Literary Criticism Mini-Research Project

As a class, we have spent time learning about and applying historical criticism theory to our reading of The Power of One. We have also spent time applying analysis techniques (connotation, attitudes, shifts, theme, etc.) to Middle Eastern poetry. To help us prepare for an in-depth reading of In Beautiful Disguises, we will spend a significant amount of time researching five other literary criticism theories.

TASK

Your overall goal is to understand basic literary theory and criticism. As you complete this assignment, you should become more familiar with ***how*** and ***why*** literary criticism is used.

You will be working in small groups to explore different types of literary theory. Each group will be responsible for one particular type of literary criticism. Using the information gathered through research, each group will put together a PowerPoint presentation about their particular branch of literary criticism theory.

This project will help us gain a basic understanding of the following literary criticism theories:

- archetype
- formalism
- psychoanalytic
- feminist
- reader response

To help you in your exploration of literary criticism theory, you will need to accomplish the following five steps:

Step 1: Read about the basic foundations of literary criticism

Step 2: Look up definitions for 10 literary terms related to literary criticism.

Step 3: Work in small groups to explore in depth one particular form of literary criticism.

Step 4: Each small group will create a 5-6 slide PowerPoint presentation to explain your group's assigned literary theory.

Step 5: Prepare a Works Cited list to turn in

PROCESS

In order to successfully complete this research project, you will access a number of different online resources to help you uncover information about literary criticism. As you will be working in small groups, it will be important for each group member to **share equal responsibility** in the success of the group.

It will be important for you to read directions carefully. Additionally, you may want to print out copies of the articles to refer back to as you complete your project.

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1: Read about basic foundations of literary criticism (attached). Each member of your group will need to read through and gloss it.

Step 2: Look up definitions for the following 10 vocabulary words related to literary criticism. Each group member must have all definitions.

Cannon
Dystopian Novel
Hyperbole
Novella
Paradox

Persona
Rhetoric
Style
Utopian Novel
Versimilitude

*You may use the web site listed below to begin looking up the definitions

Glossary of Lit. Terms - *www.virtualsalt.com/litterms.htm*

Step 3: Work in small groups to explore in depth your assigned form of literary criticism.

Research:

- When it was "invented" or "born"
- Who is known as its founder
- General definition of the theory
- Why it is used
- What it focuses on
- What are the key questions it asks of a text
- What kinds of texts it is used for
- The pro and cons of applying it to literature (What are the advantages/disadvantages to using your particular literary criticism theory?)
- Find an example of a (short) text as well as the literary criticism applied to it.

Step 4: Design a 5-6 slide PowerPoint presentation to explain your group's assigned literary criticism theory. Your PowerPoint should address the focus questions in step 3.

Step 5: Put together a Works Cited list of all resources used.

PowerPoint presentations are due on: _____

Remember, literary criticism helps readers to look more closely at particular details within a piece of literature. Using different forms of literary criticism helps us to understand a text from multiple perspectives and on a number of different levels.

What unique perspective do you bring to a text?
What form of literary criticism do you find yourself using most?

On Interpretation

A Proposal About "Reading"

Home

On Interpretation-A Proposal

There are no hidden meanings. If such things as hidden meanings can be s to exist,
they are hidden by readers' habits and prejudices (by readers' assumptions what
they read should tell them what they already know), or by readers' timidity passivity (by their unwillingness to take the responsibility to speak their m and
say what they notice). David Bartholomae

I don't think I agree.

To "interpret" something means that we make sense of something. The second we ask "What does it mean?" or the moment we try to "understand' something we experience, we are in the realm of interpretation. We order i group it,
and ultimately try to relate it to what we already know in an effort to integ it
(texts that refuse to be integrated within our frame of reference remain "to difficult"
or "not understandable"). We don't "discover" meaning as much as we "construct"
meaning, for the reader is the one who makes the connections. On the othe hand,
the author provides a kind of "field" or parameters that the reader works w so the
text can't just signify "anything." Compare a story to the night sky. The configuration
of stars is preset, awaiting a reader, but the reader makes the connections t create
meaningful constellations. As Robert Scholes points out, "the major functi of
interpretation is to say what a previous text has left unsaid: to unravel its complications, to make explicit its implications, to raise its concrete and specific
details to a more abstract and general level." In other words, when we read story

I don't like doing that either

about two kids in a forest who meet a lady who wants to eat them, we mak
sense
of that story by interpreting it. We say it is a story about poverty, justice, g
feudal society, hope and victory, childhood anxieties, or abuse, etc.
Remember that interpretation is not a matter of just thinking hard or thinki
well. It's not really a matter of "digging deeper" or "dissecting" either. Inst
interpretation relies on a methodology, lens, perspective, frame of referenc
principles of classification, or interpretive framework, which allow us to se
different
aspects of what we are studying. By "methodology" or "lens" I mean the w
we
gather materials, what we "count" as evidence (what we see as relevant or
important), and how we talk about what we see. In brief, a method is defin
by our
goals and the questions we ask.
Questions which share a similar interest or concern can be grouped and
given a name. School subjects are not only divided up in terms of subject-v
we
look at-but also in terms of "relevant" questions. For example, "sex" may b
common topic in all disciplines, but an historian, scientist, literary critic,
psychologist,
mathematician, sociologist, theologian, etc. would not ask the same questi
and as
a result, they would come up with different conclusions. They would also u
different terms to describe what they see. Importantly, the kind of
interpretation we
come up with depends on the type of questions we ask. Again, it's helpful t
see
these different ways of talking about a subject in terms of different lenses,
each
lens lets us see something that another lens is blind to. To go back to
Bartholomae's
assertion, meaning is "hidden" only because the lens we use often makes u
blind to a
meaning, for the "meaning" may be absolutely obvious to another reader w
another
lens.
Questions which share a set of interests or concerns are often given labels.
i.e. historical, scientific, empirical, etc. but also terms like formalist, Freud
Marxist, feminist, Christian, etc. While this class will not insist on one met
we
will tend to use lenses which highlight relations of gender, class, race, and
ideology.
What is important for you to keep in mind is that there is not just one appr
which is the best. Please recognize that each approach offers insights and b
spots; there are gains and limitations to each set of questions and concerns.
Furthermore, it is not simply a matter of "switching lenses." The lens we a
most
used to tends to color the one we are attempting to use.
Finally, many will say that we interpret too much or that we "read too muc
into" a story, a movie, or TV program, but even that statement is a kind of

interpretation, perhaps a lousy one. Put another way, we are always interpreting/reading everything around us, even if we say, "Oh, that's just a cartoon. It doesn't mean anything!" Most of the time we are blind to our own methodology or way of seeing because it seems so "natural," "commonsensical," or "norma Just because we are used to a way of seeing, just because our own perspective seems normal or natural, does not mean that we are not using a specific kind of "lens." It just means that we are unwilling to admit it. Thus, when someone says, "You're reading too much into it," what they are really saying is, "I don't like the le you're looking through. Or, I don't like your perspective or vantage point. Or, I dc like what your lens reveals because it disturbs me or threatens my way of seein

Correct, but should all stories be looked into this way? There seems no need to do such things,

"Feminist criticism"

Definition:
Feminist criticism is a type of literary criticism, which may study and advocate the rights of women. Using feminist criticism to analyze fiction may involve studying the repression of women in fiction. How do men and women differ? What is different about female heroines, and why are these characters important in literary history? In addition to many of the questions raised by a study of women in literature, feminist criticism may study stereotypes, creativity, ideology, racial issues, marginality, and more.
Feminist criticism may also involve reevaluating women writers--following the lead of Virginia Woolf in "A Room of One's Own."

http://classiclit.about.com/od/literaryterms/g/aa_feminist.htm

5 December 2006 Jeff

Esther Lombardi

Plaz slide 2

Example:

Showalter's three stages of feminine, feminist, and female are identifiable in the life of Cleófilas in Sandra Cisneros's "Woman Hollering Creek."

Cleófilas begins to internalize the paternalistic values of the society in which she lives at least as early as the ice house scene. She "accompanies her husband," as is expected of her (48). Since women should be seen and not heard in a paternalistic society, she "sits mute beside their conversation" (48). She goes through all of the motions that are expected of her, laughing "at the appropriate moments" (48). She submits, if unhappily, to the rule of her husband, "this man, this father, this rival, this keeper, this lord, this master, this husband till kingdom come" (49).

Yet Cleófilas gradually begins to emerge from the feminine stage into the feminist stage, where she begins to revolt and advocate for her own rights. It begins with "[a] doubt. Slender as a hair" (50). When she returns from the hospital with her new son, something seems different. "No. Her imagination. The house was the same as always. Nothing" (50). This is true because the house is not different; it is Cleófilas who has begun to change. Perhaps giving birth to a child has made her aware of the power and importance women possess. She begins to think of returning home, but is not ready for the possibility yet. It would be "a disgrace" (50). She begins to internally protest against the society, thinking about the town "with its silly pride for a bronze pecan" and the fact that there is "nothing, nothing, nothing of interest" (50). The patriarchal society, with its ice house, city hall, liquor stores, and bail bonds is of no interest to her. She is upset that the town is built so that "you have to depend on husbands" (51). Though her husband says she is "exaggerating," she seems to be becoming convinced that her society is a bad one, where men kill their wives with impunity. "It seemed the newspapers were full of such stories. This woman found on the side of the interstate. This one pushed from a moving car . . ." (52). Although she does nothing when he throws a book at her, Cleófilas does (if only meekly) insist that he take her to the doctor. And there she solidifies her internal rebellion with actions: she leaves her husband with Felice to return to Mexico.

Felice is actually more representative of the third, female, stage than Cleófilas, but the fact that Cleófilas enjoys her company suggests that when she returns to Mexico, she *may* seek to enter that third stage herself. Felice is not phalocentric--she is not interested in revolting against men, she simply does not need them. She doesn't have a husband and she owns her own car. "The pickup was hers. She herself had chosen it. She herself was paying for it" (55). Felice

is most likely a part of a community of women; she is certainly friends with the nurse Graciela. Cleófilas is attracted to Felice, who "was like no woman she'd ever met" (55). At home, in Mexico, Cleófilas recounts the story of Felice's yelling when they crossed the creek. "Just like that. Who would've thought?" (56). Cleófilas seems to have enjoyed her company and has kept the experience in her mind. Felice's laughter, "gurgling out of her own throat, a long ribbon of laughter, like water" suggests that Felice had completed the self-discovery stage. (Water is often symbolic of rebirth.) Cleófilas has witnessed the third stage in Felice, and it is up to her whether she will enter it or regress to the feminine stage and internalize the paternalistic values of her father and brothers with whom she is now living.

http://www.literatureclassics.com/ancientpaths/litcrit.html#feminist

Feminist Approach

Definition:

Feminist criticism is concerned with the impact of gender on writing and reading. It usually begins with a critique of patriarchal culture. It is concerned with the place of female writers in the cannon. Finally, it includes a search for a feminine theory or approach to texts. Feminist criticism is political and often revisionist. Feminists often argue that male fears are portrayed through female characters. They may argue that gender determines everything, or just the opposite: that all gender differences are imposed by society, and gender determines nothing.

Elaine Showalter's Theory:

In A Literature of Their Own, Elaine Showalter argued that literary subcultures all go through three major phases of development. For literature by or about women, she labels these stages the Feminine, Feminist, and Female:

(1) **Feminine** Stage - involves "*imitation* of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition" and "*internalization* of its standards."
(2) **Feminist** Stage - involves "*protest* against these standards and values and *advocacy* of minority rights...."
(3) **Female** Stage - this is the "phase of *self-discovery*, a turning inwards freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity."

wollenstone craft ? inventer

Practitioners:

Ellen Mores, Sandra Gilbert, Elaine Showalter, Nina Baym, etc.

? born 1941 ??

Advantages:

Women have been somewhat underrepresented in the traditional cannon, and a feminist approach to literature redresses this problem.

Disadvantages:

Feminist turn literary criticism into a political battlefield and overlook the merits of works they consider "patriarchal." When arguing for a distinct feminine writing style, they tend to relegate women's literature to a ghetto status; this in turn prevents female literature from being naturally included in the literary cannon. The feminist approach is often too theoretical.

Feminist literary criticism is literary criticism informed by feminist theory, or by the politics of feminism more broadly. Its history has been broad and varied, from classic works of nineteenth-century women authors such as George Eliot and Margaret Fuller to cutting-edge theoretical work in women's studies and gender studies by "third-wave" authors. In the most general and simple terms, feminist literary criticism before the 1970s -- in the first and second waves of feminism -- was concerned with the politics of women's authorship and the representation of women's condition within literature. Since the arrival of more complex conceptions of gender and subjectivity and third-wave feminism, feminist literary criticism has taken a variety of new routes. It has considered gender in the terms of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, as part of the deconstruction of existing relations of power, and as a concrete political investment. It has been closely associated with the birth and growth of queer studies. And the more traditionally central feminist concern with the representation and politics of women's lives has continued to play an active role in criticism.

Literary criticism is the study, discussion, evaluation, and interpretation of literature. Modern literary criticism is often informed by literary theory, which is the philosophical discussion of its methods and goals. Though the two activities are closely related, literary critics are not always, and have not always been, theorists.

Whether or not literary criticism should be considered a separate field of inquiry from literary theory, or conversely from book reviewing, is a matter of some controversy. For example, the *Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* draws no distinction between literary theory and literary criticism, and almost always uses them together to describe the same concept. Some critics consider literary criticism a practical application of literary theory, as criticism always deals directly with a literary work, albeit from a theoretical point of view.

wikipedia - Jeff

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Dancing in chairs: Feminist satire in Pride & Prejudice

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Electronic Database Examples

Article from On-Line Computer Service (Also in Print)

Williams, Vanessa. "D.C. Votes to Limit Teenage Drivers: Council Sets 18 as Minimum Age for Full License." Washington Post 3 Nov. 1999, final ed.: A1. National Newspapers. ProQuest. Gateway Technical College, Elkhorn Campus Library. 12 Nov. 1999 <http://proquest.umi.com/pdqweb>.

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Dancing in Chains: Feminist Satire in *Pride and Prejudice* *By Judith Wylie*

Satire has long been considered the province of the male writer, and women, especially the older, outspoken ones, have been the target of the male satirist's venom. Aspiring female writers such as Jane Austen, hopeful of earning a place as an Augustan wit, knew their open criticism of the establishment would not lead to long or successful literary careers. Yet Austen wished to break from the restrictive confines of the sentimental novel, the literary form deemed sufficient to hold the imaginative and creative skills of a proper woman writer. For years she played the literary wallflower, hesitant to express her feminist views. She recognized that if she were to dance without injury at this particular ball, she had to execute each step with perfect timing and precision. As a successful comic novelist, Austen found that she could dance exquisitely though wearing chains forged by the conservative literary establishment. She rarely misstepped, although under her breath she was whistling her own tune.

By writing comedy Austen was trespassing on male literary territory, but she did win accolades from the literary establishment, in part for following the masculine lead and ridiculing the follies of the feminine sex. However, in the tradition of the satiric trickster, Austen turns her comedic message inside out, by interpolating within the seemingly conservative tenor of her novels a satiric feminist subtext quite at odds with the surface conventionality, a strategy that Susan Fraiman calls "counternarrative." This dialogic style allows women writers to "argue in the same track as men" through their depiction of the "ideal" female but also to present "dissident tracks" (31) that undercut this patriarchal icon of feminine behavior. These "dissident tracks" are often traversed by a minor female character whose words and behavior are criticized while the heroine, conforming to the romantic narrative direction of the text, is held up as the untarnished role model.

In *Pride and Prejudice,* the "dissident track" is cut by a truth-telling female monster, Mrs. Bennet, who is employed to question masculine prerogatives. On the surface, Mrs. Bennet seems to be the perfect subject for ridicule because she appears to be truly silly and mindless. The author's veiled feminist message is revealed only when the reader looks past the humor aimed at women and then asks why a character such as Mrs. Bennet acts as she does. In the words of Mikhail Bakhtin,

Stupidity (incomprehension) in the novel is always polemical: it interacts dialogically with an intelligence (a lofty pseudo intelligence) with which it polemicizes and whose mask it tears away....[A]t its heart always lies a polemical failure to understand someone else's discourse, someone else's pathos-charged lie that has appropriated the world and aspires to conceptualize it, a polemical failure to understand generally accepted, canonized, inveterately false languages with their lofty labels for things and events.(403)

The overt lesson of Austen's satire is that male supremacy is no joke but rather a force to be reckoned with, and to survive, a female must gain masculine approval and protection. Her third-person "objective" narrator appears to be in perfect agreement with the patriarchal mandate that anything that is beneficial to men must, therefore, benefit women. However, the perceptive reader must ask if this conventional stance is reliable or just another satirical trick. If we remove the mask from the narrator, we find Austen, herself an unruly older female, compelling the reader to question the veracity of the heroine's fairy tale ending, to study instead the example of Mrs. Bennet for the truth of the feminine condition.

Early in the novel, Mrs. Bennet cries out to her husband, "'Ah! you do not know what I suffer'" (5). These words seem to emanate from the imaginary sufferings of an over-privileged female, and our sympathies go out to her much beleaguered mate rather than to the complainant. The literal truth of her words only begin to resonate when we witness her husband's callous attitude toward both his wife's and daughters' precarious economic futures. Mrs. Bennet's attempts to win some sympathy from her husband for herself and their daughters only serve to make her appear in her husband's eyes to be stupid regarding the workings of the world: "'I do think it is the hardest thing in the world, that your estate be entailed away from your own children; and I am sure if I had been you, I should have tried long ago to do something or other about it'" (61-62). Mr. Bennet's privileged position makes it unthinkable for him to identify with the vulnerability of his feminine family members or call into question the sexist system created by the patriarchy in order to protect its own. On the other hand, because of legal and social discrimination, Mrs. Bennet is powerless to do other than suffer and complain and then contend with being construed as "irrational." But to be "rational" in response to her dire situation is to approve masculine entitlement at the cost of feminine disenfranchisement; thus, Mrs. Bennet's irrationality functions subversively as a protest against the system that strives to contain her and all women.

Even as we laugh at Mrs. Bennet, we must admit that her distress and paranoia are far from groundless. She is quite aware that upon her husband's death, the legal custom of the entail decrees that she and her children will be made "destitute" because she has failed to produce a son and heir. The loss of home and position looms over her and is ultimately humorous only to those who are themselves in a place of security: men. All of what is left of Mrs. Bennet's life's happiness, home and station, is overshadowed by the threat of the entail. This threat is more than the loss of husband, material wealth, and position in society but includes personal humiliation as well. It is the severest form of torture to Mrs. Bennet that a neighbor's daughter will usurp her present position: "'*I* should be forced to make way for *her*, and live to see her take my place in it!'" (130).

As usual Austen uses humor in presenting the long arm of the patriarchy as it reaches from the past to decide the fate of those in the future. Mrs. Bennet refuses to comprehend the entail. "Jane and Elizabeth attempted to explain to her the nature of an entail. They had often attempted it before, but it was a subject on which Mrs. Bennet was beyond the reach of reason..." (62). This seemingly objective authorial comment invites the reader to question the very concept of "reason." Clearly, what society defines as reasonable and rational is that which benefits the patriarchy. Female concerns for their own welfare, which do not happen to coincide with the attainment of a masculine good, are determined to be the product of an irrational, illiberal, thereby, feminine mind. Underneath the humor of the silly old lady's refusal to understand a logical construct lurks the unasked question: Is it that Mrs. Bennet is incapable of understanding the intricacies of the entail or that she will not accept a legal tradition that inflicts such suffering on the female gender just to insure masculine financial security? Such a system is hardly "rational" from where Mrs. Bennet sits.

Since it would be "unreasonable" verging on madness for Mrs. Bennet to condemn the patriarchy for its cruel laws, she can only link the entail to all the unfathomable workings of the universe. She says to Mr. Collins, "'such things I know are all chance in this world. There is no knowing how estates will go when once they come to be entailed'" (65). Simpleminded as she again sounds, Mrs. Bennet is speaking the truth from a feminine perspective. For men, the entail has a

purpose quite the opposite of the one worrying Mrs. Bennet. Entails eliminate all chance from inheritance: the oldest male child in the family will inherit and through him the future of the male line will be insured. It is only women, whose fates are immaterial to the continuance of the patriarchy, who are ruled by chance. Mrs. Bennet searches for the rationale of an entail but cannot reach any conclusion that could exist within a moral social and legal code. Her question to her husband, "'How any one could have the conscience to entail away an estate from one's own daughters I cannot understand...'" (130), is a serious one for Jane Austen, who herself was given no financial consideration upon her father's death, and at the heart of the problem for Mrs. Bennet. The cruel answer is impossible for Austen to write in her humorous depiction of the courtship rites of the gentry. Mr. Bennet's glib reply, "'I leave it to yourself to determine'" (130), is presented for Mrs. Bennet as well as the reader to consider.

For Mr. Bennet, of course, there is no problem--he will abide comfortably on his ancestral estate until he dies. A seemingly generous man, he and his family live well, spending every bit of his £2000 a year. Never has he considered that he should provide for the future of his family of females as that would mean pinching his comforts in the present. The truth regarding this man's unvoiced feelings and of the patriarchy in general is revealed in the clipped comments of Lady Catherine De Bourgh: "'Daughters are never of so much consequence to a father'" (211). Mr. Bennet values his daughters for their inadvertent talents to amuse him with their absurdities; he never exerts himself to train or even admonish his children but is content "with laughing at them" (213). After Lydia runs away with Wickham, Austen depicts Mr. Bennet's self-recriminations for his parental neglect in that he has no savings with which to bail out the family from the embarrassing situation. His suffering is rapidly reduced, however, when he is informed that Mr. Darcy, not his brother-in-law Gardner, is the source of the bribe money that persuaded Wickham to marry Lydia. Once again unfettered from financial concerns, Mr. Bennet withdraws into his study to enjoy the "comic" show played out by his family.

next page!

As antithetical as marriage can be for women, Mrs. Bennet must raise her daughters to be ornamental, ladylike, dependent wives of gentlemen in order to secure a position in society, temporary as it may come to be. The virtually dowerless Bennet girls, ignorant of the basics of cooking and housekeeping, expect to attract a man of wealth and prestige with only their looks and charm as bait. The Bennet girls' future is dependent on the chance that each will attract a wealthy gentleman, who against his own financial interests, will propose marriage. In addition, they hope that this selfless paragon comes from such a family as the De Bourghs, who saw "'no occasion for entailing estates from the female line'" (164).

Since there is no alternative for the Bennet daughters but to continue in their fairy tale beliefs, they each enthusiastically enter the social fray with the hope of attracting a marriage proposal from her own special Prince Charming. Austen repeatedly undercuts this romantic illusion through the depiction of the Bennet marriage. The narrator comments, "Had Elizabeth's opinion been all drawn from her own family, she could not have formed a very pleasing picture of conjugal felicity or domestic comfort" and proceeds to place the blame on the "weak understanding and illiberal mind" (236) of Mrs. Bennet. The narrator elicits the reader's sympathy for Mr. Bennet's misfortune in being saddled with such a woman, suggesting that "true philosopher" that he is, he makes the best of a bad situation. "To his wife [Mr. Bennet] was very little otherwise indebted, that as her ignorance and folly had contributed to his amusement" (236). Although the narrator

dryly observes that Mr. Bennet's amusement at his wife's ignorance "is not the sort of happiness which a man would in general wish to owe to his wife" (236), she withholds comment regarding how a woman would feel in response to this sort of attitude. Instead, Austen's depiction of a desperate woman with shifting opinions and moral stances causes us to question the very system that has produced this creature.

The degree to which Mrs. Bennet suffers on the subject of her daughters and marriage is especially well displayed at the time of Lydia's elopement. Being powerless to act, to force Wickham to marry Lydia, her only recourse is to retreat into her room and fall into hysteria when she thinks about the future. Austen effectively depicts the no-win trap that imprisons women such as Mrs. Bennet: she both desires that her husband fight Wickham and make him marry Lydia and dreads that in so doing he will be killed and "'what is to become of us all? The Collinses will turn us out, before he is cold in his grave.'" Although her daughters and brother "exclaimed against such terrific ideas" (287), in her "irrational" hysteria, Mrs. Bennet actually sees the tenuousness of the family's situation more clearly than anyone else.

Mrs. Bennet's joy when the news arrives of the impending marriage is not tempered by any reservations regarding Lydia's immoral behavior during the last few weeks. Her joyous response to the shotgun marriage at first seems to be another example of her shallowness. However, she is not viewing marriage from the patriarchal perspective, whose legal and moral dictates have just been trampled on by the thoughtless Lydia. Mrs. Bennet knows at her deepest level that the promises a man makes before a marriage ceremony can be easily broken. She sees marriage as a necessary surrender for a woman who must barter herself for as much in the way of material goods as she can get: marriage is sanctioned not by law and the church but in the buying of new clothes.

Mrs. Bennet found, with amazement and horror, that her husband would not advance a guinea to buy clothes for his daughter....That his anger could be carried to such a point of inconceivable resentment, as to refuse his daughter a privilege, without which her marriage would scarcely seem valid, exceeded all that she could believe possible. She was more alive to the disgrace, which the want of new clothes must reflect on her daughter's nuptials, than to any sense of shame at her eloping and living with Wickham, a fortnight before they took place.(310-311)

Here Austen most clearly depicts Mrs. Bennet's estrangement from the patriarchal view. She feels no shame that her daughter has flouted the legal and moral imperatives of the patriarchy because she herself has never really acknowledged the validity of its dictates. Her sense of shame is evoked by her husband's cruel and unnatural disowning of his child. This denial of affection she finds incomprehensible although her husband's family has long made it a practice in the form of an entail.

In *Pride and Prejudice* we see the power of comedy to educate. Austen co-opts the male satirist's favorite punching bag, the older female, and turns her from the passive recipient of abuse to a powerful weapon directed against the very masculine stronghold that has made her monstrous. Rather than angrily decrying the hollowness of life for a woman of the leisure class, Austen instead vividly depicts her and the trap she is in. "The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news" (5). Austen demonstrates through Mrs. Bennet how women's lives were often deliberately left so empty that there was nothing else for them to aspire

to except marriage, and even worse, nothing else for them to think about. Through the fate of the older Mrs. Bennet, Austen demonstrates that the image of the beautiful, artless heroine cannot hold and the safe, respected position achieved in youth may prove equally ephemeral.

Jane Austen dances on at the literary ball wearing her fetters and "good girl" mask. But if we are not "dull elves" but rather readers of "a great deal of ingenuity" *(Letters* 29 January 1813), we will observe that over her partners' shoulders this trickster impishly winks at her readers, a wink that across two centuries silently asks the question: "Have you figured out yet who the joke is really on?"

Warren Hedges, Southern Oregon University

Rough *Overview of Critical Theories in the US*

Highly Influential Paradigms

*ca*1945 <--- Formalism---->*ca*1965	<----- Deep Structure Models -----> (*Structuralism proper exemplifies these trends*)	*ca*1980 <---- Post Structuralism ----> ?
Explicate the Formal Properties of the Text. Politics, author's life, etc. secondary. There is a limited number of great texts (canon). Great literature expresses "universal" themes.	Uncover the "deep structure" beneath the text. Look for parallels with other texts & cultures. Relationship between parts of the structure more important than elements of the structure.	Demonstrate how oppositions that deep structures depend on break down (deconstruction). Texts are infinitely interpretable in theory, though not in practice (politics).

Critical Approaches that Displace New Criticism & Become More Complex

1960 <------ 2nd Wave Feminist Criticism -----> late 70s	early 80s <---------3rd? Wave & Other Feminisms --------> ?
Maintained that "the personal is political" & traditional criticism ignored women readers & the way women were portrayed in literature from a male-centered viewpoint. Sought to recover neglected women authors of the past and value female experience. Sometimes posited a "universal sisterhood" or uniquely female experience. Sometimes viewed lesbians as the most "women-centered" writers and activists, but not all lesbians were happy with this notion.	Grows out of 2nd wave feminism's internal critique and complicates its earlier assumptions by examining differences between women, including issues of race, age, and sexuality. Many recent approaches modify other interpretive traditions (materialist, psychoanalysis, French theories about language). **Gender Studies** Draws on feminist scholarship but also discusses men and masculinity in historically specific ways. **Queer Theory** Takes practices like drag and butch/femme as an occasion to theorize about how representation "consolidates" or "disrupts" identity and how political dilemmas are simultaneously representational dilemmas.

1960 <------ Afro-American Criticism ------>	Recent Afro-American Criticism
Closely connected with Civil Rights & Black Art movements. Tried to define what was unique about Afro-American experience and art. Initially some critics took black male experience and identity to be the most authentic form of resistance to oppression. Many other culturally marginalized groups model their criticism and activism on Afro-American efforts. Sought to theorize about African-American literature in a global context. Interested in identifying & recovering African roots of much Afro-American literature & culture.	Shift from discussing race as an identity to examining race as a cultural construct. Maintains its political commitments, but moves toward coalition models (people of color). Incorporates feminist critiques of earlier work that stressed male experience. **Ethnic Studies** Examines literature from groups traditionally seen as "marginal" to US culture (Native, Asian, & Latino Americans). Also examines literature of groups that became provisionally accepted (Jewish, Italian) and/or moved from being perceived as ethnic to white (Irish, Scottish). **Post Colonial Criticism** Examines literature from areas that were formally colonized and that is often written in the language of the colonizers.

Pros and cons

P	C
~~result~~ - different point of view of txt - different cultural view	- possible insulting someone - women not viewed very highly so - feminist criticism is frowned upon.

.:VirtualSalt

A Glossary of Literary Terms

Robert Harris
Version Date: January 4, 2002

To find a particular term, use your browser's Find command (on the Edit menu in Netscape, for example). Note: Terms already in the Handbook of Rhetorical Devices have been deleted from this file.

Adventure novel. A novel where exciting events are more important than character development and sometimes theme. Examples:

- H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*
- Baroness Orczy, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*
- Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers*
- Alexandre Dumas, *The Count of Monte Cristo*

Allegory. A figurative work in which a surface narrative carries a secondary, symbolic or metaphorical meaning. In *The Faerie Queene*, for example, Red Cross Knight is a heroic knight in the literal narrative, but also a figure representing Everyman in the Christian journey. Many works contain allegories or are allegorical in part, but not many are entirely allegorical. A good example of a fully allegorical work is

- Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*

Apologue. A moral fable, usually featuring personified animals or inanimate objects which act like people to allow the author to comment on the human condition. Often, the apologue highlights the irrationality of mankind. The beast fable, and the fables of Aesop are examples. Some critics have called Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* an apologue rather than a novel because it is more concerned with moral philosophy than with character or plot. Examples:

- George Orwell, *Animal Farm*
- Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Book*

Autobiographical novel. A novel based on the author's life experience. Many novelists include in their books people and events from their own lives because remembrance is easier than creation from scratch. Examples:

- James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
- Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel*

Blank Verse. Unrhymed iambic pentameter.

Burlesque. A work designed to ridicule a style, literary form, or subject matter either by treating the exalted in a trivial way or by discussing the trivial in exalted terms (that is, with mock dignity). Burlesque concentrates on derisive imitation, usually in exaggerated terms. Literary genres (like the tragic drama) can be burlesqued, as can styles of sculpture, philosophical movements, schools of art, and so forth. See **Parody, Travesty**.

Caesura. A pause, metrical or rhetorical, occurring somewhere in a line of poetry. The pause may or may not be typographically indicated.

Canon. In relation to literature, this term is half-seriously applied to those works generally accepted as the great ones. A battle is now being fought to change or throw out the canon for three reasons. First, the list of great books is thoroughly dominated by DWEM's (dead, white, European males), and the accusation is that women and minorities and non-Western cultural writers have been ignored. Second, there is pressure in the literary community to throw out all standards as the nihilism of the late 20th century makes itself felt in the literature departments of the universities. Scholars and professors want to choose the books they like or which reflect their own ideas, without worrying about canonicity. Third, the canon has always been determined at least in part by political considerations and personal philosophical biases. Books are much more likely to be called "great" if they reflect the philosophical ideas of the critic.

Children's novel. A novel written for children and discerned by one or more of these: (1) a child character or a character a child can identify with, (2) a theme or themes (often didactic) aimed at children, (3) vocabulary and sentence structure available to a young reader. Many "adult" novels, such as *Gulliver's Travels,* are read by children. The test is that the book be interesting to and--at some level--accessible by children. Examples:

- Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer*
- L. M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*

Christian novel. A novel either explicitly or implicitly informed by Christian faith and often containing a plot revolving around the Christian life, evangelism, or conversion stories. Sometimes the plots are directly religious, and sometimes they are allegorical or symbolic. Traditionally, most Christian novels have been viewed as having less literary quality than the "great" novels of Western literature. Examples:

- Charles Sheldon, *In His Steps*
- Lloyd C. Douglas, *The Robe*
- Henryk Sienkiewicz, *Quo Vadis*
- Par Lagerkvist, *Barabbas*
- Catherine Marshall, *Christy*
- C. S. Lewis, *Perelandra*
- G. K. Chesterton, *The Man Who was Thursday*
- Bodie Thoene, *In My Father's House*

Coming-of-age story. A type of novel where the protagonist is initiated into adulthood through knowledge, experience, or both, often by a process of disillusionment. Understanding comes after the dropping of preconceptions, a destruction of a false sense of security, or in some way the loss of innocence. Some of the shifts that take place are these:

- ignorance to knowledge
- innocence to experience
- false view of world to correct view
- idealism to realism
- immature responses to mature responses

Example:

- Jane Austen *Northanger Abbey*

Conceit. An elaborate, usually intellectually ingenious poetic comparison or image, such as an analogy or metaphor in which, say a beloved is compared to a ship, planet, etc. The comparison may be brief or extended. See **Petrarchan Conceit**. (Conceit is an old word for concept.) See John Donne's "Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," for example: "Let man's soul be a sphere, and then, in this, / The Intelligence that moves, devotion is."

Detective novel. A novel focusing on the solving of a crime, often by a brilliant detective, and usually employing the elements of mystery and suspense. Examples:

- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*
- Agatha Christie, *Murder on the Orient Express*
- Dorothy Sayers, *Strong Poison*

Dystopian novel. An anti-utopian novel where, instead of a paradise, everything has gone wrong in the attempt to create a perfect society. See *utopian novel.* Examples:

- George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
- Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

End-stopped. A line that has a natural pause at the end (period, comma, etc.). For example, these lines are end stopped:

> My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun.
> Coral is far more red than her lips red. --Shakespeare

Enjambed. The running over of a sentence or thought into the next couplet or line without a pause at the end of the line; a run-on line. For example, the first two lines here are enjambed:

> Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments. Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds
> Or bends with the remover to remove. . . . --Shakespeare

Epic. An extended narrative poem recounting actions, travels, adventures, and heroic episodes and written in a high style (with ennobled diction, for example). It may be written in hexameter verse, especially dactylic hexameter, and it may have twelve books or twenty four books. Characteristics of the classical epic include these:

- The main character or protagonist is heroically larger than life, often the source and subject of legend or a national hero
- The deeds of the hero are presented without favoritism, revealing his failings as well as his virtues
- The action, often in battle, reveals the more-than-human strength of the heroes as they engage in acts of heroism and courage
- The setting covers several nations, the whole world, or even the universe
- The episodes, even though they may be fictional, provide an explanation for some of the circumstances or events in the history of a nation or people
- The gods and lesser divinities play an active role in the outcome of actions
- All of the various adventures form an organic whole, where each event relates in some way to the central theme

Typical in epics is a set of conventions (or epic machinery). Among them are these:

- Poem begins with a statement of the theme ("Arms and the man I sing")
- Invocation to the muse or other deity ("Sing, goddess, of the wrath of Achilles")
- Story begins *in medias res* (in the middle of things)
- Catalogs (of participants on each side, ships, sacrifices)
- Histories and descriptions of significant items (who made a sword or shield, how it was decorated, who owned it from generation to generation)
- Epic simile (a long simile where the image becomes an object of art in its own right as well as serving to clarify the subject).
- Frequent use of epithets ("Aeneas the true"; "rosy-fingered Dawn"; "tall-masted ship")
- Use of patronymics (calling son by father's name): "Anchises' son"
- Long, formal speeches by important characters
- Journey to the underworld
- Use of the number three (attempts are made three times, etc.)
- Previous episodes in the story are later recounted

Examples:

- Homer, *Iliad*
- Homer, *Odyssey*
- Virgil, *Aeneid*
- Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*
- Milton, *Paradise Lost*

Epistolary novel. A novel consisting of letters written by a character or several characters. The form allows for the use of multiple points of view toward the story and the ability to dispense with an omniscient narrator. Examples:

- Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*
- Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa*
- Fanny Burney, *Evelina*
- C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*
- Hannah W. Foster, *The Coquette*

Euphemism. The substitution of a mild or less negative word or phrase for a harsh or blunt one, as in the use of "pass away" instead of "die." The basic psychology of euphemistic language is the desire to put something bad or embarrassing in a positive (or at least neutral light). Thus many terms referring to death, sex, crime, and excremental functions are euphemisms. Since the euphemism is often chosen to disguise something horrifying, it can be exploited by the satirist through the use of irony and exaggeration.

Euphuism. A highly ornate style of writing popularized by John Lyly's *Euphues*, characterized by balanced sentence construction, rhetorical tropes, and multiplied similes and allusions.

Existentialist novel. A novel written from an existentialist viewpoint, often pointing out the absurdity and meaninglessness of existence. Example:

- Albert Camus, *The Stranger*

Fantasy novel. Any novel that is disengaged from reality. Often such novels are set in nonexistent worlds, such as under the earth, in a fairyland, on the moon, etc. The characters are often something other than human or include nonhuman characters. Example:

- J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

Flashback. A device that allows the writer to present events that happened before the time of the current narration or the current events in the fiction. Flashback techniques include memories, dreams, stories of the past told by characters, or even authorial sovereignty. (That is, the author might simply say, "But back in Tom's youth. . . .") Flashback is useful for exposition, to fill in the reader about a character or place, or about the background to a conflict.

Foot. The basic unit of meter consisting of a group of two or three syllables. Scanning or scansion is the process of determining the prevailing foot in a line of poetry, of determining the types and sequence of different feet.

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

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

See also **versification**, below.

Frame. A narrative structure that provides a setting and exposition for the main narrative in a novel. Often, a narrator will describe where he found the manuscript of the novel or where he heard someone tell the story he is about to relate. The frame helps control the reader's perception of the work, and has been used in the past to help give credibility to the main section of the novel. Examples of novels with frames:

- Mary Shelley *Frankenstein*
- Nathaniel Hawthorne *The Scarlet Letter*

Free verse. Verse that has neither regular rhyme nor regular meter. Free verse often uses cadences rather than uniform metrical feet.

Gothic novel. A novel in which supernatural horrors and an atmosphere of unknown terror pervades the action. The setting is often a dark, mysterious castle, where ghosts and sinister humans roam menacingly. Horace Walpole invented the genre with his *Castle of Otranto*. Gothic elements include these:

- Ancient prophecy, especially mysterious, obscure, or hard to understand.
- Mystery and suspense
- High emotion, sentimentalism, but also pronounced anger, surprise, and especially terror
- Supernatural events (e.g. a giant, a sighing portrait, ghosts or their apparent presence, a skeleton)
- Omens, portents, dream visions
- Fainting, frightened, screaming women
- Women threatened by powerful, impetuous male
- Setting in a castle, especially with secret passages
- The metonymy of gloom and horror (wind, rain, doors grating on rusty hinges, howls in the distance, distant sighs, footsteps approaching, lights in abandoned rooms, gusts of wind blowing out lights or blowing suddenly, characters trapped in rooms or imprisoned)
- The vocabulary of the gothic (use of words indicating fear, mystery, etc.: apparition, devil, ghost, haunted, terror, fright)

Examples:

- Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*
- William Beckford, *Vathek*
- Anne Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*
- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
- Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca*

Heroic Couplet. Two lines of rhyming iambic pentameter. Most of Alexander Pope's verse is written in heroic couplets. In fact, it is the most favored verse form of the eighteenth century. Example:

```
  u    /   u   /  u   /  u     /  u    /
'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill


 u  /   u  /   u   /  u  /   u   /
Appear in writing or in judging ill. . . .
      --Alexander Pope
```

[Note in the second line that "or" should be a stressed syllable if the meter were perfectly iambic. Iambic= a two syllable foot of one unstressed and one stressed syllable, as in the word "begin." Pentameter= five feet. Thus, iambic pentameter has ten syllables, five feet of two syllable iambs.]

Historical novel. A novel where fictional characters take part in actual historical events and interact with real people from the past. Examples:

- Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*
- Sir Walter Scott, *Waverly*
- James Fenimore Cooper, *Last of the Mohicans*
- Lloyd C. Douglas, *The Robe*

Horatian Satire. In general, a gentler, more good humored and sympathetic kind of satire, somewhat tolerant of human folly even while laughing at it. Named after the poet Horace, whose satire epitomized it. Horatian satire tends to ridicule human folly in general or by type rather than attack specific persons. Compare Juvenalian satire.

Humanism. The new emphasis in the Renaissance on human culture, education and reason, sparked by a revival of interest in classical Greek and Roman literature, culture, and language. Human nature and the dignity of man were exalted and emphasis was placed on the present life as a worthy event in itself (as opposed to the medieval emphasis on the present life merely as preparation for a future life).

Humours. In medieval physiology, four liquids in the human body affecting behavior. Each humour was associated with one of the four elements of nature. In a balanced personality, no humour predominated. When a humour did predominate, it caused a particular personality. Here is a chart of the humours, the corresponding elements and personality characteristics:

- *blood*...air...hot and moist: sanguine, kind, happy, romantic
- *phlegm*...water...cold and moist: phlegmatic, sedentary, sickly, fearful
- *yellow bile*...fire...hot and dry: choleric, ill-tempered, impatient, stubborn
- *black bile*...earth...cold and dry: melancholy, gluttonous, lazy, contemplative

The Renaissance took the doctrine of humours quite seriously--it was their model of psychology--so knowing that can help us understand the characters in the literature. Falstaff, for example, has a dominance of blood, while Hamlet seems to have an excess of black bile.

Hypertext novel. A novel that can be read in a nonsequential way. That is, whereas most novels flow from beginning to end in a continuous, linear fashion, a hypertext novel can branch--the reader can move from one place in the text to another nonsequential place whenever he wishes to trace an idea or follow a character. Also called hyperfiction. Most are published on CD-ROM. See also *interactive novel.* Examples:

- Michael Joyce, *Afternoon*
- Stuart Moulthrop, *Victory Garden*

Interactive novel. A novel with more than one possible series of events or outcomes. The reader is given the opportunity at various places to choose what will happen next. It is therefore possible for several readers to experience different novels by reading the same book or for one reader to experience different novels by reading the same one twice and making different choices.

Invective. Speech or writing that abuses, denounces, or attacks. It can be directed against a person, cause, idea, or system. It employs a heavy use of negative emotive language. Example:

- I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth. --Swift

Irony. A mode of expression, through words (verbal irony) or events (irony of situation), conveying a reality different from and usually opposite to appearance or expectation. A writer may say the opposite of what he means, create a reversal between expectation and its fulfillment, or give the audience knowledge that a character lacks, making the character's words have meaning to the audience not perceived by the character. In verbal irony, the writer's meaning or even his attitude may be different from what he says: "Why, no one would dare argue that there could be anything more important in choosing a college than its proximity to the beach." An example of situational irony would occur if a professional pickpocket had his own pocket picked just as he was in the act of picking someone else's pocket. The irony is generated by the surprise recognition by the audience of a reality in contrast with expectation or appearance, while another audience, victim, or character puts confidence in the appearance as reality (in this case, the pickpocket doesn't expect his own pocket to be picked). The surprise recognition by the audience often produces a comic effect, making irony often funny.

An example of dramatic irony (where the audience has knowledge that gives additional meaning to a character's words) would be when King Oedipus, who has unknowingly killed his father, says that he will banish his father's killer when he finds him.

Irony is the most common and most efficient technique of the satirist, because it is an instrument of truth, provides wit and humor, and is usually at least obliquely critical, in that it deflates, scorns, or attacks.

The ability to detect irony is sometimes heralded as a test of intelligence and sophistication. When a text intended to be ironic is not seen as such, the effect can be disastrous. Some students have taken Swift's "Modest Proposal" literally. And Defoe's contemporaries took his "Shortest Way with the Dissenters" literally and jailed him for it. To be an effective piece of sustained irony, there must be some sort of audience tip-off, through style, tone, use of clear exaggeration, or other device.

Juvenalian Satire. Harsher, more pointed, perhaps intolerant satire typified by the writings of Juvenal. Juvenalian satire often attacks particular people, sometimes thinly disguised as fictional characters. While laughter and ridicule

are still weapons as with Horatian satire, the Juvenalian satirist also uses withering invective and a slashing attack. Swift is a Juvenalian satirist.

Lampoon. A crude, coarse, often bitter satire ridiculing the personal appearance or character of a person.

Literary quality. A judgment about the value of a novel as literature. At the heart of this issue is the question of what distinguishes a great or important novel from one that is less important. Certainly the feature is not that of interest or excitement, for pulp novels can be even more exciting and interesting than "great" novels. Usually, books that make us think--that offer insight into the human condition--are the ones we rank more highly than books that simply titillate us.

Metaphysical Poetry. The term *metaphysical* was applied to a style of 17th Century poetry first by John Dryden and later by Dr. Samuel Johnson because of the highly intellectual and often abstruse imagery involved.

Chief among the metaphysical poets are John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell, and Henry Vaughan. While their poetry is widely varied (the metaphysicals are not a thematic or even a structural school), there are some common characteristics:

- 1. *Argumentative structure.* The poem often engages in a debate or persuasive presentation; the poem is an intellectual exercise as well as or instead of an emotional effusion.
- 2. *Dramatic and colloquial mode of utterance.* The poem often describes a dramatic event rather than being a reverie, a thought, or contemplation. Diction is simple and usually direct; inversion is limited. The verse is occasionally rough, like speech, rather than written in perfect meter, resulting in a dominance of thought over form.
- 3. *Acute realism.* The poem often reveals a psychological analysis; images advance the argument rather than being ornamental. There is a learned style of thinking and writing; the poetry is often highly intellectual.
- 4. *Metaphysical wit.* The poem contains unexpected, even striking or shocking analogies, offering elaborate parallels between apparently dissimilar things. The analogies are drawn from widely varied fields of knowledge, not limited to traditional sources in nature or art. Analogies from science, mechanics, housekeeping, business, philosophy, astronomy, etc. are common. These "conceits" reveal a play of intellect, often resulting in puns, paradoxes, and humorous comparisons. Unlike other poetry where the metaphors usually remain in the background, here the metaphors sometimes take over the poem and control it.

Metaphysical poetry represents a revolt against the conventions of Elizabethan love poetry and especially the typical Petrarchan conceits (like rosy cheeks, eyes like stars, etc.).

Meter. The rhythmic pattern produced when words are arranged so that their stressed and unstressed syllables fall into a more or less regular sequence, resulting in repeated patterns of accent (called feet). See **feet** and **versification.**

Mock Epic. Treating a frivolous or minor subject seriously, especially by using the machinery and devices of the **epic** (invocations, descriptions of armor, battles, extended similes, etc.). The opposite of travesty. Examples:

- Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad*
- Alexander Pope, *Rape of the Lock*

Multicultural novel. A novel written by a member of or about a cultural minority group, giving insight into non-Western or non-dominant cultural experiences and values, either in the United States or abroad. Examples:

- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

- Amy Tan, *The Kitchen God's Wife*
- Forrest Carter, *The Education of Little Tree*
- Margaret Craven, *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*
- James Baldwin, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*
- Chaim Potok, *The Chosen*
- Isaac Bashevis Singer, *The Penitent*
- Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*

Mystery novel. A novel whose driving characteristic is the element of suspense or mystery. Strange, unexplained events, vague threats or terrors, unknown forces or antagonists, all may appear in a mystery novel. Gothic novels and detective novels are often also mystery novels.

Novel. Dare we touch this one with a ten foot pole? Of course we dare, provided that you accept the caveat that novels are so varied that any definition is likely to be inadequate to cover all of them. So here is a place to start: a novel is an extended prose fiction narrative of 50,000 words or more, broadly realistic--concerning the everyday events of ordinary people--and concerned with character. "People in significant action" is one way of describing it.

Another definition might be "an extended, fictional prose narrative about realistic characters and events." It is a representation of life, experience, and learning. Action, discovery, and description are important elements, but the most important tends to be one or more characters--how they grow, learn, find--or don't grow, learn, or find.

Compare the definition of a **romance**, below, and you will see why this definition seems somewhat restrictive.

Novella. A prose fiction longer than a short story but shorter than a novel. There is no standard definition of length, but since rules of thumb are sometimes handy, we might say that the short story ends at about 20,000 words, while the novel begins at about 50,000. Thus, the novella is a fictional work of about 20,000 to 50,000 words. Examples:

- Henry James, *Daisy Miller*
- Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
- Henry James, *Turn of the Screw*
- Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Novel of manners. A novel focusing on and describing in detail the social customs and habits of a particular social group. Usually these conventions function as shaping or even stifling controls over the behavior of the characters. Examples:

- Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
- William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*

Parody. A satiric imitation of a work or of an author with the idea of ridiculing the author, his ideas, or work. The parodist exploits the peculiarities of an author's expression--his propensity to use too many parentheses, certain favorite words, or whatever. The parody may also be focused on, say, an improbable plot with too many convenient events. Fielding's *Shamela* is, in large part, a parody of Richardson's *Pamela*.

Persona. The person created by the author to tell a story. Whether the story is told by an omniscient narrator or by a character in it, the actual author of the work often distances himself from what is said or told by adopting a persona--a personality different from his real one. Thus, the attitudes, beliefs, and degree of understanding expressed by the narrator may not be the same as those of the actual author. Some authors, for example, use narrators who are not very bright in order to create irony.

Petrarchan Conceit. The kind of conceit (see above) used by Italian Renaissance poet Petrarch and popular in Renaissance English sonnets. Eyes like stars or the sun, hair like golden wires, lips like cherries, etc. are common examples. Oxymorons are also common, such as freezing fire, burning ice, etc.

Picaresque novel. An episodic, often autobiographical novel about a rogue or picaro (a person of low social status) wandering around and living off his wits. The wandering hero provides the author with the opportunity to connect widely different pieces of plot, since the hero can wander into any situation. Picaresque novels tend to be satiric and filled with petty detail. Examples:

- Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*
- Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
- Henry Fielding, *Jonathan Wild*

Pseudonym. A "false name" or alias used by a writer desiring not to use his or her real name. Sometimes called a *nom de plume* or "pen name," pseudonyms have been popular for several reasons.

First, political realities might make it dangerous for the real author to admit to a work. Beatings, imprisonment, and even execution are not unheard of for authors of unpopular works.

Second, an author might have a certain type of work associated with a certain name, so that different names are used for different kinds of work. One pen name might be used for westerns, while another name would be used for science fiction.

Lastly, an author might choose a literary name that sounds more impressive or that will garner more respect than the author's real name. Examples:

- Samuel Clemens used the name Mark Twain
- Mary Ann Evans used the name George Eliot
- Jonathan Swift used the name Lemuel Gulliver (once)

Pulp fiction. Novels written for the mass market, intended to be "a good read,"--often exciting, titillating, thrilling. Historically they have been very popular but critically sneered at as being of sub-literary quality. The earliest ones were the dime novels of the nineteenth century, printed on newsprint (hence "pulp" fiction) and sold for ten cents. Westerns, stories of adventure, even the Horatio Alger novels, all were forms of pulp fiction.

Regional novel. A novel faithful to a particular geographic region and its people, including behavior, customs, speech, and history. Examples:

- Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Thomas Hardy, *Return of the Native*

Rhyme. The similarity between syllable sounds at the end of two or more lines. Some kinds of rhyme (also spelled rime) include:

- *Couplet:* a pair of lines rhyming consecutively.
- *Eye rhyme:* words whose spellings would lead one to think that they rhymed (slough, tough, cough, bough, though, hiccough. Or: love, move, prove. Or: daughter, laughter.)
- *Feminine rhyme:* two syllable rhyme consisting of stressed syllable followed by unstressed.
- *Masculine rhyme:* similarity between terminally stressed syllables.

Ridicule. Words intended to belittle a person or idea and arouse contemptuous laughter. The goal is to condemn or criticize by making the thing, idea, or person seem laughable and ridiculous. It is one of the most powerful methods of criticism, partly because it cannot be satisfactorily answered ("Who can refute a sneer?") and partly because many people who fear nothing else--not the law, not society, not even God--fear being laughed at. (The fear of being laughed at is one of the most inhibiting forces in western civilization. It provides much of the power behind the adolescent flock urge and accounts for many of the barriers to change and adventure in the adult world.) Ridicule is, not surprisingly, a common weapon of the satirist.

Roman a clef. [French for "novel with a key," pronounced roh MAHN ah CLAY] A novel in which historical events and actual people are written about under the pretense of being fiction. Examples:

- Aphra Behn, *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*
- Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

Romance. An extended fictional prose narrative about improbable events involving characters that are quite different from ordinary people. Knights on a quest for a magic sword and aided by characters like fairies and trolls would be examples of things found in romance fiction. Examples:

- Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*
- Sir Philip Sidney, *The Arcadia*

In popular use, the modern romance novel is a formulaic love story (boy meets girl, obstacles interfere, they overcome obstacles, they live happily ever after). Computer software is available for constructing these stock plots and providing stereotyped characters. Consequently, the books usually lack literary merit. Examples:

- Harlequin Romance series

Sarcasm. A form of sneering criticism in which disapproval is often expressed as ironic praise. (Oddly enough, sarcastic remarks are often used between friends, perhaps as a somewhat perverse demonstration of the strength of the bond--only a good friend could say this without hurting the other's feelings, or at least without excessively damaging the relationship, since feelings are often hurt in spite of a close relationship. If you drop your lunch tray and a stranger says, "Well, that was really intelligent," that's sarcasm. If your girlfriend or boyfriend says it, that's love--I think.)

Satire. A literary mode based on criticism of people and society through ridicule. The satirist aims to reduce the practices attacked by laughing scornfully at them--and being witty enough to allow the reader to laugh, also. Ridicule, irony, exaggeration, and several other techniques are almost always present. The satirist may insert serious statements of value or desired behavior, but most often he relies on an implicit moral code, understood by his audience and paid lip service by them. The satirist's goal is to point out the hypocrisy of his target in the hope that either the target or the audience will return to a real following of the code. Thus, satire is inescapably moral even when no explicit values are promoted in the work, for the satirist works within the framework of a widely spread value system. Many of the techniques of satire are devices of comparison, to show the similarity or contrast between two things. A list of incongruous items, an oxymoron, metaphors, and so forth are examples. See "The Purpose and Method of Satire" for more information.

Science fiction novel. A novel in which futuristic technology or otherwise altered scientific principles contribute in a significant way to the adventures. Often the novel assumes a set of rules or principles or facts and then traces their logical consequences in some form. For example, given that a man discovers how to make himself invisible, what might happen? Examples:

- H. G. Wells, *The Invisible Man*
- Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
- Arthur C. Clarke, *2001: A Space Odyssey*
- Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles*

Sentimental novel. A type of novel, popular in the eighteenth century, that overemphasizes emotion and seeks to create emotional responses in the reader. The type also usually features an overly optimistic view of the goodness of human nature. Examples:

- Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*
- Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*
- Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*
- Thomas Day, *The History of Sandford and Merton*

Sequel. A novel incorporating the same characters and often the same setting as a previous novel. Sometimes the events and situations involve a continuation of the previous novel and sometimes only the characters are the same and the events are entirely unrelated to the previous novel. When sequels result from the popularity of an original, they are often hastily written and not of the same quality as the original. Occasionally a sequel is written by an author different from that of the original novel. See *series.* Examples:

- Mark Twain, *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
- Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer Abroad*
- Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer Detective*
- Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind*
- Alexandra Ripley, *Scarlett*

Series. Several novels related to each other, by plot, setting, character, or all three. Book marketers like to refer to multi-volume novels as sagas. Examples:

- Anthony Trollope, Barsetshire novels
- C. S. Lewis, Chronicles of Narnia novels
- L. M. Montgomery, Anne of Avonlea novels
- James Fenimore Cooper, The Leatherstocking Tales

Setting. The total environment for the action of a fictional work. Setting includes time period (such as the 1890's), the place (such as downtown Warsaw), the historical milieu (such as during the Crimean War), as well as the social, political, and perhaps even spiritual realities. The setting is usually established primarily through description, though narration is used also.

Sonnet. A fourteen line poem, usually in iambic pentameter, with a varied rhyme scheme. The two main types of sonnet are the Petrarchan (or Italian) and the Shakespearean. The *Petrarchan Sonnet* is divided into two main sections, the octave (first eight lines) and the sestet (last six lines). The octave presents a problem or situation which is then resolved or commented on in the sestet. The most common rhyme scheme is A-B-B-A A-B-B-A C-D-E C-D-E, though there is flexibility in the sestet, such as C-D-C D-C-D.

The *Shakespearean Sonnet,* (perfected though not invented by Shakespeare), contains three quatrains and a couplet, with more rhymes (because of the greater difficulty finding rhymes in English). The most common rhyme scheme is A-B-A-B C-D-C-D E-F-E-F G-G. In Shakespeare, the couplet often undercuts the thought created in the rest of the poem.

Spenserian Stanza. A nine-line stanza, with the first eight lines in iambic pentameter and the last line in iambic hexameter (called an Alexandrine). The rhyme scheme is A-B-A-B B-C-B-C C. Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is written in Spenserian stanzas.

Style. The manner of expression of a particular writer, produced by choice of words, grammatical structures, use of literary devices, and all the possible parts of language use. Some general styles might include scientific, ornate, plain, emotive. Most writers have their own particular styles.

Subplot. A subordinate or minor collection of events in a novel or drama. Most subplots have some connection with the main plot, acting as foils to, commentary on, complications of, or support to the theme of, the main plot. Sometimes two opening subplots merge into a main plot.

Symbol. Something that on the surface is its literal self but which also has another meaning or even several meanings. For example, a sword may be a sword and also symbolize justice. A symbol may be said to embody an idea. There are two general types of symbols: universal symbols that embody universally recognizable meanings wherever used, such as light to symbolize knowledge, a skull to symbolize death, etc., and constructed symbols that are given symbolic meaning by the way an author uses them in a literary work, as the white whale becomes a symbol of evil in Moby Dick.

Tone. The writer's attitude toward his readers and his subject; his mood or moral view. A writer can be formal, informal, playful, ironic, and especially, optimistic or pessimistic. While both Swift and Pope are satirizing much the same subjects, there is a profound difference in their tone.

Travesty. A work that treats a serious subject frivolously-- ridiculing the dignified. Often the tone is mock serious and heavy handed.

Utopian novel. A novel that presents an ideal society where the problems of poverty, greed, crime, and so forth have been eliminated. Examples:

- Thomas More, *Utopia*
- Samuel Butler, *Erewhon*
- Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*

Verisimilitude. How fully the characters and actions in a work of fiction conform to our sense of reality. To say that a work has a high degree of verisimilitude means that the work is very realistic and believable--it is "true to life.".

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

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

The most common verse in English poetry is iambic pentameter. See **foot** for more information.

Western. A novel set in the western United States featuring the experiences of cowboys and frontiersmen. Many are little more than adventure novels or even pulp fiction, but some have literary value. Examples:

- Walter Van Tilburg Clark, *The Ox-Bow Incident*
- Owen Wister, *The Virginian*

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