** and **complex reasoning** . That is, writing analysis, as opposed to writing summary, demands extended contemplation over multiple sittings. Discovering a specific interpretive challenge is an excellent way to begin to develop a writing topic. In addition to the questions for active reading we discussed in Module 2, when focusing on a literary text, you may also consider the following three questions as starting points for discovering the focus of your analysis:

- What theme is being expressed or represented in the literature?
- How does the author construct that expression or representation formally?
- Why might the author have chosen to create that particular literary work in that specific manner?

When it is time to sit down and write, one must approach the task with the intentions of an author. Even if writing a paper for class, this kind of focus can be helpful in discerning what to specifically discuss in your essay. Another way to think about the critical choices you’re required to make in the drafting of an analytical essay is that they are creative choices. Consider the following organizational questions:

- What do you most want to express via a thesis or purpose statement?
- How will you accomplish expressing your thoughts? What organizational strategies and types of support will work best to develop your topic?
- What is at stake in this essay? What is the larger meaning or value for understanding the ideas presented in your writing? How does your analysis help your audience more fully comprehend the culture and/or cultural object about which you are writing?

Writing critical analysis takes time, both for critical thinking and for writing. Students and scholars strongly benefit from a writing process that involves **multiple drafts** — either the creation of outlines, journaling, the writing of partial or full drafts, the preparation of abstracts, or a combination thereof — prior to final editing. A multi-stage process is more than a required exercise; it is time invested in one’s own development of thought that allows for connections to be made, ideas to become more advanced, and understanding evolve beyond original perceptions. [(1)]

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6.3.3: Preparing for Research — Knowing Your Thesis

Preparing for Research — Knowing Your Thesis

If we truly are engaging writing and research as a process, then finding the **thesis** or purpose statement that will ground and drive your analysis essay will not be instant. Drafting different versions of what will be your thesis is advisable. The term 'thesis' has linguistic origins in the Greek word *tithenai* , which means to place, as in to place a proposition before an audience. Consider the preparation that would occur for other things you would place before an audience, like a business proposal or an invitation to a party; some refinement would be required.

For example, if your goal was to write an analysis of Mark Twain's novel *Huckleberry Finn* , it is likely that several ideas for a thesis statement would come to mind.

The friendship between Huck and Jim reveals Twain's commentary on the moral dilemma of slavery.

↓

This is a fair enough focus. It is analytical; it does more than summarize. It places a proposition before the reader and upon consideration of that proposition would lead to a richer understanding of the novel. However, slight alterations in this thesis statement may offer improvements or interesting variations. For instance, an emphasis on form could add to the analysis of the content of the novel.

The friendship of Huck and Jim reveals Twain's commentary on the moral dilemma of slavery as revealed through the use of dialogue and interior monologue.

↓

Further refinement might manage to incorporate form, content AND context. Notice that a fully developed thesis — a fully developed analytical proposition — may well require more than one long, run-on sentence.

Mark Twain encourages the reading audience of his day to question the moral dilemma of slavery through his portrayal of the friendship between Huck and Jim. By revealing differing social perspectives and moral positions through the dialogue between the characters and the interior monologues of Huck, Twain allows his readers to have multiple opinions while nudging their sympathies toward a critique of slavery.

The advantage of establishing your thesis before embarking upon outside research is that you are more likely to be focused on the kinds of sources that will be most useful and less likely to be overwhelmed or sidetracked by tangential information. You may want to look up general information, such as confirming historical dates or clarifying the use of certain vocabulary, but entering the process of looking for quality sources without a clear sense of the thesis you intend to place at the center of your analysis may muddle your thinking. Certainly, as you continue your research and draft and revise your essay, your thesis and/or your supporting ideas may shift somewhat. That is a natural part of the writing process, but that kind of adjustment in thinking deepens or refines your analysis. [1]

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6.3.4: Discovering and Documenting Sources

Discovering Sources

Through your institution's library you can gain access to a wide range of academic sources for literature and the humanities. Be sure to search for sources through your library's website. This is important because your ability to access the full range of resources available in the databases depends upon you being recognized as a paying student at the college. Your library can provide detailed advice and tutorials for effectively locating resources for your research topic. Below, we will discuss, very generally, the main types of sources that you will encounter as you begin exploring your topic.

Types of Sources

Researchers may encounter three general types of sources: **primary** , **secondary** and **tertiary** .

Tertiary sources

Sources that collect, summarize, and/or consolidate information from other sources into a more basic format, such as in an almanac or an encyclopedia, are considered tertiary sources. Tertiary sources are useful reference guides, particularly to confirm factual information; however, they often do not satisfy the aims of including "outside sources" in literary research. For example, if a professor asks for "three outside sources" and you want to use the Encyclopedia Britannica as a source on World War II, it would be acceptable to incorporate it as support and document it; however, it probably is not adding much scholarship to your analysis. To put it another way, if it is important to include a tertiary source in your analytical writing, consider that an additional source beyond the minimum number required. An exception to this advice would be if your desired tertiary source is providing collected statistical information (such as socio-economic demographics) that would be difficult to document otherwise. [(1)]

Secondary sources

These sources are published writing that discusses or draws upon material originally presented elsewhere with the benefit of hindsight, include journal articles, criticism, biographies, and textbooks. These sources are especially helpful in constructing an analysis of a particular literary work because they offer insight into established scholarly opinions. One of the goals in incorporating secondary sources into your own analysis is to demonstrate that you are able to place yourself in conversations with intermediate to advanced ideas on a subject.

Primary sources

The selected readings in this course are **primary sources** , for they are original material that may be used as direct evidence in discussing and analyzing a culture and its history. Primary sources include formal documents, such as essays and other published literature, yet may also be less polished writing such as letters and diaries, or more mass produced texts like newspaper advertisements, political pamphlets, and event brochures. Visual artifacts such as paintings, photographs, and other art forms also are considered to be primary sources if they are the original creations. The advantage of a primary source is its direct connection to the time period.

Documenting Sources

All sources must be accurately referenced in analytical writing using a proper **citation** . A citation is a quotation from, or reference to, a book, article, or other source material that is formally documented. Professional organizations such as the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) have developed formal systems to document references when writing. Literary Studies is governed by the **Modern Language Association (MLA)** , a body of professionals including academics from the disciplines of English, Humanities, and Foreign Languages. The vast majority of literary scholarship is written according to MLA Style, the citation guide of the Modern Language Association. (Exceptions might be an article in an education journal that uses APA, for example.) Students always should confirm with their instructors which method of citation is preferred or required for each specific course and write accordingly. Print and online manuals for all major citation guides also are available through your institution's library or writing center. There are a number of MLA guides available online. The exact details and format required varies slightly for each type of source, whether a book, an article, a film, a website, or an online video. **Do not guess** . Use the reference guides available to you — and double-check your work.

Incorporating Quotations

Incorporating a quotation may be accomplished directly through the use of exact phrasing, clearly punctuated with quotation marks and documented, or indirectly through paraphrase. Instances of paraphrase cannot use the original language of the source (or the use of direct quotation would be the better choice), but must be documented as the idea has been borrowed.

Beyond the grammatical and punctuation requirements, the importance of working with quotations is to do more than simply quote a source. To fully develop analysis, explaining the connection of a quotation or reference to your focus, as well as commenting upon it in your own words, is key to demonstrating that your analysis is an example of mature writing. That means do not simply "parachute" a quotation or reference it without introduction. Nor should you dramatically insert an important quotation or reference at the end of one paragraph and assume that is speaks for itself; take the time to explain and develop how it is significant. [(1)]

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6.3.5: Approaches to Literary Analysis

Approaches to Literary Analysis

Since the 1960s, a number of schools or approaches to literary analysis have emerged in the academy. Some of the sources you discover may seem to obviously derive from one of the following traditions. Others may be indirectly influenced by one or more of these approaches:

Formalist

Formalist, or New Critic, analysis prioritizes close reading based solely on the text itself, its language, structure, symbols, and themes, and eschews interpretation based on the influence of outside information (such as personal history of the author, for example).

New Historicist

New Historicist analysis values the particulars of the time period and location in which the author created the text, as well as any influencing circumstances of the author's life.

Psychoanalytic

Psychoanalytic, or psycholinguistic, analysis emphasizes the interpretation of characters' mental and emotional states, narrative point-of-view, the unconscious potency of symbol and imagery, and/or the psychological implications of linguistic pattern, tone, and word usage.

Feminist

Feminist analysis examines the text through the lens of women's experience and may also consider factors in the publishing or critical reception of the work when influenced by gender norms.

Marxist

Marxist analysis addresses the text as a material product of the society from which it emerged, with particular attention to socio-economic issues.

Queer

Queer analysis reads the text with strong consideration of "queer" identity and/or "queering" of characters, actions, and/or speech; for example, the cross-dressing and gender switching that occurs in some of Shakespeare's plays can take on more significance than mere dramatic convention.

Reader-Response

Reader-Response analysis seeks to reveal the activity of the reader as contributing to — even completing — the meaning of the text by applying his or her own experiences, perspectives and cultural values; this approach is not done personally, but in consideration of "the reader" as a type or a social category.

Today, many literary scholars engage in the practice of **intersectionality** , that is the attention to the complexity of how cultural views and traditions often fall into more than one category. For example, while we might gain a great deal by interpreting a short story through a psychoanalytic lens, focusing only on this approach may foreclose the possibilities for our analysis to become as deeply grounded in formalist analysis, or may offer only a passing look at historical issues.

Analytical writers should not base their essays on a particular approach simply for the sake of following that school of thought, but rather to further their understanding of, and appreciation for, the literature in question, as well as the clarity of the interpretation offered. Often hybrid approaches, approaches than combine aspects of two or more of these analytical traditions, are very successful, so long as the thesis remains focused and the support specific and well-documented. As ever, consult with your professor about the specifics of your analytical project and the particular expectations he or she may have for a given assignment. (1)

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