Interpreting English Fiction:

Theory and Practice

COURSEBOOK

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Посібник узагальнює і систематизує літературно-критичні традиції та сучасні підходи до вивчення художньої прози, типи авторського викладу, типологію персонажів і методи характеризації, стилістичні прийоми і виражальні засоби для створення образності літературного тексту. У посібнику поєднані інформаційний блок та контрольно-дослідницький.

Призначається для студентів старших курсів спеціальності “Мова та література (англійська)” факультетів іноземних мов класичних і педагогічних університетів, а також для викладачів, учителів, перекладачів, літературознавців.

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Моїй сім'ї присвячується

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Part II. Practice

Literature is no doubt the privileged realm
in which language is exercised, clarified, and modified.

—Julia Kristeva, *Language the Unknown* (1989)

ПЕРЕДМОВА

Навчальний посібник призначено для студентів старших курсів спеціальності "Мова та література (англійська)" факультетів іноземних мов вищих навчальних закладів, які вивчають дисципліну "Лінгвостилістичний аналіз та інтерпретація художнього тексту". Основну увагу звернено на структуру і методику аналізу художньої прози малої форми і уривків з романів мовою оригіналу. У посібнику узагальнено і систематизовано навчальний матеріал з історії літературної критики, сучасні підходи до аналізу художнього твору, а також подано типологію змістових і формальних елементів, які необхідні для інтерпретації художнього тексту і не були висвітлені у курсах з лексикології та стилістики. При укладанні посібника застосовано інтегрований характер філологічного аналізу, де в рівних частинах поєднуються літературознавчий і лінгвістичний підходи до художнього тексту.

Мета посібника — формування і розвиток умінь філологічного аналізу художнього тексту на основі поєднання системності теоретичних знань з основ літературознавства, стилістики та інтерпретації окремого тексту. Крім того, у посібнику враховано співвідношення теоретичних і практичних аспектів інтерпретації, про що свідчить його структурна організація.

Основним завданням інтерпретації літературного тексту як пошукової діяльності і навчальної практики полягає у тому, щоб осягнути не тільки його змістове наповнення у авторському виконанні, але й те, що криється у ньому поза авторською волею, зважаючи на зворотність процесу інтерпретації, який передбачає форму прочитання людини-яка-перебуває-у-світі. Отже, основним завданням навчальної дисципліни, основи якої викладаються у цьому посібнику, — ознайомити читача-студента із системою літературознавчих і стилістичних понять і дослідницьких прийомів, які б розвивали

його вміння не тільки самостійної інтерпретації різноманітних текстів, але в подальшому й спробі навчити цьому мистецтву інших.

Навчальний посібник складається з двох основних частин. Теоретична частина посібника *(Theory and application)* узагальнює і систематизує жанрові різновиди художньої прози в історичній ретроспективі, особливості модерністської і постмодерністської прози, літературно-критичні традиції та сучасні підходи до аналізу художньої прози, у т.ч. з урахуванням етнокультурного і міжкультурного аспектів викладання художнього перекладу (CHAPTER 1); форми викладу тексту, співвідношення розповіді і нарації, типи нараторів, вибір літературних прийомів авторської мовленнєвої репрезентації у прозі (CHAPTER 2); типи літературних персонажів, типи і методи характеризації персонажів, сюжет та його структурні елементи (CHAPTER 3); характеристики індивідуального стилю автора і створення образності літературного тексту, які виявляються у вживанні стилістичних прийомів та виражальних засобів (CHAPTER 4). Кожен підрозділ теоретичної частини супроводжується пронумерованою за розділами (CH 1–4) системою вправ і зразками завдань для аудиторної роботи та самостійного опрацювання *(Assignments),* а також бібліографічним списком *(References and further reading)*.

Практична частина посібника *(Practice)* складається з восьми розділів (CHAPTERS 5–12), кожен з яких акцентує увагу на практичних аспектах лінгвостилістичного аналізу художніх творів XX–XXI століть, у т.ч. літературного перекладу (Дж. Джойс, С. Хілл, Е. Берджес, Д. Бартельм, Дж. Барнс, Б. Елліс, Г. Тютюнник), що включені до програми навчальної дисципліни "Сучасна література країни, мова якої вивчається" з метою їх подальшого використання у педагогічній діяльності майбутніх фахівців.

У практичній частині посібника методика цілісного опрацювання матеріалу відбувається за визначеною схемою інтерпретації літературного тексту *(How to study a literary text)* у послідовності *Text & context—Textual analysis—Beyond the text* разом із анотованим списком рекомендованої літератури для самостійного опрацювання *(References and further reading)*.

Text & context — короткий огляд біографії письменника, історичний та соціокультурний контекст, які виступають передумовами до написання художнього твору і відкривають перспективи для інтерпретації тексту.

Textual analysis являє собою систему різноманітних (усних та письмових) вправ та завдань, які викладені у відповідності до структури теоретичної частини посібника. Вони зорієнтовані на опанування смислової множинності художнього тексту і спрямовані на вироблення умінь стилістичного аналізу окремого взірця художньої літератури як об'єкта інтерпретації.

Beyond the text — перелік письмових завдань творчого і проблемного характеру для самостійної роботи (написання есе, підготовка проектів, аналітико-пошукова робота тощо), які призначені для розширення мовної і соціокультурної компетенції студента.

Особливе значення в засвоєнні курсу має самостійна робота, яка передбачає не тільки виконання теоретичних і практичних завдань творчого характеру, але й вивчення джерельної бази — наукових статей і монографій, які присвячені окремим питанням дослідження художнього тексту, що, без сумніву, збагатить кругозір та знання студента-філолога, майбутнього викладача англійської мови.

Посібник завершує глосарій літературних термінів *(Glossary)*.

Автор висловлює щиру подяку рецензентам посібника — доктору філологічних наук, професору О. А. Бабелюк, доктору філологічних наук, професору А. Г. Гудманяну, доктору педагогічних наук, професору О. Є. Місечко за схвальні відгуки та конструктивні поради.

Part I

Theory and Application

CHAPTER 1

FICTION: THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES

Preview

This chapter addresses the following issues:

- reading fiction in terms of response and interpretation
- a historical outline of fiction
- modernist and postmodernist fiction: some preliminary comments
- classifying criticism into schools and approaches
- literary-critical traditions and approaches to fiction
- intercultural approach to literary translations

1.1
READING FICTION: RESPONSE OR INTERPRETATION?

It is common knowledge that we 'respond' to the text we are reading. But readers do more than simply respond passively to texts. Instead, readers approach texts actively, with certain expectations in mind. For example, while reading a given text, one needs to establish a relationship between the text and its genre or form an idea of the text's relationship to specific places, times, and other texts by attending to its explicit references and allusions or its particular use of language. A number of recent theorists have developed this analogy in discussing the role that fiction plays in ordinary people's lives. In her book *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (2006), Lisa Zunshine writes, 'The cognitive rewards of reading fiction might thus be aligned with the cognitive rewards of pretend play through a shared capacity to stimulate and develop the imagination. It may mean that our enjoyment of fiction is predicated—at least in part—upon our *awareness* of our "trying on" mental states *potentially available* to us but at a given moment *differing* from our own' (Zunshine 2006, 17).

In his book *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction,* Richard Walsh introduces another helpful analogy – that between fiction and 'exercise'. As he notes, 'When you go for a jog, you may not be trying to get anywhere in particular, but you are certainly not pretending to run' (Walsh 2007, 45). The comment is clearly aimed at those who believe that when, for example, Charles Dickens wrote *David Copperfield* as a first-person narrative, he was pretending to be David Copperfield, and he wanted the reader to pretend that his novel really was written by the character. Both Zunshine and Walsh agree that the reader of fiction does not have to abandon a sense of who he or she is or of who the real-life author is. Indeed, they suggest that retaining such a sense is crucial to the reading of fiction.

In the creation of stories, writers may deal with the triumphs and defeats of life, the admirable and the shameful, the humorous and the pathetic, but whatever their goal, they always have something to say about human experience. If they are successful as writers, they will communicate their vision directly to us through their stories, which have a basis in realism. That is, the situations or characters, though they are the invention of writers, are similar to those that many human beings know or experience in their lives. Even fantasy, the creation of events that are dreamlike or fantastic

(and in this sense a counter to realism), is derived from a perception of life and action that is ultimately real. This similarity of art to life has led some critics to label fiction as an art of imitation. Shakespeare's Hamlet states that an actor attempts to portray real human beings in realistic situations ('to hold a mirror up to Nature'). That might also be said of the writer of fiction.

Fictional stories present us largely with models of the social and material world with which we can empathize. According to Lamarque and Olsen (1994, 89), readers 'often fantasize with active content, "filling in" as the whim takes them, and no doubt some genres of fantasy actively encourage this kind of whimsical response'. This is rather stern, and it becomes more so as the two authors then insist upon the need to distinguish between authorized and non-authorized responses—with 'the content itself and its presentation' as the source of this authority.

However, 'response' is not the same as 'interpretation'; my response may be different from yours, but we can try to reach an agreement about our interpretation of a given work.

Thus readings cannot be analysed completely in terms of general codes; our interest in reading texts is hardly reducible to how interpretation happens in the mind of a reader. An adequate analysis of reading would also need to take into account the ways our attitudes, values, and social priorities affect particular acts of reading.

1.2 FICTION: A HISTORICAL OUTLINE

1.2.1 Novels and Short Prose

Fiction originally meant anything made up, crafted, or shaped. As we understand the word today, it means a prose story based on the imagination of the author, not on true facts. In English the first recorded use of the word in this sense was in the year 1599. The original meaning of the word in reference to things made up or crafted is helpful to us in focusing on the fact that fiction is to be distinguished from works that it has often imitated such as reports, historical accounts, biographies, autobiographies, collections of letters, personal memoirs, and meditations. While writers of fiction may deliberately design their works to resemble these forms, fiction has a separate

identity because of its origin in the creative, shaping powers of the writers. It is a fact that writers of fiction may include true and historically accurate details in their works, but they create their main stories not because of a wish to be faithful to history but rather because of a hope to say something significant about human life.

The essence of fiction is narration—the relating or recounting of a sequence of events or actions. The earliest works of fiction relied almost exclusively on narration, with speeches and dialogue being reported rather than quoted directly. Many recent works of fiction include extended passages of dialogue which render the works more dramatically, even though narration is still the primary mode.

Stories and storytelling have existed for as long as people have had language. Fiction had its roots in ancient myths and folk tales. In primitive civilizations, before people could read or write, stories were circulated by word of mouth, and often travelling storytellers would appear in a court or village to entertain eager listeners with tales based on the exploits of heroes and gods. However, many of these were heavily fictionalized accounts of events and they were largely accepted by the people as facts or history. An especially long tale, an epic, was recited over a period of days; and to help their memories, the storytellers delivered these works in poetic lines, perhaps also impressing and entertaining their listeners by playing stringed instruments.

The first written stories developed from this storytelling tradition. Beginning about 800 years ago, storytelling was developed to a fine art by Marie de France, a Frenchwoman who wrote in England in the late 12th century, Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (Italian, 1313-1375), and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (English, 1340-1400). William Shakespeare (1564-1616) drew heavily on history and legends for the stories and characters in his plays.

Fiction in the modern sense of the word did not begin to flourish until the late 17th and 18th centuries, when people of all social statuses and their life became important literary topics.

The first modern short stories appeared at the beginning of the 19th century. Early examples of short-story collections include the *Fairy Tales* (1824 – 26) of the Brothers Grimm and Edgar Allan Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840). In the late 19th century, printed magazines and journals became very popular, and more and more short stories were published.

By the 20th century, most well-known magazines included short stories in every issue, and the publishers paid a lot of money for them. In 1952, Ernest Hemingway's short story *The Old Man and the Sea* helped to sell more than five million copies of the magazine *Life* in just two days.

Thus fiction gradually moved towards the characteristic concerns that it has today—the psychological and the highly individual. Indeed, fiction gains its strength from being grounded in the concrete and particular. Most characters have both first and last names; the cities and villages in which they live and move are modelled on real places; and the events and responses recounted are like those that readers themselves have experienced, could experience, or could easily imagine themselves experiencing.

The first true works of fiction, as we know it, were the lengthy Spanish and French romances written in the 16th and 17th centuries. (The French word for *novel* is still *roman.*) In English, the word *novel* was borrowed from French and Italian to describe these works and to distinguish them from medieval and classical romances as something that was *new* (the meaning of *novel*). In England, the word *story* was used along with *novel* in reference to this new literary form.

The world of the novel is so familiar to us that we can sometimes recognize its distinctive qualities only by contrasting it to other genres. The Russian literary critic and one of the leading novel theorists, Mikhail Bakhtin points out, for example, that '[t]he world of the epic is the national heroic past'; it is based upon a 'national tradition (not personal experience and the free thought that grows out of it)', and 'an absolute epic distance separates the epic world from contemporary reality' (Bakhtin 1981, 13). He argues that the novel is the only literary genre that is still undergoing a development as it 'fights for its own hegemony in literature' (Bakhtin 1981, 4). In Bakhtin's words, 'studying other genres is analogous to studying dead languages; studying the novel, on the other hand, is like studying languages that are not only alive, but still young' (Bakhtin 1981, 4).

As Hawthorn (2010, 112) argues, 'although readers can and do lose themselves while reading a novel, this does not mean that they are unable to mull over and learn from their reading experiences once they return to their everyday reality after finishing a novel'.

It was natural that increased levels of general education and literacy in the 18th century would make possible the further development of fiction. In Shakespeare's time, the only way a writer could make money out of writing was to write a play and then receive a percentage of the fees from

a performance. The audiences, however, were limited to people who lived within a short distance of the theatre (or who could afford the cost of travel to a performance) and who had the leisure time to attend a play. Once great numbers of people could read, the paying audience for literature expanded. A writer could write a novel and have it printed by a publisher, who could then sell it widely to many people, giving a portion of the proceeds to the writer. Readers could pick up the book at their leisure and finish it as they chose. Reading a novel could even be a social event: people read to each other as a means of sharing experience. With this wider audience, authors could make a career out of writing. Fiction had arrived as a major genre of literature.

There are many ways in which critics have tried to distinguish between the novel and the short story, for example, by seeing the story as a snap short. In terms of the representation of individuals, it has been argued that the novel develops a character whereas the short story is only able to show it, as in the 'slice of life' story perfected by Anton Chekhov (Childs 2006, 128).

The fable and the tale are ancient forms; the short story is of more recent origin. It was Edgar Allan Poe's criticism in the early to mid-20th century that first offered influential theories about the qualities and characteristics of short-story writing and developed a theory of the short story, which he described in a review of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales.* Poe emphasized that the story usually concentrates on a single character or relationship and has the following qualities: unity of plot, the expression of a single idea, aesthetic wholeness, a 'unity of effect or impression', and 'one pre-established design'. Poe thought that the first thing for the writer to do was to establish the 'desired effect' and that the story differed from the novel in that it could be read at one sitting, and so the reader's experience could be tightly controlled (Poe 1842). Poe added to this practical consideration the belief that a short, concentrated story (which he called 'a brief prose tale') could create a powerful single impression on the reader.

Once Poe had expressed his theory, the convenience, if not the correctness, of his recommendation prompted many later writers to work extensively in the short story form. Today innumerable short stories are printed in weekly and monthly periodicals and in collections. Many writers who publish stories over a long period of time collect their works for inclusion in single volumes. Writers like William Faulkner, Ernest

Hemingway, Shirley Jackson, Guy De Maupassant, Henry James, Flannery O'Connor, Frank O'Connor, and Eudora Welty, to name only a small number, have had their works collected in this way.

1.2.2 Modernist and Postmodernist Fiction

A short story is shorter than a novel but longer than a poem. It is traditionally understood as a short story narrative in prose. It is usually between 1,000 and 20,000 words long.

In this literary classical definition, a short story is presented as a relatively brief prose narrative, usually characterized by uniformity of tone and dramatic intensity and having as plot a single action. A popular form of a story is one that tells events with a definite beginning, middle, and end. But others may have a very little plot and may never have moved to a completed action.

A short story usually contains one event focusing on a single aspect of life. The number of characters is limited, but they are rather revealed and developed. The story may belong to a particular type (social, psychological, historical, adventure, detective, science-fiction, documentary) or be a mixture of a number of the types.

Since the early 20th century, critics have generally outlined two types of short story: the plot-based (for example, those of Guy de Maupassant or Robert Louis Stevenson) against the plotless, often open-ended, psychological story associated with the modernists (such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Katherine Mansfield).

According to Dominic Head, the twentieth-century modernist short story is not founded on unity but on ambiguity and disunity. It is also true of modernist fiction that paradox is a major component of many short stories, and there can frequently be a tension between the control of the form/structure and the ambiguity of the content/meaning (Childs 2006, 130).

The modernists experimented with the form and language of literature, turning away from the conventions of realism which had dominated European literature throughout the 19th century. They were particularly concerned with representing inner perceptions of human consciousness. Modernist works of fiction very often have inconclusive endings, endings which leave the reader puzzled and unsatisfied so that he/she will have to think and analyse. Some literary short stories tell of an epiphany: some moment of insight, discovery, or revelation by which a character's life, or

view of life, is greatly changed. It is an effective method for the author to convey to the reader that the protagonist has experienced a significant and momentous sensation that makes him realize a larger essence or meaning of his life and fate.

Looking at postmodernist fiction, we need to consider the fact that different principles are at work again. The attitude of postmodernist writers differs from that of their modernist predecessors. The former tend to consider modernist principles in a new light, with a good deal of skepticism; they feel free to oppose and parody the forms they have inherited from the past, playing with the very themes and structures that modernist authors were supposed to discard. Many of the works of postmodern literature—by Jorge Luis Borges, Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, Roland Barthes, and many others—so blend literary genres, cultural and stylistic levels, the serious and the playful, that they resist classification according to traditional literary rubrics (Abrams 1999, 168).

In terms of character, there is no coherent 'self' and no attempt to represent an identity—individuals are 'schizophrenic' in the sense that each person is many subjects, and there is only a series of different roles the individual (mostly unconsciously) aspires to perform (Childs 2006, 130).

Thus postmodernist fiction generally takes this disintegration of character. A *cancelled character* (sometimes called an *erased character)* is a character in a postmodernist work who (or which) is introduced in order to make the reader accept him or her as a human individual, but who is later cancelled or erased and revealed to be only the creation of the novelist, a construct who has existence only in the pages of the work' (Hawthorn 2010, 131). Such a refusal to observe established conventions can be compared to the way in which modernist art refused to conform to realist ideas: it perverted the representation of depth in pictures—perspective. The aim is also to make the reader or viewer think about the way in which these conventions govern our understanding both in literature and in the extra-literary world.

Postmodernism 'aspires to ways of enjoying—and finding a new agenda for—creative and interpretative activity' (Montgomery et. al. 1994, 174). That agenda involves seeing how texts build on, break and play with conventions of texts and their contexts, rather than spreading personal and social messages.

1.3
CRITICAL APPROACHES TO FICTION

1.3.1 Russian and Czech Formalism

A formalist critic is the one who pays great attention to the form of a literary work, but the term has been applied mostly to three groups of critics: the Russian and Czech formalists, whose most influential work was written in the second two decades of the 20th century, and the Anglo-American New Critics, who flourished in the 1940s and 1950s.

Russian formalism developed during the First World War and lasted into the 1920s, but by 1930 antagonism from Soviet authorities had forced its most prominent members into exile. One Russian formalist, Roman Jakobson, moved first to Czechoslovakia and then to the United States, and René Wellek's migration from Prague to the United States established important lines of indirect influence from Russian and Czech formalism through to Anglo-American New Criticism. Formalist critics argue that parallelism is a fundamental constitutive feature of the formal patterning which distinguishes literature from other kinds of discourse. Such critics value parallelism because of the way it tends to foreground or draw attention to the text itself independently of content or meaning.

The importance of Russian formalism is that members of this critical and theoretical grouping paid serious attention to the novel and developed an analytical terminology, which has remained important. It is the Russian Formalists (notably Victor Shklovsky, 1925) who identified a key distinction between the *fabula* (the chronological series of events as they happen) and the *sjuzhet* (the narrative organization of those events in a plot). In more traditional approaches to prose fiction, critics use the terms *story* and *plot*.

The Czech formalists (often referred to as the 'Prague School') flourished from the late 1920s through to the German invasion of Czechoslovakia and developed certain concepts of the Russian formalists such as that of *defamiliarization* (Shklovsky's Russian term *ostranenie),* producing their own concept of *foregrounding,* which has played a useful role in the criticism of prose fiction. At the heart of Russian formalism was the belief that the purpose of all art was to defamiliarize the familiar in order to generate for the viewer or reader a new perspective on the topic of the piece of work under consideration. The term *foregrounding*, which was borrowed from the visual arts and denotes the ability of a verbal element to

obtain extra significance, to say more in a definite context, was introduced by Prague Structuralists (notably Jan Mukařovský).

The term *foregrounding* may be used in a purely linguistic sense. It then refers to new information, in contrast to elements in the sentence which form the background against which the new elements are to be understood by the listener/reader. In what follows, this term can be used in the areas of stylistics, text linguistics, and literary studies. To put this simply, they claimed that if the text departs from linguistic norms, it becomes more poetic (Gregoriou 2009, 27). Essentially, foregrounding (emphasizing) is one of the effects which contribute to literature's aesthetic characterization.

In the context of text analysis, foregrounding is achieved by a variety of means, which have largely been grouped into two main types—*deviation* and *parallelism*. Whereas deviations are essentially violations or departures from certain linguistic norms, parallelism refers to unexpected repetition of such norms.

Foregrounded linguistic devices, for example, are thus considered conspicuous—they catch the listener's or reader's attention (e.g. the use of old-fashioned and/or very formal words such as *epicure, improvident*, and *whither* in spontaneous spoken conversations). Foregrounding thus captures deviations from the norm. Cases of neologisms, live metaphors, or ungrammatical sentences, as well as archaisms, paradox, and oxymoron (the traditional tropes) are clear examples of deviation.

1.3.2 British and American Criticism: key differences

The New Critics (two main varieties in the 1950s) consider either 'literature' or a novel a self-enclosed system that can be studied in terms of itself in relative isolation.

In terms of method, the New Critics (British 'practical criticism'—I. A. Richards, W. Empson, F. R. Leavis) typically use what has been called close reading — analyzing a small selection of a novel in exhaustive detail, drawing attention to the following sort of issues (Barry 2003, 80): firstly, a predominant interest in the evaluation of literary texts; secondly, its methodological implicitness—that is, it refused to spell out as general principles the reasons for exclusion from the matters concerned with historical or biographical contexts, or with the reader's response to the text; and thirdly, its moralism—that is, it valued a literary work primarily for its embodiment of humane values, rather than for aesthetic qualities in the narrow sense.

The American version of literary criticism, known as the *New Criticism* (C. Ransom, C. Brooks, W. K. Wimsatt), can be characterized by the opposite of the British qualities: firstly, it was predominantly interested in the interpretation of literary texts; secondly, it was methodologically explicit—that is, it valued explicit statements about method which laid out the grounds for excluding from consideration the author's intentions and biography or the reader's reaction to the text); thirdly, it valued a literary work primarily for formal and aesthetic reasons such as the extent to which it maintained a fine balance of opposed qualities and brought them into a unity of synthesis.

Because the New Critics developed their critical ideas and practices mainly in connection with the interpretation and analysis of poetry, they tended to bring to the criticism of the novel a new concern with such matters as linguistic detail, paradox, irony, symbolism, and so on.

1.3.3 Post-Structuralism

Post-structuralism extends and even universalizes the structuralist assumption that no element in a system of meaning has significance in and for itself but only as part of the system or in relations to other elements (Hawthorn 2010, 207). Jacques Derrida, the French high priest of deconstruction, called such a desired point of stability a *transcendental signified;* and for him, meaning is always relational. Examples of such transcendental signifieds in the criticism of the novel would be such things as 'the intended meaning of the author', 'how contemporary readers read the work', 'what the work means to a competent reader', and so on.

In an essay called *The death of the author* (1968), Roland Barthes claims, 'Classic criticism has never paid any attention to the reader; for it the writer is the only person in literature. …the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author' (Barthes 1977, 148). This post-structuralist argument represents a radical overturning of the authority of the author and of those ways of reading which are centred upon it. Barthes advances the following arguments:

(1) The author is, by definition, absent from writing (in contrast to speech, which generally implies the presence of the speaker).

(2) A text's meaning is produced in the act of reading, not of writing.

(3) A text is not an utterly unique artifact emerging from a writer's brain; instead, the conventions and language which make up a text are

available to the writer precisely because they have been used before (for intertextuality and allusion, see Chapter 4).

1.3.4 Structuralist Narratology

It is supposed that the term *narratology* was coined as late as in 1969, and was subsequently popularized in the 1970s by structuralist writers, who applied the general principles of *structuralist* theory to the analysis of various examples of narrative.

Narratology as an area of study is so recent that although it is a recognized academic discipline, its practitioners are not, generally, to be found in departments of narratology. Narratologists may be found in departments of English, Comparative Literature, Law, Linguistics, Medicine, Sociology, and many others. However, because some of the most important and most highly valued narratives in our culture (and in other cultures) are works of literary prose fiction, narratologists have had much to say about novels and short stories. And such has been the impact and influence of narratology that a good many of the concepts and terms that its practitioners have developed have been imported into literary criticism and into the study of literary narratives. It is no exaggeration to say that the recent development of narratology as an academic discipline has helped to build up a conceptual basis for the analysis of prose fiction, and it has done this in a remarkably short time. Moreover, if literary criticism took much from narratology, it gave much too. The foundational work on modern narratology—Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (first published in French as *Figures III* in 1972 and in English translation in 1980)—in its attempt to describe the system governing all narratives, pays detailed analytical attention to Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-27).

Narratology is a rapidly expanding and many-faceted field of study. The origins of structuralism as a body of theory generally date back to Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics,* which was compiled by Saussure's students after his death from his lecture notes and first published in French in 1916. Saussure's most influential move in this work was to distinguish between what he terms 'static' and 'evolutionary' linguistics. Nowadays the terms 'synchronic' (or structuralist) linguistics, and 'diachronic' (or historical) linguistics are generally used to make the same distinction in English.

Saussure pointed out that language could be studied either by recording its development over time (which was a traditional way at the time he wrote)

or, alternatively, by looking at a given language as a functioning system at a particular moment of time without any concern for how it got to be that way. Saussure, incidentally, believed that these two approaches were complementary, although it is common to read claims that he wished to replace historical linguistics with synchronic linguistics. Those structuralists who used Saussure as their theoretical starting point adopted his synchronic approach to the study of language as a model (or 'paradigm'), and they attempted to construct a 'grammar' of different systems of meaning in the way in which Saussure had written of the construction of a synchronic grammar of language.

It is for this reason that early structuralist narratologists adopted some of the terms used by structuralist linguists. In explaining his use of the term 'mood', for example, Gérard Genette notes, 'one can tell *more* or tell *less* what one tells, and can tell it *according to one point of mood or another;* and this capacity, and the modalities of its use, are precisely what our category of *narrative mood* aims at' (1980, 161–162). Genette further uses the term 'voice' to designate the narrative situation or its instance (1980, 30–31). These and other terms are taken from the terminology applied by linguists to the grammar of verbs.

Central to structuralist linguistics is a concern for an abstract form of analysis that is not concerned with the particular meaning of a single sentence, but with the underlying system that makes meaning possible—its *grammar.* Structuralist narratologists share a similar concern, although they have disagreed as to whether they are looking for the grammar of a particular narrative text, a set of texts, or of narrative in general. Thus the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp was interested not in any particular folktale, but in the underlying system or grammar that enabled the generation of a large number of seemingly different folktales. Just as one grammar allows the generation of an enormously large number of grammatical sentences in English, so in the same way, one 'grammar' of the folktale could be recognized in any given folktale in a particular cultural or generic tradition.

Structuralist narratology in its purer form focuses much less on the detail of individual works than on the manner in which they exemplify a set of possibilities open to the genre as a whole. Like the trend in linguistics upon which they are based, literary-critical structuralism tends to be ahistorical, concentrating upon systems as they operate at a given moment in time rather than on their modification over time.

What structuralist narratology has given the student of prose fiction, then, is a set of concepts and their related terms that denote aspects of the

underlying 'grammar' of narratives. In some cases this has involved refining and sharpening existing terms and concepts—thus the older term *point of view* has been refined by modern narratologists so as to enable a distinction between *perspective* and *voice*. Another example involves a narratological appropriation of the terms *diegesis* and *mimesis*, used in the third book of Plato's *Republic* to distinguish between cases where the poet himself is the speaker (diegesis) and cases where the poet creates the illusion that speeches should not be attributed to him personally (mimesis). Gerald Prince's *Dictionary of Narratology* (1988) defines *diegesis* as either the fictional world in which events occur in a narrative or 'telling' as against 'showing'.

Several other important contributions by structuralist narratologists to the analysis of literary narrative can be listed. Perhaps the most important of these has been the refinement of the distinction between *story* and *plot*. But many other theoretical advances in the study of literary narrative have been powered by the work of structuralist narratologists—important work on key techniques such as Free Indirect Discourse, for example.

If structuralist narratology can be said to have been enormously productive, then its limits and shortcomings have also inspired some narratologists to find a model for narrative that offers an alternative to structuralist linguistics. This search for an alternative narratological model is one of the forces that has powered the shift from the linguistic paradigm to the rhetorical paradigm.

1.3.5 Postclassical Narratology

In his volume *Narratologies: New perspectives on Narrative Analysis* (1999, 2–3), David Herman introduced the term *postclassical narratology* and defined it as follows: 'Postclassical narratology (which should not be conflated with poststructuralist theories of narrative) contains classical narratology as one of its "moments" but is marked by a profusion of new methodologies and research hypotheses: the result is a host of new perspectives on the forms and functions of narrative itself. Further, in its postclassical phase, research on narrative does not just expose the limits but also exploits the possibilities of the older, structuralist models'.

What is subsumed under classical narratology primarily embraces the work of the French structuralists (Roland Barthes, Claude Bremond, Tzvetan Todorov, A. J. Greimas, and Gérard Genette). The influential spokespersons of the postclassical narratology made the following contributions:

Meir Sternberg went beyond mere chronology to focus on the dynamics of narrative design; Thomas Pavel founded possible-worlds theory; Seymur Chatman started to analyse film narrative; and Susan Lanser began to incorporate questions of gender and ideology.

Ansgar Nünning, in his work *What is Narratology?* (2003, 243–4), has captured the extent and variety of new approaches in a diagram that provides the most important distinctions between classical and postclassical narratologies. He contrasts (1) classical text-centredness with postclassical context orientation and (2) the treatment of narrative as a langue with the pragmatic focus on the parole of individual (use of) narratives in postclassical approaches. As in the syntax vs. pragmatics dichotomy, Nünning also (3) sees classical narratology as a closed system and postclassical narratologies as emphasizing the dynamics of narration. Moreover, he (4) subsumes the shift from the functional analysis of features to a reader-oriented focus on strategies and applications in the dichotomy and (5) contrasts classical bottom-up analysis with postclassical top-down inferencing. Where (6) classical narratology remained shy of moral grounding, postclassical narratologies open themselves to moral issues, analogously causing (7) a shift from descriptive to interpretative and evaluative paradigms. Another important feature of postclassical narratologies is their emphasis on new media.

To summarize, while traditional narratologists primarily focused on the eighteenth-century to early twentieth-century novel, transmedial approaches handle new genres and storytelling practices across a wide spectrum of media: plays, films, narrative poems, conversational storytelling, cartoons, video clips, paintings, and so forth.

1.3.6 Cognitive Narratology

Structuralist narratology did not pay much attention to the referential or world-creating dimension of narratives (perhaps Ferdinand de Saussure excluded the referent from his theory of the sign and instead favoured the dichotomy *signifier vs. signified*). Cognitive narratologists, like Monika Fludernik, David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Ralf Schneider, however, show that the recipient uses his or her world knowledge to project fictional worlds, and this knowledge is stored in cognitive schemata called frames and scripts.

The basic assumption of *cognitive narratology* is that readers evoke fictional worlds (or storyworlds) on the basis of their real-world knowledge; cognitive narratology seeks to describe the range of cognitive processes

that are involved. Alan Palmer and Lisa Zunshine, for instance, argue that the way in which we attempt to make sense of fictional narratives is similar to the way in which we try to make sense of other people (Herman 2010, 12). This emphasis ties in with generally pragmatic concerns, thereby establishing connections with recent developments in linguistics, where the direction of research has also moved from syntax to pragmatics and on to cognitive approaches.

In recent years, a number of radical critiques and suggestions for rewriting the classical model have been proposed. The categories that have so far come in for most critical attention include focalization, voice, person, the status of the narrator, the implied author and the issue of unreliability, and the story-discourse distinction. A final postclassical area of research is the study of unnatural narratives, that is, anti-mimetic (primarily postmodernist) narrative texts that challenge and move beyond real-world understandings of identity, time, and space by representing scenarios and events that would be impossible in the actual world.

1.3.7 Literary Text Analysis and Cognitive Stylistics

The predominance of literary texts as the focus of study within stylistics is reflected in some of the alternative names that stylistics sometimes goes by. These include literary stylistics and linguistic stylistics. A distinction usually refers to the objectives behind the type of analysis. Hence, literary stylistics in this case is concerned with using linguistic techniques to assist in the interpretation of texts, whereas linguistic stylistics is about doing stylistic analysis in order to test or refine a linguistic model and to contribute to linguistic theory. Offering linguistic principles to the study of literature, stylistics possesses a kind of objectivity that literary criticism seems to lack; it is a process of literary text analysis.

Stylistics is uses a wide range of theories, though it originated in literary theories of formalism and took on the theory of structuralism as developed by Saussure in the early 20th century. What these theories together provided was the descriptive apparatus (such as grammatical and lexical terminology and categories) which would enable scholars to identify the techniques that writers were using to demonstrate the linguistic basis of well-known literary effects, particularly those which were foregrounded.

In time, stylistics responded to the developing of new theories of language, based more on contextual factors (in the case of pragmatics and

discourse analysis) and on cognitive factors (in the case of generative grammar and cognitive linguistics).

An area of stylistics, in which interest has grown considerably over the last decades, is generally known as *cognitive stylistics* (*cognitive poetics* is another term currently in use). Cognitive stylistics is clearly related to the discipline of literary criticism, and it focuses primarily on hypothesizing about what happens during the reading process and how this influences the interpretations that readers generate about the texts they are reading. It is based on the assumption that reading is an active process and that readers consequently play an active role in constructing the meaning of texts. Put simply, it is a field that investigates what happens cognitively when we read. Cognitive stylistics has drawn considerable influence from work in areas such as cognitive science generally, psychology, and artificial intelligence.

In recent years, the theories of cognitive stylistics have been outlined by R. Tsur, E. Semino, P. Stockwell, J. Gavins and G. Steen. In a discussion of how readers make sense of the fictional worlds of poems, Semino makes a useful distinction between what she terms projection and construction. Texts project meaning while readers construct it (Jeffries and McIntyre 2010, 127). That is, texts contain triggers which activate aspects of readers' background knowledge. This then allows readers to construct mental representations of the text as, for example, cognitive metaphors. (See further discussion in 4.3.)

1.4
LITERARY TRANSLATIONS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM: CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS

A literary work is an integral part of culture. As professor Valdes (1986, 137) states, 'one of the major functions of literature is to serve as a medium to transmit the culture of the people who speak the language in which it is written'. Literature is culture in action, and it is a means of presenting cultural slices of life.

In the EFL classroom, teaching priorities have recently moved towards addressing intercultural problems. The importance of exposing students to other cultures through literature has been asserted, and instructional materials and practices are under development to this end. When successful, these practices will result in a student who is engaged in interpreting fiction and

who becomes acquainted with the artistic worldview of the author. In the language classroom, educators deal with culture on a national as well as an intercultural level.

A literary translation is a device of art used to release the text from its dependence on prior cultural knowledge. However, it is not an easy task to transplant a text steeped in one culture into another. Furthermore, different translated versions of one and the same text are open to different interpretations. As Umberto Eco (1989, 17) claims, 'A work of art, therefore, is a complete and *closed* form in its uniqueness as a balanced organic whole, while at the same time constituting an *open* product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations which do not impinge on its unadulterable specificity'. Particularly demanding from the translator's point of view is the use of culturally specific imagery (simile, metaphors, allusions, personification, and symbols).

In the paper based on the translation of a collection of short stories *A night in Casablanca* by the Moroccan writer Muhammad Zefzaf, the translator introduces the reader to the common linguistic difficulties of translating from Arabic. To give the closest approximation of the source language, it is necessary to opt for 'glossing' or using explanatory footnotes. Here is another example with a historical reference that also requires the use of a footnote:

> When they divorced, he didn't think she would do that, but he soon knew that a woman is capable of doing anything. Didn't she cause Adam to be dismissed from Eden and waged a war against Ali (May God be pleased with him)?

The first reference to Adam and Eve in Eden is a biblical one and needs no commentary to the western reader. The second allusion, however, derived from Islamic history, might be vague to the reader. It refers to A'ishah, one of prophet Muhammad's wives and daughter of his first caliph (successor). She played a significant role in supporting those who were fighting against the fourth caliph Ali—a revered figure in Islamic history, especially for the Shiite sect. These cultural and historical allusions give a certain density to the language and need to be explicated in the translation to bring forth the richness of the text for the new readers. Footnotes, however, can be rather intrusive, and, therefore, their uses need to be minimized as much as possible.

Here is another example that illustrates an amalgam of grotesquery, parody, mysticism in the city of Venice in the postmodernist novel *Perverzion*

by Yuri Andrukhovych. The passage with historical and cultural references, then, can be understood as creating visual sensory impressions in the eyes of a Ukrainian intellectual. They are part of the prior cultural knowledge taken for granted by the author:

> A streak of sunlight upon the furniture, chandeliers, silverware, *mio caro signore, tutto e per Lei*, a typical Venetian scene unfolds, which we can call 'Joy of Being, or *Dolce vita*.' There's the lapping of water, the scent of perfumes, almond pastries, chapels on piles, a poem of Rilke's dedicated to Richard Beer-Hofmann, sharp-quilled grasses in inner courtyards, a thimbleful of sludgy hellish coffee, learned erudites and bookworms, brazen older women who look you in the eye, ten thousand churches, palaces, wine cellars, museums, bordellos, four hundred bridges from each of which you are invited to spit, schools of mysterious trades, street tenors singing romances, and of course, the most triumphal of all Venetian phenomena: the ubiquitous flapping of laundry that never dries. (Translated by Martha Kuchar.)

Thus it is a great challenge dealing with a language that has a different feel and nuance embedded more in culture than in literal meaning. This reconstruction of the translation process sheds some light on the linguistic and cultural issues that might be encountered in literary translation. The more important tasks, which have to be undertaken through lingua-cultural analysis, are much broader and involve learning the culture of the people represented in a fictional text.

Every writer has a distinctive voice; it is therefore important for a reader to be able to hear the individual voice of the writer. This sensitivity to voice can help to ensure that the reader is finally able (1) to interpret the fictional text; (2) to perceive the gentle reverberations of meaning, the ingenious symbols to be explored, decoded, and analysed; and (3) to define their literary value.

The most important factor for successful reading is that an examination of a foreign culture using those translated literary texts that contain culture-specific information (allusions, a system of values, symbols, artifacts, etc.) should increase readers' understanding of that culture and perhaps inspire their own imaginative writing. Indeed, active engagement with a literary text depends on a reader's familiarity with the cultural assumptions in it. As Allen (1975, 111) asserts, 'Literature is a facet of culture. Its significance can be best understood in terms of its culture, and its purpose is meaningful only when the assumptions it is based on are understood and accepted'. As

Kövesces explains, 'Symbols in general and cultural symbols in particular may be based on well-entrenched metaphors in a culture…' (Kövesces 2002, 59). (See more about symbols in 4.6.)

Rosenblatt (1991, 445) has found two distinct ways that readers approach texts. According to him, 'efferent' reading is reading for the purpose of getting information. When we read from an efferent point of view, we focus more on content than on form, attending more to the writer's message than to how that message is delivered. The opposite of efferent reading is described by Rosenblatt as 'aesthetic' reading, which involves concentrating upon images, associations, and feelings the material evokes. The latter enables and strengthens the readers' interaction with the text.

A piece of literature is a highly charged artifact. Writers assume that their readers share with them similar cultural experiences, similar cultural knowledge and assumptions. As readers try to interpret received linguistic clues, they will naturally draw upon information gained from their own experience and background. This information is part of the framework—existing knowledge about the world—that they bring to bear in the reading process (Gajdusek 1988, 232). Thus the possibility of cultural inference and misinterpretation occurs when the reader does not share the same cultural assumptions. The problem is to explore the cultural assumptions of the target culture that can also change across time and are influenced by social as well as national identity, including objects, situations, rituals and traditions, actions, settings, characters, names, and so on.

It is often difficult for a foreign reader to decode all the cultural references familiar to the native user of the language. Therefore, the value of cultural, historical, and linguistic commentaries must not be underestimated because they are a helpful means of grasping the message of a literary work. The commentaries are designed to reflect the specific features of national character, ideals, morals, and the elements of foreign standards of living.

Literary texts are suitable for developing intercultural communicative competence. Not only do they invite readers to engage with a nation or an ethnic group by portraying specific values, prejudices, and stereotypes; they also offer their audience the chance to exchange their culturally restricted points of view with the fictional character(s) or with the narrator. Accordingly, the emphasis is placed on 'the contrast with the students' known "home" literature and culture, especially where the difference between the learners' own culture and the target culture is large' (Durant 1977, 20).

The rationale for including literary translations in the language classroom is to promote students' curiosity about the target culture and to raise awareness of their own culture. The above skills-based approach, where the students observe, analyse, and form conclusions, is based on their prior knowledge of their own culture, which can then be compared and contrasted with the target culture. Comparisons to other cultures are not idle as they often result in real consideration of one's own cultural values where blind acceptance has existed before—for students and teachers alike.

(CH 1) ASSIGNMENTS

(1) How do acts of reading correlate with the process of interpretation of a literary work?

(2) What are the landmarks in the development of modern literary fiction?

(3) What are the basic peculiarities of modernist and postmodernist fiction? What is a *cancelled character* in terms of postmodernist fiction?

(4) Why do we classify novels and short stories as narratives?

(5) Choose one of the schools of criticism (the Russian and Czech Formalists or the New Critics) and say how it has extended your understanding of the art of the writer.

(6) What are the main directions in cognitive narratology and cognitive stylistics?

(7) What are the stages in studying the lingua-cultural background of literary translations? What difficulties does the translator face while interpreting culture-specific imagery?

(8) Read the following general information about the concept of *symbol*.

> A symbol is something such as an object, picture, written word, sound, or particular mark that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention. In ancient Greece, a 'symbolon' (from Greek 'to put together') was a means of recognizing each other. An object (whether a piece of

parchment, a picture, or a coin) was cut in half, and only if the two halves fitted together, were letters delivered or messages given to unknown recipients. (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.)

(a) Why is it important to learn the symbols of a specific country?
(b) Choose a piece of literary translation dealing with a social or cultural topic. List as many symbols as you can with a brief explanation of each one.
(c) Share and discuss your findings in a small group.

(CH 1) REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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CHAPTER 2

NARRATION AND NARRATORS IN FICTION

Preview

This chapter addresses the following issues:

- first-person and third-person narration: two important points of view
- 'story' and 'narration' in relation to the concept of *diegesis*
- voice and perspective
- the choice of narrator
- speech presentation: types of techniques

2.1
POINT OF VIEW

One of the most important ways in which writers knit their stories together and also an important way in which they try to interest and engage readers is careful control of point of view. Point of view is the voice of the story, the speaker who is doing the narration. It may be regarded as the focus of the story, the angle of vision from which things are not only seen and reported but also judged. The major part of literary works is usually written in the form of narration: the author's story about the events and about the actions of characters.

In every story events are presented from somebody's point of view and in a certain mode of narration. A primary distinction to be made is that between the basic types of narration: first- and third-person narration. (See the discussion below in 2.3.2.)

If the story is a *first-person narration*, it is told from a character's point of view and the reader gets a biased understanding of the events and the other characters because he/she sees them through the perception of the character who narrates. The narrator (or speaker) usually uses the 'I' personal pronoun in referring to his or her position as an observer or commentator; the 'I' is also a primary character in the story. At the same time, any story always reveals the author's point of view even if it is implied. The character's and the author's viewpoints may or may not coincide.

First-person narration may be found in a wide range of novels written in different styles and periods. Novels such as Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* (1967), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1983) are told in the first person. Indeed, in the case of *Robinson Crusoe*, the very chapter headings emphasize the use of the first person: 'I go to sea', 'I am very ill and frightened', 'I sow my grain', 'I am very seldom idle'.

Third-person narration is where the narrator is the author in the story and the reference to characters involves the use of third-person pronouns. The opening of *A Christmas Song* (1950) by Herbert Ernest Bates is of this type, in the way it introduces Clara, a talented young music teacher who works in a music shop in a small Midlands town.

> She gave lessons in voice-training in the long room above the music shop. Her pupils won many examinations and were afterwards very successful at

local concerts and sometimes in giving lessons in voice-training to other pupils. She herself had won many examinations and everybody said how brilliant she was.

The third-person point of view may be of the following types:

(1) *limited,* with the focus being on one particular character and what he or she does, says, hears, thinks, and otherwise experiences;

(2) *omniscient,* with the thoughts and behaviour of all the characters being open and fully known by the speaker; and

(3) *objective,* with the story being confined *only* to essential reporting of actions and speeches, with no commentary and no revelation of the thoughts of any of the characters.

As Hawthorn (2010, 112) argues, *omniscient* is a term about which many recent commentators have expressed doubts. *Omniscient* narrator means 'all-knowing' or 'all-seeing', and the word implies that the narrator knows everything: what has happened and what will happen, what the characters are thinking, and so on. One objection to the term is that it has been applied rather loosely to any non-character narrator who actually professes ignorance about his/her characters and the events with which they are involved. Another objection is that it seems odd to talk about some narrators knowing 'everything' when there is nothing more to know in a work of fiction than that which is created by the author. Such objections are unlikely to oust the term, and indeed many sophisticated narratologists still use it and form illogical compounds such as *semi-omniscient*.

Complete omniscience is not only unfamiliar to human beings; it may work against the creation of that tension and uncertainty that exercise the reader's mind in a creative fashion. It is also extremely important to remember that novelists may vary what a narrator knows from page to page. Thus the so-called omniscient narrator may not, actually, be completely all-knowing.

According to Roberts and Jacobs (1992, 66), it is point of view that makes fiction lifelike, although the author arranges the point of view so that the reader may be properly guided to learn of actions and dialogue. But point of view raises some of the same questions that are found in life. For example, we cannot always be sure of the reliability of what people tell us; we often need to know what their position is. In life, all people have their own limitations, attitudes, and opinions; so their description of any event and their beliefs or conclusions about such events will no doubt be

coloured by these attitudes. For example, would the testimony of a nearsighted person who witnessed a distant incident while not wearing glasses be accurate? Would someone's report be reliable if the person were interpreting an activity of someone he or she did not like? The same applies to the speakers that we encounter in fiction. For readers, the perception of a fictional point of view can be as complex as life itself, and it may be as difficult to find and rely upon proper sources of information.

2.2 'STORY' AND 'NARRATION': FOCUS ON THE CONCEPT OF *DIEGESIS*

In prose fiction we can distinguish the actual events, which are claimed to have taken place in a novel or a short story, from the way those events are told in the narrative. Pioneering work in this area was done by the Russian formalist critics, as already mentioned, who made the following distinction:

what happened	vs.	how it is told
'story'		'narration'

Thus two main dimensions or levels are identified:

(1) *story,* consisting of the basic events and actions in chronological order in which they are supposed to have happened, together with circumstances in which the actions are performed; and

(2) *narration,* comprising the techniques and devices used for telling the 'story' to the reader. The purpose of narration is, as much as possible, to render the story, to make it clear, and to bring it alive in the reader's imagination.

One reason for making this distinction is to examine the way in which a story re-orders the events. When a text includes a flashback, for example, the order of events in the story (historical time) is obviously not the same as the order of events in the narration (narrated order).

When the narrator draws on the story (or pretends to draw on it) to create the narration, he/she creates a story which, broadly speaking, 'makes sense'. Reality need not make sense, but a narration usually does. This is an important distinction to draw, because 'we can think of narrations as ways of making sense of the world around us through telling stories about it' (Montgomery et al., 1992, 177–8).

Two different issues are involved here: (a) is the narrator personified? and (b) is the narrator presented as an individual who lives in the same world as the characters? It is the case that there is a conventional association of personified narrators with life inside a fictional world and of third-person narrators with a perspective on characters and events from outside a fictional world. To get at the distinction in defining narrators, structuralist narratologists use two main types of narrative modes: *mimesis* (the direct presentation of speech and action) and *diegesis* (the verbal representation of events). The term *diegesis* refers to the 'story level' of a narrative as against its 'narrative level'. Robert Scholes (1980, 210) compares diegesis to the referent and defines it as the constructed sequence of events generated by a reading of the text, whereas the referent is the sequence of events to which it (i.e. the story) refers.

According to the relevance to the story and the act of telling, narrators can be classified into different 'levels' (Hawthorn 2010, 111–112):

(1) extra-heterodiegetic narrator: a 'first level' narrator who narrates a story in which he or she is not present,

(2) extra-homodiegetic narrator: a 'first level' narrator who narrates a story in which he or she is present,

(3) intra-heterodiegetic narrator: a 'second level' narrator who narrates a story in which he or she is not present,

(4) intra-heterodiegetic narrator: a 'second level' narrator who narrates a story in which he or she is present.

2.3 TYPES OF NARRATORS

2.3.1 Voice and Perspective

According to Mikhail Bakhtin, 'the decisive and distinctive importance of the novel as a genre [is that] the human being in the novel is first, foremost and always a speaking human being; the novel requires speaking persons bringing with them their own unique ideological discourse, their own language' (1981, 332). This does not, however, mean that people in prose fiction speak the same way as people in the everyday extrafictional world do. It does mean that novels tend to have not one centre of authority—the narrator's or author's voice—but many such centres, which typically are in

conflict with one another. For Bakhtin, voice will be perceived because it is not just a mechanical means whereby thoughts are broadcast; it has an ideological dimension. Different voices in the novel represent and express different points of view, different perspectives. Moreover, for Bakhtin, different voices can be isolated even in a narrator's or a single character's words: when we speak, our utterances contain a range of different voices, each of which carries its own values; so an utterance can represent a real war of different viewpoints and perspectives.

In his book *Studying the Novel* (2010), Jeremy Hawthorn claims that the disadvantage with the traditional term *point of view* is that it obscures what recent theorists have distinguished between *perspective* ('who sees or perceives?') and *voice* ('who speaks or tells?'). In Katharine Mansfield's short story *The Voyage* (1922), for instance, the voice is that of a third-person narrator. The reader is, nevertheless, encouraged to see and experience everything through the consciousness and senses of the main character of the story, the little girl Fenella. Hawthorn, then, concludes that the *voice* is that of a semi-omniscient third-person narrator, but the *perspective* is Fenella's.

To express the distinction between narrative voice and perspective, Genette (1980, 189–194) has introduced the term *focalisation* in order to avoid confusion with earlier usages of the terms 'point of view' or 'perspective', which are often used to denote narrative voice as well.

2.3.2 The Choice of Narrator

Narrators are the individuals or voices who (or even which) tell us the story. Evidently, narrators greatly differ in kind; however, because stories usually are told by someone, almost every story has some kind of narrator.

First-person narration often seems more subjective than third-person narration since it seems to position us within the consciousness of the narrating character. But there are ways of reducing this sense of subjectivity. A narrator who says 'I' might be involved in events to a much greater or a much lesser degree: as the protagonist, as some other major character, as some minor character, as a mere passive spectator, or even as a character who arrives late upon the scene and then tries to piece together what happened. Thus a narrator's knowledge might vary in gradations from total omniscience to almost total ignorance.

An important subclass of first-person narration involves cases where the narrative is told not by the central protagonist but by a subsidiary

character. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1922) is a well-known case of this. Although Nick Carraway, the narrator, tells the story in the first person, he remains on the margins of the events which involve the central figure—Jay Gatsby himself—whose story is thus told from some degree of narrative distance.

A narrator may seem to have many of the attributes of a human being without being a character in the story that he or she narrates. Thus some narrators may have names and detailed personal histories; others merely suggest that they are persons (perhaps by the occasional use of 'I' in their narrative) but tell us no more about themselves than this (Hawthorn 2010). Hence, we have (a) a personified narrator, named and with well-defined individual human characteristics, a 'teller' recognized by the reader as a distinct person; (b) an unpersonified (impersonal) narrator, human but anonymous; (c) a type of narrator not corresponding to any recognizable human entity.

Another classification divides narrators into *participants* and *nonparticipants*. When the narrator is cast as a participant in the events of the story, he or she is a dramatized character who says 'I'. Such a narrator may be the protagonist or may be an observer, a minor character standing a little to one side. A narrator who remains a nonparticipant does not appear in the story as a character. Viewing the characters, seeing into the minds of one or more of them, such a narrator refers to them as 'he', 'she', or 'they'.

The standard technical terms used by structuralist narratologists to define narrators get at some of these distinctions. According to Gérard Genette (1980), 'homodiegetic' narration refers to the choice of a first-person narrator and 'heterodiegetic' narration, of a third-person narrator.

Dieter Meindl (2008, 35) makes some interesting points about the relative advantages of the first set of choices, although in his terminology the choice is between a first-person or a third-person narrator. First-person narration is limited in scope: the narrator cannot simply state the inner world (thoughts, feelings) of others. Conversely, the first-person narrator—a real person or subject—is unlimited in manner, commanding as s/he does the whole range of subject discourses—erring, deceiving oneself and/or others, etc., as well as telling the truth: s/he is unreliable. The narrative agency ('narrator') of third-person narrative is not a person or subject; hence, third-person narrative can hardly be subjective or unreliable, but it is basically reliable in the sense of being authorial.

2.4
TECHNIQUES OF SPEECH PRESENTATION

Story telling—whether in a novel or a short story—often relies on the expressive and dramatic potential of speech. In this sense, nearly the whole story depends at some point on the presentation of material as if it were fragments of a spoken dialogue which is being quoted. Various techniques are used in the presentation of speech (i.e. the characters' words and thoughts) and the identification of speakers. These techniques may be classified under the following major types:

Direct speech

In *direct speech*, speech is enclosed within quotation marks and introduced by or presented alongside a (grammatically independent) reporting clause (*she said/declared/commanded, asserted,* etc.). The language used in the reported clause is appropriate to the speaking character (in terms of pronouns, tense, lexis, etc.):

> 'Then can I come back down?' he asked.
> 'No, you cannot,' I said, noticing that half his margarita was gone. 'Where's your friend?'
> 'Ashton took a Zyprexa and then fell asleep,' Robby said blankly.
>
> (Bret Easton Ellis, *Lunar Park,* 2006)

Indirect speech

In comparison with direct speech, *indirect speech* is presented from a slightly different perspective, with a shift from the perspective of the speaker to that of the narrator. The language used in the reported clause is appropriate to the narrator (in terms of pronouns, tense, lexis, etc.).

The piece of a direct-speech dialogue from *Lunar Park* given above can be transformed into indirect speech, producing the following:

> Robbie asked whether he could then come back down. The narrator said that he couldn't and asked where his friend was. Robby said blankly that Ashton had taken a Zyprexa and then had fallen asleep.

Free direct speech

In this case the perspective of the narrator is minimized instead of being emphasized. The reporting clauses are dropped altogether, although the

quotation marks are usually preserved. The language is partly appropriate to the narrator (e.g. tense and pronouns) and partly to the character (e.g. lexis and grammatical structures).

The first line of the dialogue in the example below could be treated as direct speech if 'She looked for fully half a minute into the mirror, without saying another word' is taken as a reporting clause. But the remaining speech is in the free direct mode because of the absence of any other reporting clauses:

> She looked for fully half a minute into the mirror, without saying another word.
> 'I still can't think why I didn't see Heidi. She promised to meet me for coffee yesterday.'
> 'She could hardly meet you for coffee if she wasn't here.'
> 'I don't get it.'
> 'I've sent her home.'
> (Herbert Ernest Bates, *How Vainly Men Themselves Amaze,* 1968)

Free indirect speech

Another technique for the representation of consciousness is called *narrated monologue* or *free indirect discourse*. This is a mixed form, consisting partly of direct speech and partly of indirect (or reported) speech, where it is difficult to separate the voice of the narrator from the voice of the character. Grammatically free indirect speech resembles indirect speech (third person singular), but it also retains some individual characteristics of characters' speech.

> Beautiful? said Ignatius Gallaher, pausing on the word and on the flavour of his drink. It's not so beautiful, you know. Of course, it is beautiful… But it's the life of Paris; that's the thing. Ah, there's no city like Paris for gaiety, movement, excitement…
> (James Joyce, *A Little Cloud,* from *Dubliners,* 1914)

It is a fairly simple matter, involving few changes, to switch the free indirect speech of this passage into direct speech, thereby emphasizing the perspective of the character:

> 'Beautiful?' said Ignatius Gallaher, pausing on the word and on the flavour of his drink. 'It's not so beautiful, you know. Of course, it is beautiful… But it's the life of Paris; that's the thing. Ah, there's no city like Paris for gaiety, movement, excitement…'

Free indirect speech is thus an ambiguous mode in that it blurs the distinction between a character's speech and the narrative voice. James Joyce and Jane Austen are especially known as exponents of free indirect speech. The use of this technical device offers the emotional weight of the character's perspective.

The stream of consciousness technique and interior monologue

A further development of the modes of speech representation given above is to be found in the so-called *stream of consciousness technique* through which the narrator designs a style which is based on the conception of the prevalence of the subconscious over the conscious; hence, the thought processes are presented as a flow of ideas, feelings, and images. It is a kind of selective omniscience: the presentation of thoughts and sense impressions in a lifelike fashion—not in a sequence arranged by logic, but mingled randomly.

This term was coined by William James, the brother of the novelist Henry James. It is important to note, however, that for William James the stream of consciousness was not necessarily verbal but also included other sensual perceptions, especially visual representations. It is also possible to reproduce the stream of consciousness in free indirect speech. The stream of consciousness technique is especially popular with representatives of modernism (Joyce and Woolf) and has brought into contemporary literature a deeper insight into human psychology. Through the stream of consciousness technique 'the narrator creates the illusion that without his or her interference, readers have direct access to the mental processes of the characters. As a result, the reader sees the fictional world through the "mental window" of the observing consciousness of the characters' (Verdonk 2002, 50).

Here is an example from Episode 13 (Nausicaa) of James Joyce's *Ulysses*:

> Ba. What is that flying about? Swallow? Bat probably. Thinks I'm a tree, so blind. Have birds no smell? Metempsychosis. They believed you could be changed into a tree from grief. Weeping willow. Ba. There he goes. Funny little beggar. Wonder where he lives. Belfry up there. Very likely. Hanging by his heels in the odour of sanctity. Bell scared him out, I suppose. Mass seems to be over. Could hear them all at it. Pray for us. And pray for us. And pray for us. Good idea the repetition. Same thing with ads. Buy from us. And buy from us.

This piece of first-person narration takes us right into the mind of Mr Leopold Bloom, the central figure in the novel. His thought processes are

directly projected. The fragmented syntax, the staccato phrases, the use of simple present tense tends to dramatize the thoughts and impressions of the character. The extract is entirely free from reporting clauses and inverted commas. The reader may have an impression not of a smoothly flowing stream but of an ocean of miscellaneous things.

Interior (internal) monologue is an extended presentation of a character's thoughts in such an arrangement as if the character were speaking out loud to him-/herself. It is usually narrated in the past tense as well as in the third person and creates a distancing perspective. Interior monologue is necessarily limited to verbal representation which tries to reproduce non-orderly and associative patterns of thought. These are the opening lines of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*:

> Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.
> For Lucy had her work cut out of her. The doors would be taken off their hinges; Rumpelmayer's men were coming. And then, thought Clarissa Dalloway, what a morning – fresh as if issued to children on a beach.

It is a rather lengthy piece of text (half a page and over) dealing with one major topic of the character's thinking, offering reasons for his past, present, or future actions, which allows the author (and the readers) to peep into the inner world of the character, to observe his ideas and views in the making. Besides, an internal monologue gives us a character's stream of consciousness (or at least part of it), but not every stream of consciousness is an internal monologue.

(CH 2) ASSIGNMENTS

(1) Give the pros and cons of reading a novel told by a first-person or a third-person narrator (or an 'anonymous voice' or an identified character).

(2) What are the objections and restrictions to the term *omniscient* point of view?

(3) Why do structuralist narratologists use the term *diegesis*?

(4) Take one or more novels or any shorter prose and imagine them as told in different ways by different narrators.

(a) Illustrate and discuss the strengths and limitations of such changes.
(b) Which type of speech presentation demands more effort of the author?

(5) Identify the type of speech presentation in the following segments:

(a) She took the ball from him and said: 'Thank you. You beer looks good. It makes me thirsty'.
(b) She gave him a bland, unequivocal stare of admiration, eyes immobile and precisely focused. 'Well, how *did* she strike you? Or are you not one of those who size people up very quickly?'

Try to rewrite each segment as indirect speech. Make a note of the changes that were necessary in order to do so. Compare the original with your rewritten version: are there any differences between them in terms of meaning or effect? If so, make a note of what the differences are.

(6) Identify the way of presenting speech used in the following segment:

'So, I just looked at him—coolly, you know, and looked at her. Then I looked back at him again—taking my time, you know, I don't think that that's a fair question to put to me, says I'.

Try to rewrite the segment as free indirect speech. Compare the original with your rewritten version: do they differ in meaning or effect? If so, how?

(7) Ellipsis (the omission of words and phrases from a text) can occur for different purposes. Elliptical dots (…) are used in reporting dialogue when a character has stopped speaking in mid-sentence, for example. Try to guess what word is omitted in the passage quoted below from Joyce's *The Sisters.* Explain your choice and the effect of this omission.

Eliza signed again and bowed her head in assent. My aunt fingered the stem of her wine-glass before sipping a little.
—Did he … peacefully? she asked.
—O, quite peacefully, ma'am, said Eliza. You couldn't tell when the breath went out of him. He had a beautiful death, God be praised.

(8) How would you outline the relationship between the stream of consciousness technique and interior monologue? Is the stream of consciousness technique a result of an interior monologue of a character?

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CHAPTER 3

CHARACTER, PLOT, AND STRUCTURE

Preview

This chapter addresses the following issues:

- types of literary character
- types of characterization
- methods of characterization
- plot and its structure
- chronology and order of plot structure
- components of plot structure

3.1
TYPES OF LITERARY CHARACTER

All works of fiction share a number of common elements, the more apparent ones for reference here being *character, plot,* and *structure.*

Stories are about characters—characters who, though not real people, are drawn from life. A character is a reasonable facsimile of a human being, with all the good and bad traits of being human. A story is usually concerned with a major problem that a character must face. This may involve interaction with another character, with a difficult situation, or with an idea or general circumstances that force action.

Some recent narrative theorists have preferred to talk of 'actors' rather than characters, pointing out that a work of science fiction might be based on roles filled by non-human participants (Hawthorn 2010, 11). Furthermore, the narrators of novels can be as fictional as the events which are presented. When Julian Barnes uses a woodworm to retell the biblical story of Noah's Ark from an unusual angle in *A History of the World 10½ Chapters* (1989), he follows the tradition of using non-human narrators in literary narratives.

There are different types of literary character: major and minor characters, flat and round characters, stock characters, 'types', and so on.

In most stories, one character is clearly central and dominates the story from the beginning up to the end. Such a character is generally called the main, central, or major character, or *the protagonist. The antagonist* is the personage opposing the protagonist.

Characters may be *simple (flat)* or *complex (well-rounded)*, depending on their level of development and the extent to which they change. Simple characters are constructed round one outstanding trait or feature. Complex characters undergo change and growth and reveal various sides of their personalities. Round characters present us with more facets—that is, their authors portray them in greater depth and in more generous detail. Hamlet, for instance, is a complex character as he is brave and hesitant, sensitive and unyielding. Contradictory features within a character make it true-to-life and convincing.

The terms *flat* and *well-rounded* were proposed by the English novelist E. M. Forster: 'The test of round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round'.

In his book *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), E. M. Forster uses Dickens's Mrs Micawber (from *David Copperfield)* as an example of what he calls a 'flat character': 'The really flat character can be expressed in one sentence such as "I never will desert Mr Micawber". There is Mrs Micawber—she says she won't desert Mr Micawber; she doesn't, and there she is'. Mrs Micawber does not change because she is not allowed genuine *interaction* with other people and situations; even though she has, as it were, dealings with them, she is independent of them.

Flat characters tend to stay the same throughout a story, but round characters often change. (Some critics call a fixed character *static*; a changing one, *dynamic*). In William Faulkner's *Barn Burning,* for example, the boy Sarty Snopes, driven to defy his proud and violent father, becomes more knowing and more mature at the story's end.

Minor characters often remain *mono-dimensional* and/or *static.* This means that the text presents only few or even just one characteristic of such characters (mono-dimensional) and that there is little or no development throughout the story (static). Such mono-dimensional characters can often be reduced to types, representatives of a single and stereotyped character category: the wicked step-mother, faithful servant, miserly old man, profligate youth, etc. E. M. Forster's term *flat* comprises both the aspect of mono-dimensional and static. Major characters are more frequently *multi-dimensional* and *dynamic,* though not as a rule. A multi-dimensional (or *round,* as Forster calls it) character, as the word suggests, has a number of defining characteristics, sometimes conflicting ones, and such characters often undergo a development throughout the story (dynamic).

James Phelan in *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology* (1996), refers to the model that he has developed for analysing character, and comments:

(1) Character consists of three components—the mimetic (character as person), the thematic (character as idea), and the synthetic (character as artificial construct).

(2) The relationship between these components varies from narrative to narrative (Phelan 1996, 29).

Phelan's division is structured on a general and abstract level, and it indicates components into which *any* literary character can be divided. But the two distinctions overlap, and both draw attention to the ways in which a literary character is both like and unlike a real person.

The term *stock character* has been applied to recent, especially commercial, fiction. Stock characters require little detailed portraiture

because we already know them well. Most writers of the literary story, however, attempt to create characters recognized as stereotypes and unique individuals (for example, Sherlock Holmes—a masterly detective; Soames Forsyte—a man of property). Although stock characters tend to have single dominant virtues and vices, characters in the contemporary modern fiction tend to have many facets.

In recent years, a number of critics have developed the concept of projection characters, that is, characters into whom the author projects aspects of him- or herself—often aspects which cannot be acknowledged either to others or to the author him- or herself. In Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations,* for example, the character Orlick is like a dark shadow of the hero Pip and seems almost a personification of Pip's repressed desires.

3.2
TYPES AND METHODS OF CHARACTERIZATION

The process by which the author presents and develops a fictional character is known as characterization. Characters can be described, implicitly as well as explicitly, either by the narrator (sometimes, somewhat misleadingly, called authorial characterization) or by another character in the story (also called figural characterization) or even by the characters themselves (self-characterization).

There are two main types of characterization: *direct* and *indirect.* Types of characterization are used in texts to enable readers to form a mental construct of a character from the information they are given, and from their own experience and imagination.

The direct type of characterization means that the character is evaluated by the writer himself or by another character in the story. The most obvious type of characterization is when someone (in the following excerpt—the narrator) tells us explicitly what a character is like.

Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her. (Austen, *Emma*, ch.1)

The author also uses the indirect type of characterization when he/she depicts the character through his/her actions, manners, behaviour, speech, attitude to other characters, other characters' attitudes to him or her, etc.

The most important *methods of characterization* available to the writer are description, action, dialogue (a character's speech characteristics), and symbol and image (the latter will be discussed in Chapter 4 (4.6)).

Description

Description is a traditional means whereby the writer can suggest what sort of character we are encountering. The use of description brings scenes and feelings to the imagination of readers.

Description can be both physical (places and persons) and psychological (an emotion or set of emotions). As an end in itself, description can interrupt action; so many writers include only as much as necessary for the highlighting of important actions. Some writers may make lavish descriptions in their works. Joseph Conrad, for example, provides extensive descriptions in his novels and stories. His scenes are not only places in which the characters act, but are so evocative that they provide a background designed to give philosophical perspective to the actions.

Here is a description taken from the end of Herbert Ernest Bates's short story *A Christmas Song* (1950). The story's main female character, Clara, is looking down the valley. The author describes the winter landscape around the town, Clara's state of mind, and her antagonist, Freddy, the factory owner's son who tries to seduce Clara in a clumsy and insensitive fashion.

> She got out of the car and stood for a few moments looking down the valley. She bent down and put her hands on the grass. Frost was crisp and hard already, and she could see it sparkling brightly on tree branches and on rain soaked stems of dead flowers. It made her breath glisten in the house-lights coming across the lawn. It seemed to be glittering even on the long wide flood waters, so that she almost persuaded herself the valley was one great river of ice already, wonderfully transformed.
> Standing there, she thought of the young man, with his shy ardent manner, his umbrella and his raised hat. The song he had not been able to remember began to go through her head again — *Softly plead my songs — Loved one, come to me* —; but at that moment Freddy Williamson came blundering up the drive and seized her once again like a hungry dog.

Action

A character in fiction is not just a static portrait, he/she acts. Since action, movement, change, and development always occur in fiction, action serves as the main method of characterization.

Actions may reveal the character from different aspects. Actions include gestures, characters' thoughts, words, decisions, and impulses.

For example, the actions of Mrs Palgrave's in Bates *How Vainly Men Themselves Amaze* (1968), the way she treats her children and a servant hints at her hostile nature and manners. Esme's decision in Susan Hill's *A Bit of Singing and Dancing* (1973) to take a risk and encourage her friendship with Mr Curry is an action; her impulse to make a change in her life is also an action.

Dialogue and speech characteristics

At its simplest, dialogue is a conversation of two people, but more characters may participate, depending on their importance, the number present, and also the circumstances of the scene and action. Being the major medium of the dramatist, dialogue is just one of the means by which the fiction writer makes a story vivid and dramatic. Straight narration and description can do no more than say that a character's thoughts and responses exist, but dialogue makes everything real and firsthand. Dialogue is hence a means of *rendering* rather than presenting. Writers include dialogue in order to enable the reader better to know the characters and the experiences they face.

Some dialogues may be terse and minimal; other dialogues may be expanded, depending on the situation, the personalities of the characters, and the author's intent.

The language of dialogue indicates the intelligence, articulateness, educational levels, or emotional states of the character.

Speech characteristics include:

(1) Markers of the character's emotional state: emotionally coloured words, emphatic inversion, contracted forms, elliptical sentences, initiating signals (as *'Well', 'Oh'*), hesitation pauses, the use of breaks-in-the-narrative that stand for silence (e.g. *'That's all right — I'm not doing anything —', 'I didn't see her go. Where on earth —'),* the use of speech that is interrupted with voiced pauses ('*er*', '*ah*', '*um*', '*you know'*, '*of course*', and so on). In fictional conversation they all may create realism and indicate the character's state of mind or might show a character who is unsure or is not in control.

(2) Attitudinal markers: verbs denoting attitudes (as *'despise', 'hate', 'adore'* etc.), intensifiers (as *'very', 'absolutely'* etc.); the use of private, intimate expressions might show people who are close to each other emotionally.

(3) Markers of the character's educational level: bookish words, rough words, slang and colloquial expressions; the use of grammatical mistakes, faulty pronunciation, or graphons to show a character's limited background or a character who is trying be seen in that light. Graphon is violation of the graphical shape of the word; it contains information about the speaker's origin, social and educational background, physical and emotional condition.

For example, when the famous Sinclair Lewis's character Mr. Babbit uses *'pee-rading'* (parading), *'Eytalians'* (Italians), *'peepul'* (people), the reader obtains not only the vivid image and the social, cultural, educational characteristics of the character, but also feels the author's sarcastic attitude to him.

(4) Markers of regional and dialectal speech —foreign words and local words, which clearly show the regional location from which the speaker came, just as an accent indicates the place of national origin.

(5) Markers of the speaker's individual speech peculiarities (idiolect), which serve as a means of individualization.

3.3 PLOT AND ITS STRUCTURE

Fictional characters, imitated from life, must go through a series of lifelike actions, or incidents, which in total make up the story. An ordered, organized sequence of events and actions is the *plot* of the story.

Plot has been compared to a map, scheme, or blueprint. In a carefully worked plot, all the actions, speeches, thoughts, and observations are arranged to make up an organic unity (Roberts and Jacobs 1992, 64).

Plot in its simplest stage is worked out in a pattern of cause and effect that can be traced in a *sequence* or *chronology*. That is, the incidents happen over a period of time, but chronology alone is not the cause of the sequence of actions. Instead, time enters into the cause-and-effect pattern to give the opportunity for effects to follow causes.

E. M. Forster (Forster 1962) claims that a story is a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence, whereas a plot is a narrative of events with

the emphasis falling on causality. Hence, a necessary distinction is to be made between the incidents about which we are told in a novel in their chronological order and the actual narrating of these events in perhaps quite a different order. The terms *story* and *plot* are used to make this distinction. (See the previously mentioned comments in Section 1.3.)

Structuralist narratologists (notably Gérard Genette) provide terms and concepts that can explain how and why the plot of a literary work deviates from strict and chronological progression. They claim that a novel's plot includes order, ellipses (gaps, omissions, and absences), duration, and frequency.

According to Hawthorn (2010, 114), plots of a novel can be classified into 'picaresque/episodic, well-made (the traditional nineteenth-century realist plot); multiple (many novels have two or more lines of plot, sometimes interconnecting and sometimes not). Another classification singles out the *main plot* from its attendant *subplot(s)* for the purpose of analysis.

Whereas a plot is related to chronology, the structure of a story may be different because authors often choose to present their stories in something other than direct chronological order. Structure, in other words, refers to the way in which the plot is assembled, either in whole or in part.

Structure and plot are closely related to each other; however, critics often use 'structure' in a rather wider sense than such treatment might suggest. If we can think of the plot of a novel as the way in which its story is arranged, its structure involves more than its story, encompassing the work's total organization as a piece of literature, a work of art.

The plot may have different sorts of structure; the main ones are as follows:

(a) a straight line narrative presentation, when the events proceed steadily forward in chronological order;

(b) a complex narrative structure, when the events are not arranged in chronological order and may move backwards and forwards in time;

(c) a frame structure, when there is a narrative framing of 'a story within a story' which either contrast or parallel. For example, the central concern of *The Hours* (1998), by Michael Cunningham, can be illuminated by tracing the evolution of the imagery in three key parallel actions. Its plot dramatizes just a few hours in the lives of three women, each living in a different era: Virginia Woolf herself in 1923; a fifties housewife, Laura Brown; and a contemporary New Yorker, Clarissa, nicknamed Mrs. Dalloway after the character in Woolf's novel. Within each plot line, a suicide takes place or is contemplated; each of the women in some way contends with the dilemma

of living as if life has meaning in the face of death, and as the hours pass, the three plots intertwine, expanding and enriching one another.

The plot structure of prose fiction involves chronology and order of events and actions together with such components as setting, climax, and dénouement. Other structural components might include theme and message, title, conflict, tone, and atmosphere.

3.3.1 Components of Plot Structure 1: Setting, Climax, Dénouement, Chronology, and Order

Setting

It is important to be aware of the context within which the action of a novel or a short story takes place: its geographical setting, social and historical factors, and the significant cultural issues. They all form the *setting*.

For the setting the writer selects the relevant details which would suggest the whole scene. The setting introduces the theme and the main characters. In the setting the necessary preliminaries to the events of the plot cast light on the circumstances influencing the development of the action and characters. This component supplies some information on either all or some of the following questions: Who? What? Where? When? The setting may be compressed into one sentence or extended into several paragraphs. In some stories the setting is scarcely noticeable, in others – it plays a very important role.

The functions of the setting may vary; they are as follows:

(1) The setting, especially description of nature, helps to evoke the necessary atmosphere (or mood) which corresponds to the general intention of the story.

(2) The setting may reinforce characterization by either paralleling or contrasting the actions.

(3) The setting may be a reflection of the character's inner state.

(4) The setting may place the character in a recognizable realistic environment including geographical names and allusions to historical events. All this adds credibility to the plot.

(5) The setting, especially domestic interiors, may serve to reveal certain traits of the character.

The setting in a story may perform either one or several functions simultaneously.

Climax

The *climax* is the key event, the plot's most dramatic and revealing moment, usually the turning point of the story. It is often referred to as the moment of illumination for the whole story as it is the moment of high tension, when the relationship among the events becomes clear and when their role in the development of characters is clarified.

Dénouement

The *dénouement* (or resolution) is the unwinding of the actions; it includes the event, or events, immediately following the climax and bringing the actions to an end. It is the point at which the fate of the main character is clarified. The dénouement ('the untying of the knot') suggests to the reader certain crucial conclusions.

A story may have no dénouement. By leaving it out, the author achieves a certain effect—he invites the reader to reflect on all the circumstances that accompanied the character of the story and to imagine the outcome of all the events himself.

Novels may have two more components of plot structure: the prologue and the epilogue. The prologue contains facts from beyond the past of the story; the epilogue contains additional facts about the future of the characters if it is not made clear enough in the dénouement.

Chronology and order of events and actions

The author may rearrange the components of plot structure. Any shift in the organization of the plot structure affects the atmosphere and the necessary mood, and the reader's emotional response to the story. Therefore, chronology and order are issues that can be crucial to the matter of plot structure. The difference between 'story' and 'plot' can contribute importantly to the structure of prose fiction.

As mentioned earlier, the plot may move backwards and forwards in time, instead of proceeding steadily forward in chronological order. As Hawthorn (2010, 112) suggests, 'if life always goes ABCDE, novels often go DEACB'.

The most frequent deviations from such strict chronological progression are as follows:

(a) *Flashback* (or analepsis) is a scene of the past inserted into the narrative. Flashbacks present background information, appear in non-chronological order and may be related to various characters. Many stories

are told with flashback techniques in which plot events from earlier times interrupt the story's 'current' events.

(b) *Flashforward* (or prolapsis) is a look towards the future, a remark or hint that prepares the reader for what is to follow.

(c) *Retardation* is the withholding of information until the appropriate time and the deliberate sustaining of anticipation by means of suspense.

(d) *Parallelism* of events and situations (usually in a subplot) or parallelism of characters can be represented by oppositions in ethnicity, gender, or age.

(e) *The author's digression* is an insertion which has no immediate relation to the theme. The author wanders away from the subject and breaks off into a digression to state his personal view or to make a general statement.

3.3.2 Components of Plot Structure 2: Theme, Message, Title, Conflict, Tone, Atmosphere

Theme and message

We have said that writers write because they have things to say about life. One of the elements unifying a story is the existence of an underlying theme or central idea the entire story reveals.

The *theme* is somewhat comparable to a scaffold that is used by workers in the construction of a large building: once the building is complete, it is removed, but the effect of the scaffold is still apparent (Roberts and Jacobs 1992, 65). However, the comparison is not totally valid because authors may sometimes leave some of the 'scaffolding' in their stories in the form of a direct statement of a theme—as it were, a part of his/her scaffold.

The theme involves a set of issues, problems, or questions without any attempt to provide a rationale or answer to satisfy the demands of the reader. A novel or a short story may have a range of varied themes located in it. Charles Dickens's *Bleak House,* for instance, has been interpreted as containing the themes of 'parental responsibility', 'the heartlessness of the law', 'the evil of "causes"', 'the destructiveness of choosing money and position rather than love', 'the centrality of writing to Victorian society' and many more.

The story can be seen as being a consistent embodiment of an idea. The most important idea that the author expresses in the process of developing the theme is the *message* of the story.

In some stories the message is unmistakable. At the end of Aesop's fable about the council of the mice that cannot decide who will bell the cat, the message is stated in the moral: *It is easier to propose a thing than to carry it out.* In literary fiction, a message is seldom so obvious. It may be moral inferences drawn from the story or what the happenings add up to what the story is about. The author's message is therefore organically connected with the theme.

The process of determining and describing ideas in stories is probably never complete; there is always another idea that is equally valid and applicable. Such a wide opportunity for discussion and interpretation is one of the things that makes fiction interesting and valuable.

Title

When analyzing the message, one must also take into consideration the title of the story. The *title* is the first element of the plot structure to catch our eye, but its meaning and function may be determined retrospectively.

The title may have the following functions:

(1) It may serve as a means of conveying the author's message.

(2) It may serve as a means of cohesion; by framing the story, it may link all the scenes and then attach components to form an artistic whole.

(3) The title may serve as a means of focusing the reader's attention on the most relevant characters and details.

(4) It may characterize the protagonist.

(5) It orients/disorients the reader towards the story.

Conflict

The plot of any story is connected not only with actions and events but also with conflicts. *Conflict* in prose fiction is the opposition between forces or characters. There are external and internal conflicts.

When the main character is fighting against someone or something outside himself, we term this variety of conflict *external*. When the opposition of forces takes place inside the minds of the characters, this type of conflict is *internal*.

External conflicts fall into the following types:

(1) character against character (or between two or more characters);

(2) character against some natural force (the sea, the desert, wild beasts);

(3) character against society or the established order in the society (a conflict with poverty, racial hostility, injustice etc.);

(4) one set of values against another set of values.

Internal conflicts often represent 'man against himself', and they take place within one character. The internal conflict is localized, as it were, in the inner world of the character and is rendered through his/her thoughts, feelings, and intellectual processes.

The plot may be based on several conflicts of different types; it may involve both an internal and an external conflict.

Tone and atmosphere

Atmosphere is the general mood of a literary work. It is affected by such components of a literary work as the plot, setting, characters, details, symbols, and language means. Atmosphere describes the prevailing mood of prose fiction, an attempt by the writer to make the reader react, or feel, in a certain way.

The attitude of the writer to his/her reader as well as to his/her subject matter determines the *tone* of the story. The tone of a story is an important element in its tonal design.

In prose appreciation, 'if we are to perceive how the writer feels about what he is writing (and how he wishes the reader to feel), it is essential that we grasp the tone accurately' (Cadden 1986, 32). If the reader can accurately gauge a writer's tone, he/she begins to sense the writer's true feelings to be in a better position to assess the intention behind a given story. The writer may be aggressive, or humble, or confiding towards the reader. In the actual writing, the subject matter may be presented in an assertive, or wistful, or admiring, or harsh, or lyrical, or ironic, or humorous, or colloquial tone. Any changes in tone will be invaluable in the assessment of the writer's purpose.

The tone is the light in which the characters and events are depicted. The tone, therefore, is closely related to atmosphere. The tone tells how the writer already feels about his/her subject; if it is wistful and yearning, the prevailing atmosphere will probably be sad and melancholic, perhaps nostalgic. Atmosphere, however, is related more to the emotive words the story may use (i.e. those words designed to provoke an emotional response). It will be related more specifically to the descriptive sections, especially those containing images and metaphors.

There is a difference between *mood* and *tone:* the latter term involves attitudes towards what is recounted and described. A setting, for example, may help to create a particular mood in a story, but only narrative treatment can confirm a certain tone.

(CH 3) ASSIGNMENTS

(1) Compare various classifications of literary character and say what characteristics and functions each of them reveals in a piece of prose fiction.

(2) Find examples of 'flat' and 'round' characters (or other types) in a novel or a short story. Discuss their use.

(3) Explain the meaning of the suggestion 'if life always goes ABCDE, novels often go DEACB'. Why do authors frequently employ the deviations from the strict chronological progression in the plot structure?

(4) Read the following passage below and say what status, habits, and features of a character the details of appearance suggest.

> She knew the men preferred Effie. Her sister was a very gay person although she did not sing; she had never passed an examination in her life, but there was, in a strange way, hardly anything you felt she could not do. She had a character like a chameleon; she had all the love affairs. She laughed a great deal, in rippling infectious scales, so that she made other people begin laughing, and she had large violet-blue eyes. Sometimes she laughed so much that Clara herself would begin weeping. (Bates, *A Christmas Song,* 1950)

(5) Read the conversation below between Clara and Freddy from Herbert Ernest Bates's *A Christmas Song*.

(a) Make a list of all the words and phrases which Freddy uses to say how Bates conveys his character.

(b) What tone does the author choose?

(c) Comment on the use of detail in the passage as a means of developing suspense.

> Freddy Williamson stood in the street below and threw his driving gloves at her.
>
> 'Get dressed! Come on!'
>
> She opened the window.
>
> 'Freddy, be quiet. People can hear.'
>
> 'I want them to hear. Who isn't coming to whose party? I want them to hear.'

He threw the driving gloves up at the window again.

'Everybody is insulted!' he said. 'Come on.'

'Please,' she said.

'Let me in then!' he bawled. 'Let me come up and talk to you.'

'All right,' she said.

She went downstairs and let him in through the shop and he came up to the music room, shivering, stamping enormous feet. 'Getting colder,' he kept saying. 'Getting colder.'

'You should put on an overcoat,' she said.

'Never wear one,' he said. 'Can't bear to be stuffed up.'

'Then don't grumble because you're starved to death.' […]

Freddy Williamson put clumsy hands across her shoulders, kissing her with lips rather like those of a heavy wet dog.

'Good old Clara,' he said again. 'Good old girl.'

Suddenly he pressed himself against her in attitudes of muscular, heavier love, grasping her about the waist, partly lifting her from the floor, his lips wet on her face.

'Come on, Clara,' he kept saying, 'let the blinds up. Can't keep the blinds down for ever. '

'Is it a big party? '

'Come on, let the blind up.'

(6) List the themes of a favourite novel and study a dynamic character, showing exactly how that character changed or grew and developed.

(a) Were they all intended by the novelist? Does it matter?

(b) What may have caused a person to be a 'dynamic' character?

(7) What are the functions of the title?

(8) What is the relationship between tone and atmosphere?

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CHAPTER 4

LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Preview

This chapter addresses the following issues:

- the relationship between metaphor and simile
- the relationship between literary and conceptual metaphors
- the relationship between metaphor and metonymy
- the relationship between hyperbole and understatement
- the relationship between symbol and image
- the relationship between tone and irony
- the relationship between allusion and intertextuality
- traditional and post-structuralist accounts of intertextuality

In general, *style* refers to the individual traits or characteristics of a piece of writing: to a writer's particular ways of managing words that we come to recognize as habitual or customary. A distinctive style marks the work of a fine writer: we can tell his or her work from that of anyone else. From one story to another, however, the writer may fittingly change style, and in some stories, style may be altered meaningfully as the story goes along.

The medium of fiction and of all literature is language, and the manipulation of language—the *style*—is a primary skill of the writer of fiction. Usually, style indicates a mode of expression—the language a writer uses. A mark of a good writer's style is the employment of imagery, figures of speech, or other stylistic devices to convey their effect; the choice of words—expressive verbs, and abstract and concrete nouns; sentence length and complexity. Even with the most active and graphic diction possible, writers can never make an exact rendering of their incidents and scenes, but they can indeed be judged on the extent to which they make their narration vivid.

4.1 METAPHOR

The word *metaphor* comes from the Greek word *metaphora,* meaning 'to transfer' or 'to carry'. To interpret a word or phrase, we automatically look for the element of similarity and transfer it into a new context. In doing this, we interpret metaphorically.

Figurative or metaphorical meaning, in semantics, describes a word's extension of meaning, which is in contrast to a word's literal, basic or conceptual meaning. Surfing, for instance, has the basic definition of 'the sport or pastime of surfboarding' (OED), but also the metaphorical or figurative meaning of 'the act of using the Internet' (OED), when used with reference to computing.

When Paul Simon sings *'I am a rock'* (1966), we are unlikely to think that he is made of stone or wonder how a rock can sing. Rather, we select those aspects of a rock which might also characterize how the singer may feel or want to represent himself and transfer them to the new context. The metaphor which results vividly transfers our associations of rock—such as

hardness, isolation, imperviousness—to the singer (there is also an allusion here to the metaphorical use of the term 'rock' in the Bible, which suggests further possible meanings for Simon's phrase).

Different parts of speech can be used as metaphors:

Noun: 'time is a jet plane' (Bob Dylan, *You're a big girl now,* 1974)
'You are the apple of my eye'

Verb: 'time is running out'
'the hour glass whispers to the lion's roar'
(Auden, *Our bias,* 1940)

Adjective: 'golden skin'
'a wooden performance'

Adverb: Thistles dried to sticks in last year's wind
stand nakedly in the green,
stand sullenly in the slowly whitening,
field. (Adrienne Rich, *Toward the solstice,* 1977)

4.2 SIMILE

Metaphor is often seen as the central form of figurative language use (others being idioms, phrasal verbs, similes and proverbial phrases).

Simile is a category of metaphor in that, as its name suggests, it draws attention to a similarity between two terms. But whereas in metaphor the link between the terms is implied, in simile it is made through an explicit textual signal (*like, as*, etc.). The simile *the sky is like a polished mirror,* for example, invites the listener or reader to imagine how the sky might actually appear like a polished mirror. The difference between simile and metaphor can be demonstrated by turning the simile into a metaphor. If we say the sky is like a polished mirror, this formulation can no longer be understood literally; we know that the sky is not really a polished mirror, though it might look like one, and therefore *a polished mirror* has to be read metaphorically.

4.3
LITERARY AND CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS

When we say 'metaphor', the average person will associate the term with the study of literature. Since language is the vehicle for expressing the conceptual system which we use in thinking and acting, it is the main source of information about the structure of that system.

The leading exponents of cognitive linguistics—George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Mark Turner and Raymond Gibbs—share the common assumption, which goes back to classical times, that humans categorize their experience into general concepts so as to make sense of the astounding variety of the world. But they contest the traditional idea that our categorized concepts are an objective representation of reality and therefore primary, which means that all imaginative conceptualizations are derivative and to be labelled figurative, poetic or metaphorical. In the cognitivist view, metaphors can be expressed in language precisely because human thought processes are essentially metaphorical.

Kövesces's *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (2002) is a very useful textbook on the methodology of the cognitive linguistic study of metaphor. Moving beyond the idea that metaphor indicates simple comparisons, we examine the parts of metaphor: the source and target domains. When words are used in metaphoric senses, one field or domain of reference is mapped onto or carried over another on the basis of some perceived similarity between the two fields. The starting point or described concept is often called the 'target' domain, while the comparison concept or the analogy is called the 'source' domain.

This approach reveals that multiple source domains may be involved in the understanding of a single target domain. Source domain knowledge may pertain to the body, and is, thus, bodily based. It may also be based on experience or on the knowledge of one's culture. Kövesces explains the basic and well-known significance of the body-based orientations: upward orientation tends to go together with positive evaluation, while downward orientation with a negative one. But positive-negative evaluation is not limited to the spatial orientation up-down … Various spatial image schemas are bipolar and bivalent. Thus, whole, center, link, balance, in, goal, front are mostly regarded as positive, while their opposites—not whole, periphery, no link, imbalance, out, no goal, and back—[are viewed] as negative (Kövesces 2002, 36).

Though we may no longer see them as metaphorical, there are numerous common expressions which show how metaphors structure our everyday concepts. An abstract concept can now be defined simply as a 'mapping' of one domain onto the other. This model suggests that abstract concepts are formed systematically through such mappings and that specific metaphors are traces to the target and source domains (Danesi 2008, 99).

The next important point made by Lakoff and Johnson is that there are several general kinds of experiences involved in conceptualization. The first involves orientation. This produces concepts that are derived from our physical experiences of orientation—up versus down, back versus front, near versus far, and so on. The result is that concepts we wish to understand (target domains) are likely to be conceptualized. For example, the experience of up versus down underlies conceptual metaphors such as:

HAPPINESS IS UP = I'm feeling up.
SADNESS IS DOWN = She's feeling down today.
MORE IS UP = My income rose (went up) last year.
LESS IS DOWN = Her salary went down after her change of job.

Of course, this metaphorical structuring of our thinking is culturally and ideologically determined. For instance, how we experience one thing in terms of another, how we give a concept a spatial orientation (up-down, on-off, near-far, right-left, in-out, forward-back, centre-periphery, etc.) based on our everyday physical experience; how we project our experiences with physical objects in the world on to non-physical experiences such as activities, emotions, ideas, etc., so as to be able to refer to them, to quantify them, to identify them, in short, to reason them out.

In ordinary conversation, we use these metaphors in talking about life and our activities during life (e.g. education, marriage, work). We say that we 'still have a long way to go' to make our work perfect. We may get sidetracked ('I really got off the track'), encounter impediments on the way ('we're going over some rocky ground there'). We may need help ('without my friends I'd really be lost') and worry about the choices we make ('I shouldn't have taken this route').

So metaphor is a pervasive process in language, yet we believe that writers have special talents in the creation and use of metaphor. Lakoff and Turner in their book *More than Cool Reason* (1989) have selected an impressive collection of poetry to illustrate their belief that poets and ordinary people share models of the world, models which are represented through

metaphor. They say the difference between literary and conceptual metaphor is a matter of degree and skill; others say it is in the aptness of the metaphors. Robert Frost's poem ('Two roads diverged and I took the one less traveled') and the Twenty-Third Psalm ('He leadeth me beside the still waters') exemplify the literary use of metaphors. Such metaphors are not different from or more apt than those of everyday talk. Rather, they are not employed with great skill, and many appear within one passage to produce a layered effect.

These are all examples of metaphors which have become linguistically ossified because they structure the conceptualization of our everyday realities. Other metaphors, of course, have not been assimilated into routine conceptualizations because they are too evocative and creative. Though they provide new insights into our social, ideological and cultural realities, it must be noticed that such fresh metaphors are embedded in the same conceptual system as their conventionalized counterparts, that is, they, too, originate from the same experiential basis of the knowledge of our body, our sense perceptions, mental images as well as other experiences of a physical or social nature (Weber 1995, 33).

Lakoff and Johnson have provided detailed studies of what they call the image-schematic bases of meaning, by which they mean the extent to which our mental concepts depend on, among other things, our bodily experience. Image-schemata are the recurrent patterns of our everyday perceptual interactions and bodily experiences, such as recurrent shapes, actions, dimensions, and so on. Image schemas are so deeply rooted that we are hardly ever aware of their control over conceptualization, but they can be brought to mind easily. If someone asked you to explain an idiom such as spill the beans, you would not likely have a conscious image schema involving beans and the action of spilling them. However, if that same person asked you the following questions—'Where were the beans before they were spilled?' 'How big was the container?' 'Was the spilling on purpose or accidental?'—then you would no doubt start to visualize the appropriate schema. You would see the beans as kept in a container and the container as being about the size of the human head.

A second type of conceptualization process, according to Lakoff and Johnson, involves the experience of 'containment'. The notion of containment produces conceptual metaphors in which activities, emotions, and ideas are associated with entities and substances contained in something:

THE MIND IS A CONTAINER = I'm full of memories.
ANGER IS FLUID IN A CONTAINER = You make my blood boil.

We use these image-schemata as a way of imposing order upon the chaos of reality, but they are not fixed or static but dynamic patterns, which are constantly updated and modified in our encounters with new types of situations. Such image-schemata can also be metaphorically extended to more abstract or less-well-understood domains of experience. So the centre-periphery distinction is extended from the concrete domain of seeing an object to the domain of understanding an idea, with the visually central object finding its counterpart in the 'central' (or significant) idea. And the domain of physical containment metaphorically structures the domain of psychological containment, so that we may feel psychologically 'imprisoned' or feel a need to 'break out' of our lives.

The image-schematic structure of the source domain is transferred onto the target domain. The image-schematic structure of the target (e.g. life) is not pre-existent but is actively constructed, created by the reader in his/her interpretation of the metaphor. Therefore, metaphors for life LIFE IS A DAY, LIFE IS FLUID IN THE BODY, LIFE IS FIRE show their richness within a single piece of literature. In Shakespeare's *Sonnet 73,* lines 1 through 4 use the lifecycle year of plants (LIFE IS A YEAR, LIFE IS A PLANT) as novel metaphors to describe life. As Lakoff and Turner point out regarding line 3, it is not cold but the wind that shakes trees; it is a person who is being shaken by the cold of approaching death. Lines 5 through 8 use the LIFE IS A DAY metaphor; in lines 9 through 12 LIFE IS FIRE, and the final lines (13 through 16) contain a plea for love that nourishes life (the traveller needs provisions).

1 That time of year thou mayst in me behold
2 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
3 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold.
4 Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
5 In me thou seest the twilight of such day
6 As after sunset fadeth in the west;
7 Which by and by black night doth take away,
8 Death's second self that seals up all in rest.
9 In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
10 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
11 As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
12 Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
13 This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong.
14 To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

In general, we can say that only as much knowledge about the source domain as is consistent with the target domain is transferred in the metaphorical mapping. Metaphor is thus defined as mapping across conceptual domains, from a source domain (including a journey, a day, fluid in the body, fire, a plant, a year, etc.) onto a target domain (life). The conceptualization of life is realized in a number of different linguistic expressions.

Let us consider a few ways in which people conceptualize love.

LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE = There were sparks between us.
I'm magnetically drawn toward her.
My life revolves around her.

LOVE IS A MEDICAL-HEALTH FORCE = Theirs is a sick relationship.
Their romance is dead; it can't be revived.
Their relationship is in good shape.

LOVE IS MADNESS = I'm crazy about her.
He's gone mad over her.
I've lost my head over him.

LOVE IS A MAGICAL FORCE = She cast a spell over me.
She has bewitched me.
I'm in a trance over him.

LOVE IS A SWEET TASTE = You're so sweet.
She's my sweetheart.
He's my honey.

As these examples illustrate, love is indeed a multi-faceted experience, as our stack of metaphors show, and the poets have always known. The metaphor LOVE IS A SWEET TASTE commonly surfaces in a courtship performance and a romantic verbal touch. This time-tested and timeworn formula is a special manifestation of a broader one: LOVE IS A TASTE IN ONE'S MOUTH. This is why we say that love, which is no longer sweet, can leave a bad, sour, rotten taste in one's mouth. Like wine, love can both please and displease.

As Alice Deignan has argued, the use of such metaphorical strategies is not restricted to the language of love; they are general strategies that

allow people to encode subjective judgments in a way that conceals their subjectivity. 'Speakers use a metaphorical expression to encode their approval, or—far more frequently—their disapproval, of a manifestation of desire. The evaluation, thereby, takes on the appearance of objectivity' (Deignan 2005, 34).

Nor are such strategies peculiar to speakers of English. There are, in fact, many cross-cultural similarities in the ways in which sexual attractiveness and desire are modelled metaphorically. In the Chagga tribe of Tanzania, for example, the perception of sex and love as things that can be tasted manifests itself in discourse about sex. In that society, the man is perceived to be the 'eater' and the woman his 'sweet food'. It can be inferred from everyday expressions such as 'Does she taste sweet?' 'She tastes sweet as sugar honey'. Such a remarkable correspondence to the LOVE IS A SWEET TASTE formula suggests that this particular conceptual metaphor cuts across cultures.

The writer and the scientist alike use metaphors to make a guess about a suspected inner connection among things. 'Metaphors are slices of truth; they are evidence of the human ability to see the universe as a coherent organism' (Danesi 2008, 114). When a metaphor is accepted as fact, it enters human life, taking on an independent conceptual existence in the real world, and thus it can suggest ways to bring about changes in and to the world.

Lakoff and Johnson in their truly fascinating book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) established metaphor as a fundamental area of concern for psychology and linguistics emphasizing that it is not just a matter of language but a matter of thought and reason. It is a way of understanding or thinking about a particular domain of experience in terms of another. The innovative claim of the book was that metaphor is the cornerstone of language, a new approach in linguistics which they called cognitive linguistics.

This approach can enrich the study of literature because many traditional figurative devices such as symbolism, personification imagery, and euphemism are supported by the dynamics of conceptual metaphor. As Kövesces explains, understanding a symbol means seeing the conceptual metaphors that the symbol can evoke or was created to evoke (Kövesces 2002, 59).

As these readings demonstrate, the cognitive linguistics approach to metaphor allows for alternative means of reading literature closely. The same literary devices of conventional metaphor, personification, symbolism,

and various types of imagery are still at play. The beauty of the cognitive linguistics approach to literature lies in metaphor's ubiquitous nature; it illustrates that metaphor as a figurative device extends far beyond simple comparisons and has a dynamic structure which reveals much about how we understand our world.

4.4 METAPHOR AND METONYMY

Metonymy (Greek for 'a change of name') is distinguished from metaphor in that, whereas metaphor works through similarity, metonymy works through other kinds of association (e.g. cause – effect, container – contained, etc.). Typical dress, for example, can be used metonymically to stand for those who wear it: if someone says 'a lot of big wigs came to the party', we understand 'big wigs' to refer to 'important people' (a metonymy which probably derives from the fashion among the upper classes in earlier centuries in Europe).

Rhetoricians, linguists, and literary theorists from Aristotle to the present day have achieved little consensus in distinguishing metonymy from metaphor. At first glance, these two tropes appear to be similar because each describes a connection between two things where one term is substituted for another. Metaphor is based on similarity. Metonymy is based on contiguous relations between objects: part – whole, cause – effect, and so on. In contemporary literary studies, the metaphor – metonymy opposition has gradually become a commonplace of practical criticism.

Unlike metaphor, metonymy involves only one conceptual domain, so the mapping or connection between two things is within the same domain. Thus, the reference to a baseball player as a glove, as in *We need a new glove to play third base,* maps a salient characteristic of one domain (the glove part of the baseball player) as representing the entire domain (the player).

Metonymy is closely related to the notion of *synecdoche* (Greek for 'taking together'), which is a subcategory of metonymy. In fact, metonymy and synecdoche are not always clearly distinguishable since both figures often exploit the relationship between larger and smaller entities. Synecdoche occurs when the association between the figurative and literal senses is that between a part and the whole to which it belongs. For example, *farm hands*

is a common synecdoche for workers on a farm; a new motor comes to mean 'a new car' by using one part of the car, its engine, to stand for the whole.

There is a growing body of literature in cognitive linguistics that points to the metonymic character of thinking. One important source of evidence is the systematic analysis of conventional expressions. Consider some of the following examples that illustrate various metonymic models in our conceptual system: OBJECT USED FOR USER *(The fax has the flu today, We need a better glove at third base),* THE PLACE FOR THE EVENT *(Watergate changed our politics, Let's not let Iraq become another Vietnam).* Many of these models depend on conventional cultural associations, which reflect the general principle—a thing may stand for what it is conventionally associated with. This principle limits the use of metonymy to certain relationships between entities. For example, we can use the name of any well-known creative artist to refer to the creations of that artist, as in *Does he own any Hemingway?* or *I saw a Jasper Johns yesterday.* Metonymy functions primarily in this way for reference.

4.5
HYPERBOLE AND UNDERSTATEMENT

Hyperbole (Greek for 'overshooting') distorts the truth in that speakers assert more than is objectively warranted, as in *I have ten thousand papers to grade before noon.* Hyperbole should be contrasted with simple overstatement, by which a person unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a proposition that is stronger than the evidence warrants.

If a person says *All Americans can attain their dreams of success* without realizing that the circumstances of nature and society prevent some people from achieving their full potential, he/she simply overstates the truth. However, a person who realizes the truth might intend the listener to understand the same proposition as hyperbole for rhetorical effect. Many hyperboles are apparent because they are clearly absurd, such as the idiomatic expressions *It makes my blood boil* and *It is raining cats and dogs* (both phrases are partly motivated by metaphor as well).

Understatement (the Greek term is *meiosis,* 'lessening') also distorts the truth because speakers say less than is objectively warranted, as when someone comments about a very drunken person *He seems to have had a bit too much*

to drink. The term *litote* (Greek for 'plain' or 'simple') is reserved for a particular kind of understatement in which the speaker uses a negative expression where a positive one would have been more forceful and direct. Litotes imply a desire to suppress or conceal one's true attitude. Paradoxically, litotes like hyperbole, seem to involve intensification, suggesting that the speaker's feelings are too deep for plain expression (e.g. *It's not bad, He's no Hercules, She's no beauty, He's not exactly a pauper*).

A famous example of understatement from Shakespeare is found in *Romeo and Juliet* in the scene where Romeo has just wounded—as it turns out, fatally—Mercutio. The following exchange occurs as Mercutio falls dramatically to the ground:

Romeo: Courage, man. The hurt cannot be much.
Mercutio: No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church Door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve.

The expressed meaning here is mild and the intended meaning is intense as Mercutio ironically mocks Romeo for claiming that his deed is insignificant.

In everyday speech, hyperbole and litotes represent antithetical postures and tend to correspond to contrasting philosophical attitudes: optimism and idealism in the case of hyperbole, pessimism and cynicism in the case of litotes.

4.6 SYMBOL AND IMAGE/IMAGERY

Because fiction impresses itself upon human imagination, it is almost a necessary consequence that incidents, speeches, and characters acquire an underlying idea or value. To this degree, even an apparently ordinary thing may be interpreted as a symbol or image.

A *symbol* is an object or an image which comes to stand for something else (often an idea or quality) by analogy or association. A tree, for example, can symbolize strength or tradition, while a dove conventionally symbolizes peace.

Characters read and understand the symbolism which abounds in their daily rituals and occasional celebrations. In Joyce's *Clay,* for example, the characters believe that various objects symbolize their destinies in the future,

such as the ring symbolizing marriage, the prayer book representing the convent, and water standing for long life.

Symbols are not limited to literature and art: they are central to all known human cultures. When a woman gets married in white she makes use of the symbolic force of that colour of dress, which conventionally symbolizes virginity and has existed for an extremely long time; or, on the contrary, blood naturally symbolizes violence. Any writer who incorporated this convention in a novel would be taking what we can call a public symbol and adapting it for use within his or her work. Thus symbols can be *public (motivated)* and *private (unmotivated).* In practice, of course, it is hard to find a completely public or a completely private symbol.

In James Joyce's short story *The Dead,* we feel that the repeated references to snow have a symbolic force. This is partly because snow is referred to so repetitively and suggestively that the reader cannot but feel that there is something significant in the function that snow performs in the story. It is also, of course, because we naturally associate snow with some things rather than others—especially in countries like Britain and Ireland, where extensive falls of snow are relatively rare. We can suggest that in *The Dead* snow suggests *death:* it is cold, it covers the graveyard, it affects the whole country just as death comes to us all, and so on. Now the justification for this interpretation is partly that snow is naturally associated with death because it is cold like a dead body and because people lost in snow die. Moreover, Joyce draws attention to certain of these qualities and associates them with other references in the story so as to make these associations clear.

Symbolist literature tends to emphasize the importance of using private and conventional symbols to create a wider meaning or world view. The symbolism in Joyce's *Dubliners,* for example, might be seen as responsible for creating the impression of paralysis.

An image/imagery in its narrowest sense is a word picture, a description of some visible scene or object. More commonly 'imagery' refers to the figurative language in a piece of literature or all the words which refer to objects and qualities which appeal to the feelings of a character.

The author conveys images of the characters, events and places through the following:

(1) precise description (plants, animals can be named, and visual details are recorded; as in J. Priestley's *Angel Pavement,* feet and hands with 'fingers worked to the bone' create the image of a woman exhausted by a life full of hardships);

(2) the choice of expressive verbs (in Susan Hills's *I'm the King of the Castle*, a rabbit 'bumped' along harmlessly in the wood; Kingshaw begins to 'prance' on the castle walls);

(3) similes (for example, eyelashes are like 'spiders legs', the pupils of her eyes are like 'bright birds' eggs', and so on);

(4) antithesis (in James Joyce's *The Dead,* Miss Ivors manages to provoke and make fun of Gabriel Conroy by setting him up as the antithesis of everything Irish);

(5) repetitions (important images recur throughout the text, for example, Joyce in *Clay* repeats a series of synonyms for smallness, including 'little', 'tiny', 'small' to build up the image of Maria's diminutive stature, but also of her fragility and her very slight presence, thus caricaturing her features).

4.7
TONE AND IRONY

In every story one may consider tone, that is, an attitude or attitudes that the author conveys about the material in the story and also toward the readers of the story. Irony is the use of language and situations that are widely inappropriate or opposite to what might be ordinarily expected. Irony can be classified along with metaphor, metonymy, etc. as a trope; it is often thought of as a type of tone, a particular way of speaking and writing, which is a matter of general style and can be widespread in a text.

Irony can be of two types:

(1) *Situational irony* is a means by which authors create a strong emotional impact by presenting circumstances in which punishments do not fit crimes or in which rewards are not earned. Forces, in other words, are beyond human control or comprehension. Within the general term 'situational irony' there are two subtypes: dramatic irony and structural irony.

The characteristic of dramatic irony is that the reader knows something significantly different from what the characters believe.

In structural irony the text as a whole, or a large part of the text, is unreliable if taken literally. Instead, an alternative interpretation, which is not made explicit (but is implied), is true. Often a text is structurally ironic because it is told by an unreliable narrator such as an uneducated child, someone mentally ill, a foreigner, etc.

(2) In *verbal irony*, which applies to language, what is meant is different from, or opposite to, what is said. There appears to be something odd or wrong with the words and what they literally mean; so we interpret the text by finding another meaning for it. (When irony is found in a somewhat sour statement tingled with mockery, it is called *sarcasm.*)

Irony is an extremely subtle device. At its simplest level, it means stating one thing but meaning something else (often the opposite). The writer may seek, in this manner, to convey his/her real intentions through irony.

Here is a passage quoted from Jane Austen's opening description of Emma:

> Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

In the introduction to the main character of the novel, the statements appear entirely positive and complimentary, yet there is a constant use of subtle irony throughout the passage which, even on first reading, expands the simple surface portrait with deeper implications. Emma is 'handsome' and 'clever' (as opposed, we feel, to 'beautiful' and 'intelligent'). Other touches such as 'comfortable', 'with very little to distress or vex her' gently suggest a character who has never experienced the harshness of real life, perhaps even a pampered smugness. It is difficult to miss the irony in 'seemed' and 'some' in the phrase 'seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence'.

An entire story may be told from an ironic point of view. Whenever we sense a sharp distinction between the narrator of a story and the author, irony is likely to occur—especially when the narrator is telling us something that we are clearly expected to doubt or to interpret very differently. Irony is especially evident in satiric writing, yet the ironic mode, where a writer modestly observes his own shortcomings (and those of others), has become popular with contemporary novelists.

To notice an irony gives pleasure. It may move us to laughter, make us wonder, or arouse our sympathy. By so involving us, irony—whether in a statement, a situation, an unexpected event, or a point of view—can render a story more likely to strike us, to affect us, and to be remembered.

4.8
ALLUSION AND INTERTEXTUALITY

An *allusion* occurs when one text makes an implicit or explicit reference to another text. Allusions may vary from the explicit (where an actual quotation is made and signalled with inverted commas) to the implicit (where no signal is given).

Allusion serves to place a text within the textual network which makes up a cultural tradition. Because of this, allusion can be used simply as a way of adding cultural value to a text. Thus one of the reasons for making allusions is that they are thought to invoke some of the cultural connotations of the source text.

Texts may allude to other texts in a variety of ways:

(1) through a verbal reference to another text,

(2) through epigraphs (a quotation at the beginning of the text),

(3) through names of characters,

(4) through choice of titles.

Intertextuality is used in some literary criticism to describe the variety of ways that texts interact with other texts and in particular to focus on the interdependence between texts rather than their discreteness or uniqueness (Montgomery et al. 1992, 162). Allusion is a form of intertextuality which works largely through verbal echoes between texts; however, texts may also interact with one another through formal and thematic echoes.

The very idea of genre—that texts can be divided into different groups according to certain shared characteristics—necessarily involves a degree of interaction between texts. One of the ways in which intertextuality occurs specifically through genre is in parody, satire, and mock forms. These subgenres rely upon intertextual relations with other genres for their effect. For example, Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1712/14) depends upon the reader's familiarity with the conventions of the epic genre which it mocks. Thus the poem opens with the following lines:

> What dire offense from amorous causes springs,
> What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
> I sing—This verse to Caryll, Muse! is due.

These lines echo the ritualistic opening gesture of the epic mode—an example of which can be seen in the opening lines of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667):

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, where mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater many
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse …

As its opening indicates, *The Rape of the Lock* uses these epic conventions in order to treat a 'trivial' social event as if it were an epic matter.

From these examples, we can see that part of the significance of a literary text exists not within itself but in the relationships it sets up with other texts. These examples also show that the intertextual dimensions of cultural texts can only have effects and meaning through the active knowledge which a reader brings to them. Thus Pope's poem has a much-reduced impact on readers unfamiliar with the tradition it parodies.

Traditional and post-structuralist accounts of intertextuality

Traditional literary criticism is often concerned with the texts which influenced a particular writer: influence is most usually established through tracing allusions. For post-structuralist theorists such as Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes, all language usage is inevitably intertextual in several senses: first, because individuals do not originate or invent language—it always exists before we do; and second, because without pre-existing forms, themes, conventions and codes there could be no such a thing as literature at all. For Barthes, literature is 'a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture' (Barthes 1977, 146). Such a theory of intertextuality is radically different from traditional understandings of the functions and significance of allusion.

(CH 4) ASSIGNMENTS

(1) Traditional stylistic analysis of a literary text may have dealt with symbolism, images, similes, and other figurative devices. Consider closely the linguistic expressions which have led you to identify the following:

(a) What figurative devices are used in the extract below from Peter Ackroyd's *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde* (1983)?

(b) What type of metaphor is used in this section of the text?
(c) How does conceptual metaphor underpin these devices?

Of course there were great faults, but if there had been no faults, there would have been no triumph. I exaggerated wildly, and turned the things I most love to parody. I thought too quickly, and grew so impatient with my own sorrows that I turned them aside into laughter. I was so great a master of language that I thought I could fashion the world into my own image. In my days of purple and gold, I did too many things too well. I had the openness of mind and the flexibility of intelligence which were the predominant notes of the Athenian people. […] But, in reality, I courted success primarily. And that was to be my ruin. I remember reading, in my prison cell, Pascal's motto: 'Diseur de bons mots—mauvais caractère,' and I bowed my head at the justice of the indictment.

I was a vessel for the prose of the age, and in the end it flowed over my head. I reveled in its language but not in its morality and so, when I look back over my work, it sometimes has the strangely scented doom of hot-house flowers. Browning was not afraid to write an ugly line in order to express precisely his thought—that was his tragedy. I found meaning in beauty only and abjured ugliness—that was mine. I never saw reality. I put on a mask as easily as I adopted a mood, and as a result I became a prisoner of those masks and my moods; even now I am tempted to make roulades of phrases. I feel like Timanthes who, despairing of his ability to represent Agammemnon's head, threw a drapery over it.

(2) Consider the passage quoted from the short story by Herbert Ernest Bates *How Vainly Men Themselves Amaze*.

(a) Find examples of symbols and images in this section of the text. How do they differ?
(b) Do you find the weather, the landscape, and the opening scene with the rolling ball symbolic?

The sand on the seaward side of the dunes glittered like fine sugar in the sun. A plastic ball, in white and yellow stripes, rolled softly and with deceptive slowness from one dry tuft of dune-grass to another, not at all unlike a big bored snail, until suddenly a sharper gust of breeze caught it and tossed it bouncing high across the shore.

(3) The passage quoted below is from James Joyce's *Dubliners* (1915). It abounds in the repetition of nouns and verbs.

(a) Why does the author choose this stylistic device?
(b) Why does Joyce always rearrange the vocabulary?
(c) What stylistic effect does this device convey in the text?

There was a great deal of laughing and joking during the meal. Lizzie Fleming said Maria was sure to get the ring and, though Fleming had said that for so many Hallow Eves, Maria had to laugh and say she didn't want any ring or man either; and when she laughed her grey-green eyes sparkled with disappointed shyness and the tip of her nose nearly met the tip of her chin. Then Ginger Mooney lifted up her mug of tea and proposed Maria's health, while all the other women clattered with their mugs on the table, and said she was sorry she hadn't a sup of porter to drink it in. And Maria laughed again till the tip of her nose nearly met the tip of her chin and till her minute body nearly shook itself asunder, because she knew that Mooney meant well, though of course she had the notions of a common woman.

(4) The passage quoted below is from Solomon Northup's autobiography *Twelve Years a Slave* (1854).

The softest couches in the world are not to be found in the log mansion of the slaves. The one where I reclined year after year was a plank twelve inches wide and ten feet long.

(a) Identify ironies which occur to you as you read the extract. Label them as either verbal irony or situational irony. If you have difficulty naming the types of irony, try to explain why.
(b) For each example of irony, indicate what the apparent (or literal) meaning is and then formulate the hidden or implied meaning. Remember that irony may be carried by an implication or presupposition rather than what has literally been said.
(c) For each irony, describe how you know irony is present (it could be a feature of the text or it could come from your own general knowledge, etc.).
(d) Describe the functions of the ironies in the text. Here are some suggestions:

to undermine the speaker;
to create an ambiguous meaning;
to express a particular world view;
to make a moral point.

(5) Titles in most literary biographies allude to and locate information on various historical personalities, the biographical narratives being in Peter Ackroyd's *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde (1983), Chatterton (1987), Milton in America (1996), Julian Barnes's Flaubert's Parrot (1984), Arthur and George (2005),* and so on. Besides, the purpose of biography, one might argue, is to convey a sense of the identity of the subject.

(a) Do they fulfil that purpose or do they show that the purpose cannot be fulfilled?
(b) How do the allusions support your answer?

(6) How do the authors achieve intertextual relationships with other genres?

(7) What are the varieties of allusion?

(8) Discuss the difference between traditional and post-structuralist accounts of intertextuality.

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Part II

Practice

HOW TO STUDY A LITERARY TEXT

Part 1: **TEXT & CONTEXT**	
Biographical details	● What do you know about the author and his/her style?
Literary genre	● What literary genre does the text in question belong to? Does it borrow elements from other genres? If so, how?
Historical and cultural background	● What is the ideological, cultural, or historical context in which the text was produced or reproduced? ● What culture does the text come from? How do these cultural connections influence the text? ● What historical period does the text come from? How does this historical period influence the text?
Summary	● It is a clear, concise, orderly retelling of the contents of an excerpt or a text. You need to read the text (or excerpt) several times to make a summary.
Part 2: **TEXTUAL ANALYSIS**	
Discussion	*Setting* ● Where does the action take place? What is the time of the action presented? The social circumstances? ● What part does the setting play in the story? What is the function of the setting? *Narrative Method* ● Think about how the text is narrated? From whose point of view are the events described: first-person, third-person, from an omniscient or limited point of view?

● Who narrates the text: the author or a narrator? If there is a narrator, who is it?
● How is the text narrated: chronologically or non-chronologically, episodically, trough flashbacks, in reverse?
● What are the prevailing techniques of speech presentation? What effect do they have?

Characters and Characterization
● Who is the protagonist? Other characters? What is the relationship between them?
● What does the narrator say about the character? Can we feel the author's attitude towards his characters?
● Do the characters develop? Which of them are multi-dimensional (or dynamic) and mono-dimensional (or static)? Which characters do you like or dislike?
● What is the author's type of presenting characters (direct/explicit or indirect/implicit)?
● What are the prevailing methods of characterization (description, action, dialogue, symbol and image)?
● Are symbols, images, and incidents repeated so as to appeal to the feelings of a character or to give the story a pattern?
● A character in a story may be portrayed by means of the following details:
- name
- physical appearance
- aspects of character (attitudes, moral ideas, judgements, temperament, etc.)
- social background and status
- language

Plot and Its Structure
● Does the literary text have a plot? How is the action in the text organised? Try to draw a diagram of the way the text progresses.
● How does the action start?
● Is there a climax? What does it show? Does the story present a conflict?
● Does the text have dénouement? Is there an open ending/surprise ending? What is the effect of the ending? Has the reader been prepared for it?

Atmosphere and Tone

- What atmosphere and feelings does the narrative convey to the reader because of the description of the setting, the choice of words, and the like?
- What tone, or attitude, does the author adopt towards the reader and subject matter? Does it gratify or irritate the reader?
- Is the story told in a serious, humorous, ironic, sentimental, or any other way?

Theme and Message

- What concerns and issues does the text raise? Does the text present a moral and just world?
- Can you compare or contrast the text with any other work by the same author or with any other text that deals with the same theme?
- What is the message of the text? Can you state it in a single sentence?

Title (and other paratextual elements)

- Interpret the title of the story. What is the significance of the title, epigraphs, dedications etc.? Are they relevant to the theme?

Language & Style

- What sort of language (in terms of both lexical choice and sentence structure) is used to tell the story?
- Is there anything special about the kind of language the writer has chosen to make his/her narration vivid?
- Does the author decorate his/her writing with comparisons, metaphors, similes, personification, etc.?
- What episodes abound in various tropes? What is their effect?

Part 3:
BEYOND THE TEXT

Creative development

- Here are some further activities to choose from. They suggest conventional and creative research and writing assignments as well as projects that make use of art, film, and some of the media.

CHAPTER 5

James Joyce's *Eveline*: a Story of Paralysis

TEXT and CONTEXT

Joyce's style in *Dubliners*

James Joyce's first volume of short stories was called *Dubliners* (published in 1914), the 'moral history' of his country and a first step toward its spiritual liberation. However, the sexual content and some of the vulgar language led to the collection being censored. It was a nine-year struggle to get the book into print.

Dubliners consists of 15 stories, all set in Dublin. Its style is in marked contrast to the many diverse styles that Joyce deliberately adopted in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses, Finnegans Wake*, and the novels that followed. Joyce's early writings experiment with the naturalistic form, attempting to fuse realist narrative with the presentation of individual consciousness. The stories in *Dubliners* are both detailed descriptions of the social fabric of a modern city and investigations of the individual experiences of the city. Joyce called his early stories *epiphanies*. Joyce used the *epiphany* as an artistic device in his short stories and adapted the term to secular experience of sudden revelation that occurs in the act of perceiving a commonplace and ordinary object. (*Note:* Originally, the epiphany was associated with a 'manifestation' of God's presence within the created world).

In a letter of 5 May 1906, at the time of writing some stories, he referred to it as having a style of 'scrupulous meanness'. The phrase 'scrupulous meanness' is a subjective, impressionistic description of style and needs to be explained linguistically. Joyce's *scrupulous* means 'minutely exact and careful; strictly attentive to the smallest details; characterized by punctilious exactness'; *meanness* is 'poverty of style, execution, or design'. (The whole short story is given below.).

Summary

Eveline begins with the heroine sitting still beside a window, looking out at the world passing, and remembering her childhood. The story deals with a young woman caught between the obligation to look after her father and the chance to escape to a new life with her boyfriend, the sailor, Frank. At

home she faces the prospect of her father's violence. With the threat of this violence in mind, Eveline agrees to be Frank's wife in their new home in Buenos Aires. For much of the story she weighs up the options of staying in the sterile, hard life looking after her father and family or embarking on a new life with Frank. She decides that Frank will give her happiness, and she goes with him to the port in Dublin to catch the boat out. Once there, however, the young woman displays her inability to leave and is helpless to move off the quayside. She remains trapped in her old life, caught in the paralysis of the city.

James Joyce, EVELINE[1]

She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. She was tired.

Few people passed. The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete pavement and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. One time there used to be a field there in which they used to play every evening with other people's children. Then a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it – not like their little brown houses but bright brick houses with shining roofs. The children of the avenue used to play together in that field – the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she and her brothers and sisters. Ernest, however, never played: he was too grown up. Her father used often to hunt them in out of the field with his blackthorn stick; but usually little Keogh used to *keep nix*[2] and call out when he saw her father coming. Still they seemed to have been rather happy then. Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive. That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all

1. Eveline. Gifford cites Thomas Moore's poem 'Eveleen's Bower', as a possible source for the name of the principal figure in this story. However, a Victorian pornographic novel, in which the heroine has sexual intercourse with her father, was entitled *Eveline.* See Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria To Freud: Education of the Senses* (1984).

2. keep nix. Slang: to keep guard.

grown up; her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. Everything changes. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home.

Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from. Perhaps she would never see again those familiar objects from which she had never dreamed of being divided. And yet during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the coloured print of *the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque*.[3] He had been a school friend of her father. Whenever he showed the photograph to a visitor her father used to pass it with a casual word:

—He is in *Melbourne*[4] now.

She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise? She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all her life about her. Of course she had to work hard both in the house and at business. What would they say of her in the Stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow? Say she was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled up by advertisement. Miss Gavan would be glad. She had always had an edge on her, especially whenever there were people listening.

—Miss Hill, don't you see these ladies are waiting?

—Look lively, Miss Hill, please.

She would not cry many tears at leaving the Stores.

But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would

3. the promises made to Blessed Mary Alacoque. St Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-90), a French nun, who after a series of visions introduced devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She was beatified in 1864 and canonized in 1920. Many Irish Catholic homes in the time of this story contained a print of the Sacred Heart with a list of promises of domestic security and blessing in life.

4. Melbourne. City in Victoria State, Australia. In the nineteenth century, many Irish were transported as criminals to Australia while many emigrants settled there. The Catholic priesthood in Australia was significantly Irish in personnel and ethos.

be married – she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been. Even now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence. She knew it was that that had given her the palpitations. When they were growing up he had never gone for her, like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl; but latterly he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead mother's sake. And now she had nobody to protect her. Ernest was dead and Harry, who was in the church decorating business, was nearly always down somewhere in the country. Besides, the invariable squabble for money on Saturday nights had begun to weary her unspeakably. She always gave her entire wages – seven shillings – and Harry always sent up what he could but the trouble was to get any money from her father. He said she used to squander the money, that she had no head, that he wasn't going to give her his hard-earned money to throw about the streets, and much more, for he was usually fairly bad of a Saturday night. In the end he would give her the money and ask her had she any intention of buying Sunday's dinner. Then she had to rush out as quickly as she could and do her marketing, holding her black leather purse tightly in her hand as she elbowed her way through the crowds and returning home late under her load of provisions. She had hard work to keep the house together and to see that the two young children who had been left to her charge went to school regularly and got their meals regularly. It was hard work – a hard life – but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life.

She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the night-boat to

be his wife and to live with him in *Buenos Ayres*[5] where he had a home waiting for her. How well she remembered the first time she had seen him; he was lodging in a house on the main road where she used to visit. It seemed a few weeks ago. He was standing at the gate, his peaked cap pushed back on his head and his hair tumbled forward over a face of bronze. Then they had come to know each other. He used to meet her outside the Stores every evening and see her home. He took her to see *The Bohemian Girl*[6] and she felt elated as she sat in an unaccustomed part of the theatre with him. He was awfully fond of music and sang a little. People knew that they were courting and, when he sang about *the lass that loves a sailor*[7], she always felt pleasantly confused. He used to call her Poppens out of fun. First of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to like him. He had tales of distant countries. He had started as a deck boy at a pound a month on a ship of the Allan Line going out to Canada. He told her the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services. He had sailed through the Straits of Magellan and he told her stories of *the terrible Patagonians.*[8] He had fallen on his feet in Buenos Ayres, he said, and had come over to the old country just for a holiday. Of course, her father had found out the affair and had forbidden her to have anything to say to him.

—I know these sailor chaps, he said.

One day he had quarrelled with Frank and after that she had to meet her lover secretly.

The evening deepened in the avenue. The white of two letters in her lap grew indistinct. One was to Harry; the other was to her father. Ernest had been her favourite but she liked Harry too. Her father was becoming old lately, she noticed; he would miss her. Sometimes he could be very nice. Not long

5. Buenos Ayres. The capital of Argentina, in the 19th and early 20th century a thriving and wealthy city which attracted many European immigrants and adventurers. The phrase 'Going to Buenos Ayres' was also slang for taking up a life of prostitution.

6. The Bohemian Girl. A very popular romantic light opera (1843) with music by the Dublin musician and composer Michael William Balfe (1808-1870). Its heroine is an aristocrat kidnapped by gypsies.

7. the lass that loves a sailor. A popular song by English songwriter Charles Dibdin (1745-1814).

8. the terrible Patagonians. Notoriously uncivilized, nomadic tribes-people, inhabitants of the southern part of Argentina. Almost unknown in Europe, they were a Victorian byword for wildness and barbarity.

before, when she had been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the fire. Another day, when their mother was alive, they had all gone for a picnic to the Hill of Howth. She remembered her father putting on her mother's bonnet to make the children laugh.

Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne. Down far in the avenue she could hear a street organ playing. She knew the air. Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could. She remembered the last night of her mother's illness; she was again in the close dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ-player had been ordered to go away and given sixpence. She remembered her father strutting back into the sickroom saying:

—Damned Italians! coming over here![9]

As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother's life laid its spell on the very quick of her being — that life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness. She trembled as she heard again her mother's voice saying constantly with foolish insistence:

—Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun![10]

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her.

She stood among the swaying crowd in the station at the North Wall. He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again. The station

9. Damned Italians! coming over here. Italian immigration to Ireland was in fact very slight, which fact must add to the intemperance of this xenophobic outburst. As it happens, Argentina was a main focus of Italian emigration in the period.

10. Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun! A famous crux. Possibly mere nonsense. It has been generally assumed that this is corrupt Gaelic. The meaning of the phrase is not quite clear, it may mean 'the end of pleasure is pain' or 'the

was full of soldiers with brown baggages. Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat, lying in beside the quay wall, with illumined portholes. She answered nothing. She felt her cheek pale and cold and, out of a maze of distress, she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty. The boat blew a long mournful whistle into the mist. If she went, to-morrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Ayres. Their passage had been booked. Could she still draw back after all he had done for her? Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer.

A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him seize her hand:

—Come!

All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.

—Come!

No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish!

—Eveline! Evvy!

He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition.

end of song is raving madness'. The latter would make sense in view of Eveline's mention of her mother's, 'life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness'.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Despite its brevity and simple plot, *Eveline* has fascinated a number of scholars. Gary Leonard, for example, refers to it as 'so apparently simple and yet so wondrously complex' (Leonard 2004, 94). The literariness (or style) of the story lies in a particular kind of complexity: formal properties of a text and the actualization of indirect meanings in reading.

This is a story of paralysis, which is a major connotative code in all the *Dubliners* stories. Joyce described his intention to write Dubliners as the desire to represent the sense of Dublin's paralysis which is evoked throughout, and in many different forms: political, social, moral, cultural, emotional.

● What is the setting of the story?

Discussion

● Does Joyce resort to the flashback technique? What is gained by arranging the events in a non-chronological order?

● Name the characters.

● Do the characters develop in the story? Which of them are dynamic and/or static?

(b) What is Eveline's age, occupation, social position? What are the sources of her income? Is Eveline described economically and laconically?

(c) What features of Frank's nature are accentuated? Comment on Eveline's father's remark about Frank 'I know these sailor chaps'. What is Frank's real attitude to Eveline? How does the address 'Eveline! Evvy!' characterize him?

(d) Do you find the character-image of Eveline's mother enigmatic? Supply your evidence to support your view. What mysterious phrase did Eveline's mother utter?

● Significantly, we never see Eveline move a single step. What kind of paralysis does the writer describe in Eveline? What verbs are used throughout the story? What do they add to the theme of paralysis?

● What other themes develop in Joyce's *Eveline*?

● How effectively has the author revealed the conflict between a solitary individual and the city of paralysis? Has he also managed to reveal the conflict between the protagonist's instinct of self-preservation and her natural desire for happiness?

● What is the general atmosphere of the story? What linguistic means create a gloomy tone in the first part of the story and a dramatic tone in the final scene?

● Can you identify any stylistic features of Joyce's writing that support his description of the style—one of 'scrupulous meanness'? How does the 'meanness' of style match the restricted nature of Eveline's experience and imagination?

● Joyce's scrupulous meanness restricts the narrative to plain factual statements. Give comments on the methods and means of characterization the writer employs.

● Where is the climax in the story? What part does the dénouement play in conveying the message?

● Find in the text the indications that Eveline is not going to leave Dublin. Are they explicit or implicit in her weighing-up process? Why does Eveline find it impossible to leave home? Give possible interpretations.

● Would you call the word 'dusty' repeated twice an artistic detail?

● Do the words 'sat', 'leaned', 'tired' at the beginning of the story suggest implication?

● What is the stylistic effect of the simple sentences and the questions Eveline asks herself in the story?

● What impression do colloquial and slang words convey? What stylistic devices have you found in the story?

● Would you treat the word 'nausea' as a symbol of disaster? Why, or why not? Does it tell us more about Eveline's physical or psychological state? How is the situation in which this word appears related?

● Find the phrase *Everything changes* at the end of the second paragraph. Comment on the ambivalence of the word 'change'. What does Eveline mean by 'another life'? Does it get linked to both life and death? Would you conquer your fear of change in such a situation?

Writing

Write a short essay in response to the following:

● *Eveline* stands out as a story of paralysis where the protagonist, a typical Dubliner, 'never decides and never escapes'. Discuss the cultural code of Dublin and the teachings of Irish Catholicism which dominate the characters' lives.

● Joyce uses the antithesis of the sailor Frank associated with freedom and the future against Eveline, a prisoner in the father's house, in order to create the tension in the final scene, when Eveline sees 'the black mass of the boat, lying in beside the quay'. Write your impressions of the effect produced by the appearance of 'the black mass'. Does it have symbolic force?

BEYOND THE TEXT

Writing

Write an essay on one of the topics below:

● Leaving a homeland: for love or money?

● Emigration will solve our problems.

Project

● Living abroad creates different atmosphere in our lives. For some it could be the most rewarding moments financially and emotionally. But for others it could be the nightmare on the way of earning money, and if given a chance, they would turn the clock back. Are the Ukrainian women who earn money abroad happy?

Debate the question yourself, arguing the side that you disagree with. Try to make your argument serious and persuasive.

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CHAPTER 6

The Act of Consciousness and the Experience of Being Alive in James Joyce's *The Dead*

TEXT and CONTEXT

Summary

The longest story in the *Dubliners* collection, *The Dead* (written in 1907), is the story of Gabriel Conroy, who attends the Christmas dinner party of his aunts, the Morkans, accompanied by his wife Gretta.

The Morkans are middle class ladies, who have been prominent in Dublin music circles and who host entertaining evenings for their friends and family. Gabriel is a self-conscious, intellectual character, often embarrassed and sometimes snobbish. He is embarrassed by the maid Lily, who tells him that 'the man that is now is only all palaver', which is a premonition of the conclusion in which Gabriel realises that he is a shadow of the man who died for his wife. He is embarrassed also by Miss Ivors, who teases him for having written reviews in a pro-British newspaper and for not supporting the revival movement in his own country. She accuses him of being a British sympathiser, a West Briton, and taunts him about not visiting the west of Ireland, 'your own land', then reputed as the last refuge of ancient Gaelic culture.

Outside the party and public, we see his contemplation of life with Gretta. This prepares us for the final tragic scene in which it is revealed to Gabriel that he is not the ideal love of Gretta's life, and he becomes aware of himself as a pathetic shadow of what he should be. In Gretta's comparison of him to Michael Furey, Gabriel sees himself as a shade of what he imagines himself. Against the burning truth of Furey's death, the discovery that Furey's love must be stronger in her heart than his life as a husband, Gabriel is moved to tears, and moved to change his life.

The Dead—dead lovers, dead memories—serve to remind him of who he really is. They come back to haunt him in the final section of the story. This self-realisation is the final epiphanic moment of the story, where the main character comes upon a dramatic revelation. (The abridged short story with notes by Terence Brown is printed in the Appendix of this section).

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Joyce perfected the stream of consciousness technique to great effect in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in presenting the sensory perceptions of a child, for example, and in *Ulysses*, in Molly Bloom's soliloquy at the end. In *The Dead*, for example, Joyce uses the technique to indicate Gabriel's inner thoughts and desires. The only spiritual experience is Gabriel Conroy's vision of the snow falling across all of Ireland and over the grave of the heroic Michael Furey. The revelation inspires Gabriel to decide to embark on a symbolic journey to the west of Ireland, which comes as a dramatic epiphany.

Setting

● The Misses Morkans' house where Miss Kate, Miss Julia and their niece Mary Jane give their Christmas party; a room in the Gresham Hotel where Gabriel Conroy and his wife Gretta are to spend the night. What is the function of the setting?

Discussion

Character development and complexity

(a) Do the characters develop in the story? Which of them are multi-dimensional (or dynamic) and mono-dimensional (or static)?

(b) Are characters described implicitly or explicitly: by the narrator, by another character in the short story, or by the characters themselves (self-characterization)? What methods of characterization are employ in the story?

(c) Gabriel's flight and disappearance from the public world of the party brings other characters into the forefront. What are these other party-goers of the story?

(d) Comment on the men present at the dance besides Gabriel. Why does Joyce limit his cast so narrowly?

(e) Discuss the relationship between Gabriel Conroy and women in general.

(f) Why did Gabriel's wife confess her story to him? Was it just the music that reminded her of him, or something else?

(g) Why is Gabriel so humiliated when he learns that Michael Furey is dead? What other effects does this revelation have on him? Explain what he realizes in the last section of the story.

(h) How are the point of view and Gabriel's inner thoughts represented in this passage?

> Gabriel's warm trembling fingers tapped the cold pane of the window. How cool it must be outside! How pleasant it would be to walk out alone, first along by the river and then through the park! The snow would be lying on the branches of the trees and forming a bright cap on the top of the Wellington Monument. How much more pleasant it would be there than at the supper-table!

- Would you say *The Dead* is a Christmas story? Why or why not?

- Comment on the relevance of the dinner-table conversation to the themes of the story.

- Interpret the title of the story.

  (a) What is the function of the title? Is it related to the message? What ring does it acquire in the last sentence in the story?

  'His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead'.

  (b) Does the title foreshadow the outcome of the events?

  (c) To whom does the title refer? Does it refer to the boy who died for Gabriel's wife? Gabriel's family? Gabriel? The people at the party? The people of Dublin?

- Does *The Dead* accept a new relationship with the city and offer a solution to the spiritual paralysis? Why does Joyce move from death to life, from blindness to sight, from cold to warmth?

● Word pictures (images) are repeated several times as a structuring device.

Why does Joyce use the repetition of nouns and adjectives? What is the significance of the repetition of the images of snow outside? Why does he imagine people standing in the snow before he begins to speak? What is the symbolism of snow in the story? Explain Gabriel's longing to be out in the snow. Is Gabriel 'thought-tormented'?

● What is the symbolism behind Gabriel's decision 'to set out on his journey westward'? Do you think the possibility of a turn to the West of Ireland is as a source of inspiration to break out of the paralysis of Dublin?

● The political symbols in this story are particularly significant. In the story, Michael is associated with nationalist struggle through the song, *The Lass of Aughrim,* a nationalist ballad, and therefore with a heroic death. Gabriel in contrast merely heralds the passing of the old generation and the arrival of a new generation, while his own part, even in his own wife's affections, is somehow minute and unheroic.

Why does Joyce use this antithesis? Does it seem to represent two different attitudes to Ireland?

● Identify as many cases of allusion as you can

(a) by circling all the words and phrases (including names) which you think may be allusions

(b) by finding out what they are allusions to by looking them up in appropriate sources.

Writing

Write a short paper in response to one of the following:

● Gabriel sometimes seems at peace with himself and his life and at other times expresses rage at Irish tradition and yearns to be more 'continental'.

What, ultimately, does the story suggest are Gabriel's true feelings? On what do you base your findings about it?

● After your first reading of the story, scan it again, marking the following:

(a) all references to cold, dampness, and snow;

(b) all references to death, illness, or people dead at the time of the story;

(c) all references to warmth, light, fire, and the like;

(d) all references to youth, young people, children, and the like.

Put your findings in order and write a paragraph on the importance of these elements in the story and answer the following:

(a) Do they contribute to the vivid impressions of the setting?

(b) Do they affect the tone?

BEYOND THE TEXT

Projects

● Music plays a distinctive role in *The Dead*. At the party, Mary Jane performs a piano piece, Aunt Julia sings, and Gretta hears Bartell D'Arcy perform *The Lass of Aughrim*, which Michael Furey used to sing. Joyce was a big fan of music and used it often in his work.

Look for recordings of *The Lass of Aughrim* and other music of the period. How does this inform your understanding of Joyce and *The Dead*? (This activity is taken from *The Bedford Anthology of World Literature (1650 – the present),* 364)).

● For a specific occasion, plan and compose an after-dinner speech with several headings like Gabriel's. Then analyse your speech, explaining what you were trying to accomplish for your group—and for yourself. Compare your intentions with Gabriel's.

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James Joyce, THE DEAD (abridged)

Gabriel could not listen while Mary Jane was playing her Academy piece,[1] full of runs and difficult passages, to the hushed drawing-room. He liked music but the piece she was playing had no melody for him and he doubted whether it had any melody for the other listeners, though they had begged Mary Jane to play something. Four young men, who had come from the refreshment-room to stand in the doorway at the sound of the piano, had gone away quietly in couples after a few minutes. The only persons who seemed to follow the music were Mary Jane herself, her hands racing along the key-board or lifted from it at the pauses like those of a priestess in momentary imprecation, and Aunt Kate standing at her elbow to turn the page.

Gabriel's[2] eyes, irritated by the floor, which glittered with beeswax under the heavy chandelier, wandered to the wall above the piano. A picture of the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* hung there and beside it was a picture of the two murdered princes in the Tower[3] which Aunt Julia had worked in red, blue and brown wools when she was a girl. Probably in the school they had gone to as girls that kind of work had been taught, for one year his mother had worked for him as a birthday present a waistcoat […], with little foxes' heads upon it, lined with brown satin and having round mulberry buttons. It was strange that his mother had had no musical talent though Aunt Kate used to call her the brains carrier of the Morkan family. Both she and Julia had always seemed a little proud of their serious and matronly sister. […] It was she who had chosen the names for her sons for she was very sensible of the dignity of family life. Thanks to her, […] Gabriel himself had taken his degree in the Royal University[4]. A shadow passed over his face as he remembered her sullen opposition to his marriage. Some slighting phrases she had used still rankled in his memory; she had once spoken of Gretta as being country cute and that was not true of Gretta at all. It was Gretta who had nursed her during all her last long illness in their house at Monkstown.

He knew that Mary Jane must be near the end of her piece for she was playing again the opening melody with runs of scales after every bar and while he waited for the end the resentment died down in his heart. The piece ended with a trill of octaves in the treble and a final deep octave in

the bass. Great applause greeted Mary Jane as, blushing and rolling up her music nervously, she escaped from the room. The most vigorous clapping came from the four young men in the doorway who had gone away to the refreshment-room at the beginning of the piece but had come back when the piano had stopped.

Lancers[5] were arranged. Gabriel found himself partnered with Miss Ivors. She was a frank-mannered talkative young lady, with a freckled face and prominent brown eyes. She did not wear a low-cut bodice and the large brooch which was fixed in the front of her collar bore on it an Irish device.

When they had taken their places she said abruptly:

—I have a crow to pluck with you.

—With me? said Gabriel.

She nodded her head gravely.

—What is it? asked Gabriel, smiling at her solemn manner.

—Who is G. C.? answered Miss Ivors, turning her eyes upon him.

Gabriel coloured and was about to knit his brows, as if he did not understand, when she said bluntly:

—O, innocent Amy! I have found out that you write for *The Daily Express*. Now, aren't you ashamed of yourself?

—Why should I be ashamed of myself? asked Gabriel, blinking his eyes and trying to smile.

—Well, I'm ashamed of you, said Miss Ivors frankly. To say you'd write for a rag like that. I didn't think you were a West Briton.[6]

A look of perplexity appeared on Gabriel's face. It was true that he wrote a literary column every Wednesday in *The Daily Express,* for which he was paid fifteen shillings. But that did not make him a West Briton surely. The books he received for review were almost more welcome than the paltry cheque. He loved to feel the covers and turn over the pages of newly printed books. Nearly every day when his teaching in the college was ended he used to wander down the quays to the second-hand booksellers, to Hickey's on Bachelor's Walk, to Webb's or Massey's on Aston's Quay, or to O'Clohissey's in the by-street. He did not know how to meet her charge. He wanted to say that literature was above politics. But they were friends of many years' standing and their careers had been parallel, first at the University[8] and then as teachers: he could not risk a grandiose phrase with her. He continued blinking his eyes and trying to smile and murmured lamely that he saw nothing political in writing reviews of books.

When their turn to cross had come he was still perplexed and inattentive. Miss Ivors promptly took his hand in a warm grasp and said in a soft friendly tone:

—Of course, I was only joking. Come, we cross now.

When they were together again she spoke of the University question and Gabriel felt more at ease. A friend of hers had shown her his review of Browning's poems.[7] That was how she had found out the secret: but she liked the review immensely. Then she said suddenly:

—O, Mr Conroy, will you come for an excursion to the Aran Isles[9] this summer? We're going to stay there a whole month. It will be splendid out in the Atlantic. You ought to come. Mr Clancy is coming, and Mr Kilkelly and Kathleen Kearney. It would be splendid for Gretta too if she'd come. She's from Connacht, isn't she?

—Her people are, said Gabriel shortly.

—But you will come, won't you? said Miss Ivors, laying her warm hand eagerly on his arm.

—The fact is, said Gabriel, I have already arranged to go—

—Go where? asked Miss Ivors.

—Well, you know every year I go for a cycling tour with some fellows and so—

—But where? asked Miss Ivors.

—Well, we usually go to France or Belgium or perhaps Germany, said Gabriel awkwardly.

—And why do you go to France and Belgium, said Miss Ivors, instead of visiting your own land?

—Well, said Gabriel, it's partly to keep in touch with the languages and partly for a change.

—And haven't you your own language[10] to keep in touch with – Irish? asked Miss Ivors.

—Well, said Gabriel, if it comes to that, you know, Irish is not my language.

Their neighbours had turned to listen to the cross-examination. Gabriel glanced right and left nervously and tried to keep his good humour under the ordeal which was making a blush invade his forehead.

—And haven't you your own land to visit, continued Miss Ivors, that you know nothing of, your own people and your own country?

—O, to tell you the truth, retorted Gabriel suddenly, I'm sick of my own country, sick of it!

—Why? asked Miss Ivors.

Gabriel did not answer for his retort had heated him.

—Why? repeated Miss Ivors.

They had to go visiting together and, as he had not answered her, Miss Ivors said warmly:

—Of course, you've no answer.

Gabriel tried to cover his agitation by taking part in the dance with great energy. He avoided her eyes for hi had seen a sour expression on her face. But when they met in the long chain he was surprised to feel his hand firmly pressed. She looked at him from under her brows for a moment quizzically until he smiled. Then, just as the chain was about to start again, she stood on tiptoe and whispered into his ear:

—West Briton!

When the lancers were over Gabriel went away to a remote corner of the room where Freddy Malins' mother was sitting. She was a stout feeble old woman with white hair. Her voice had a catch in it like her son's and she stuttered slightly. She had been told that Freddy had come and that he was nearly all right. Gabriel asked her whether she had had a good crossing. She lived with her married daughter in Glasgow and came to Dublin on a visit once a year. She answered placidly that she had had a beautiful crossing and that the captain had been most attentive to her. She spoke also of the beautiful house her daughter kept in Glasgow, and of all the nice friends they had there. While her tongue rambled on Gabriel tried to banish from his mind all memory of the unpleasant incident with Miss Ivors. Of course the girl or woman, or whatever she was, was an enthusiast but there was a time for all things. Perhaps he ought not to have answered her like that. But she had no right to call him a West Briton before people, even in joke. She had tried to make him ridiculous before people, heckling him and staring at him with her rabbit's eyes.

He saw his wife making her way towards him through the waltzing couples. When she reached him she said into his ear:

—Gabriel, Aunt Kate wants to know won't you carve the goose as usual. Miss Daly will carve the ham and I'll do the pudding.

—All right, said Gabriel.

—She's sending in the younger ones first as soon as this waltz is over so that we'll have the table to ourselves.

—Were you dancing? asked Gabriel.

—Of course I was. Didn't you see me? What words had you with Molly Ivors?

—No words. Why? Did she say so?

—Something like that. I'm trying to get that Mr D'Arcy to sing. He's full of conceit, I think.

—There were no words, said Gabriel moodily, only she wanted me to go for a trip to the west of Ireland and I said I wouldn't.

His wife clasped her hands excitedly and gave a little jump.

—O, do go, Gabriel, she cried. I'd love to see Galway[11] again.

—You can go if you like, said Gabriel coldly.

She looked at him for a moment, then turned to Mrs Malins and said:

—There's a nice husband for you, Mrs Malins.

While she was threading her way back across the room Mrs Malins, without adverting to the interruption, went on to tell Gabriel what beautiful places there were in Scotland and beautiful scenery. Her son-in-law brought them every year to the lakes and they used to go fishing. Her son-in-law was a splendid fisher. One day he caught a fish, a beautiful big big fish, and the man in the hotel boiled it for their dinner.

Gabriel hardly heard what she said. Now that supper was coming near he began to think again about his speech and about the quotation. When he saw Freddy Malins coming across the room to visit his mother Gabriel left the chair free for him and retired into the embrasure of the window. The room had already cleared and from the back room came the clatter of plates and knives. Those who still remained in the drawing-room seemed tired of dancing and were conversing quietly in little groups. Gabriel's warm trembling fingers tapped the cold pane of the window. How cool it must be outside! How pleasant it would be to walk out alone, first along by the river and then through the park! The snow would be lying on the branches of the trees and forming a bright cap on the top of the Wellington Monument.[12] How much more pleasant it would be there than at the supper-table!

He ran over the headings of his speech: Irish hospitality, sad memories, the Three Graces,[13] Paris, [14] the quotation from Browning. He repeated to himself a phrase he had written in his review: *One feels that one is listening to a thought-tormented music.* Miss Ivors had praised the review. Was she sincere? Had she really any life of her own behind all her propagandism? There had never been any ill-feeling between them until that night. It unnerved him to think that she would be at the supper-table, looking up at him while he spoke with her critical quizzing eyes. Perhaps she would not be sorry to see him fail in his speech. An idea came into his mind and gave

him courage. He would say, alluding to Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia: *Ladies and Gentlemen, the generation which is now on the wane among us may have had its faults but for my part I think it had certain qualities of hospitality, of humour, of humanity, which the new and very serious and hypereducated generation that is growing up around us seems to me to lack.* Very good: that was one for Miss Ivors. What did he care that his aunts were only two ignorant old women?

[…]

The raisins and almonds and figs and apples and oranges and chocolates and sweets were now passed about the table and Aunt Julia invited all the guests to have either port or sherry. At first Mr Bartell D'Arcy refused to take either but one of his neighbours nudged him and whispered something to him upon which he allowed his glass to be filled. Gradually as the last glasses were being filled the conversation ceased. A pause followed, broken only by the noise of the wine and by unsettlings of chairs. The Misses Morkan, all three, looked down at the tablecloth. Someone coughed once or twice and then a few gentlemen patted the table gently as a signal for silence. The silence came and Gabriel pushed back his chair and stood up.

The patting at once grew louder in encouragement and then ceased altogether. Gabriel leaned his ten trembling fingers on the tablecloth and smiled nervously at the company. Meeting a row of upturned faces he raised his eyes to the chandelier. The piano was playing a waltz tune and he could hear the skirts sweeping against the drawing-room door. People, perhaps, were standing in the snow on the quay outside, gazing up at the lighted windows and listening to the waltz music. The air was pure there. In the distance lay the park where the trees were weighted with snow. The Wellington Monument wore a gleaming cap of snow that flashed westward over the white field of Fifteen Acres.[15]

He began:

—Ladies and Gentlemen.

—It has fallen to my lot this evening, as in years past, to perform a very pleasing task but a task for which I am afraid my poor powers as a speaker are all too inadequate.

—No, no! said Mr Browne.

—But, however that may be, I can only ask you tonight to take the will for the deed and to lend me your attention for a few moments while I endeavour to express to you in words what my feelings are on this occasion.

—Ladies and Gentlemen. It is not the first time that we have gathered together under this hospitable roof, around this hospitable board. It is not the first time that we have been the recipients – or perhaps, I had better say, the victims—of the hospitality of certain good ladies.

He made a circle in the air with his arm and paused. Everyone laughed or smiled at Aunt Kate and Aunt Julia and Mary Jane who all turned crimson with pleasure. Gabriel went on more boldly:

—I feel more strongly with every recurring year that our country has no tradition which does it so much honour and which it should guard so jealously as that of its hospitality. It is a tradition that is unique as far as my experience goes (and I have visited not a few places abroad) among the modern nations. Some would say, perhaps, that with us it is rather a failing than anything to be boasted of. But granted even that, it is, to my mind, a princely failing, and one that I trust will long be cultivated among us. Of one thing, at least, I am sure. As long as this one roof shelters the good ladies aforesaid—and I wish from my heart it may do so for many and many a long year to come—the tradition of genuine warm-hearted courteous Irish hospitality, which our forefathers have handed down to us and which we in turn must hand down to our descendants, is still alive among us.

A hearty murmur of assent ran round the table. It shot through Gabriel's mind that Miss Ivors was not there and that she had gone away discourteously: and he said with confidence in himself:

—Ladies and Gentlemen.

—A new generation is growing up in our midst, a generation actuated by new ideas and new principles. It is serious and enthusiastic for these new ideas and its enthusiasm, even when it is misdirected, is, I believe, in the main sincere. But we are living in a sceptical and, if I may use the phrase, a thought-tormented age: and sometimes I fear that this new generation, educated or hypereducated as it is, will lack those qualities of humanity, of hospitality, of kindly humour which belonged to an older day. Listening to-night to the names of all those great singers of the past it seemed to me, I must confess, that we were living in a less spacious age. Those days might, without exaggeration, be called spacious days: and if they are gone beyond recall let us hope, at least, that in gatherings such as this we shall still speak of them with pride and affection, still cherish in our hearts the memory of those dead and gone great ones whose fame the world will not willingly let die.[16]

—Hear, hear! said Mr Browne loudly.

—But yet, continued Gabriel, his voice falling into a softer inflection, there are always in gatherings such as this sadder thoughts that will recur to our minds: thoughts of the past, of youth, of changes, of absent faces that we miss here tonight. Our path through life is strewn with many such sad memories: and were we to brood upon them always we could not find the heart to go on bravely with our work among the living. We have all of us living duties and living affections which claim, and rightly claim, our strenuous endeavours.

—Therefore, I will not linger on the past. I will not let any gloomy moralising intrude upon us here to-night. Here we are gathered together for a brief moment from the bustle and rush of our everyday routine. We are met here as friends, in the spirit of good-fellowship, as colleagues, also to a certain extent, in the true spirit of *camaraderie,* and as the guests of - what shall I call them? — the Three Graces of the Dublin musical world.

The table burst into applause and laughter at this sally. Aunt Julia vainly asked each of her neighbours in turn to tell her what Gabriel had said.

—He says we are the Three Graces, Aunt Julia, said Mary Jane.

Aunt Julia did not understand but she looked up, smiling, at Gabriel, who continued in the same vein:

—Ladies and Gentlemen.

—I will not attempt to play to-night the part that Paris played on another occasion. I will not attempt to choose between them. The task would be an invidious one and one beyond my poor powers. For when I view them in turn, whether it be our chief hostess herself, whose good heart, whose too good heart, has become a byword with all who know her, or her sister, who seems to be gifted with perennial youth and whose singing must have been a surprise and a revelation to us all to-night, or, last but not least, when I consider our youngest hostess, talented, cheerful, hard-working and the best of nieces, I confess, Ladies and Gentlemen, that I do not know to which of them I should award the prize.

Gabriel glanced down at his aunts and, seeing the large smile on Aunt Julia's face and the tears which had risen to Aunt Kate's eyes, hastened to his close. He raised his glass of port gallantly, while every member of the company fingered a glass expectantly, and said loudly:

—Let us toast them all three together. Let us drink to their health, wealth, long life, happiness and prosperity and may they long continue to hold the proud and self-won position which they hold in their profession and the position of honour and affection which they hold in our hearts.

All the guests stood up, glass in hand, and, turning towards the three seated ladies, sang in unison, with Mr Browne as leader:

For they are jolly gay fellows, For they are jolly gay fellows, For they are jolly gay fellows, 'Which nobody can deny.

Aunt Kate was making frank use of her handkerchief and even Aunt Julia seemed moved. Freddy Malins beat time with his pudding-fork and the singers turned towards one another, as if in melodious conference, while they sang, with emphasis:

Unless he tells a lie, Unless he tells a lie.[17]

Then, turning once more towards their hostesses, they sang:

For they are jolly gay fellows, For they are jolly gay fellows, For they are jolly gay fellows, Which nobody can deny.

The acclamation which followed was taken up beyond the door of the supper-room by many of the other guests and renewed time after time, Freddy Malins acting as officer with his fork on high. […]

He stood still in the gloom of the hall, trying to catch the air that the voice was singing and gazing up at his wife. There was grace and mystery in her attitude as if she were a symbol of something. He asked himself what is a woman standing on the stairs in the shadow, listening to distant music, a symbol of. If he were a painter he would paint her in that attitude. […]

The hall-door was closed; and Aunt Kate, Aunt Julia and Mary Jane came down the hall, still laughing. […]

Gabriel said nothing but pointed up the stairs towards where his wife was standing. Now that the hall-door was closed the voice and the piano could be heard more clearly. Gabriel held up his hand for them to be silent. The song seemed to be in the old Irish tonality[18] and the singer seemed uncertain both of his words and of his voice. The voice, made plaintive by distance and by the singer's hoarseness, faintly illuminated the cadence of the air with words expressing grief:

O, the rain falls on my heavy locks
And the dew wets my skin,
My babe lies cold …[19]
[…]

The morning was still dark. A dull yellow light brooded over the houses and the river; and the sky seemed to be descending. It was slushy underfoot; and only streaks and patches of snow lay on the roofs, on the parapets of the quay and on the area railings. The lamps were still burning

redly in the murky air and, across the river, the palace of the Four Courts stood out menacingly against the heavy sky. […]

A wave of yet more tender joy escaped from his heart and went coursing in warm flood along his arteries. Like the tender fires of stars moments of their life together, that no one knew of or would ever know of, broke upon and illumined his memory. He longed to recall to her those moments, to make her forget the years of their dull existence together and remember only their moments of ecstasy. For the years, he felt, had not quenched his soul or hers. Their children, his writing, her household cares had not quenched all their souls' tender fire. In one letter that he had written to her then he had said: *Why is it that words like these seem to me so dull and cold? Is it because there is no word tender enough to be your name?*

Like distant music these words that he had written years before were borne towards him from the past. He longed to be alone with her. When the others had gone away, when he and she were in their room in the hotel, then they would be alone together. He would call her softly:

—Gretta!

Perhaps she would not hear at once: she would be undressing. Then something in his voice would strike her. She would turn and look at him. . . . […]

She leaned for a moment on his arm in getting out of the cab and while standing at the curbstone, bidding the others good-night. She leaned lightly on his arm, as lightly as when she had danced with him a few hours before. He had felt proud and happy then, happy that she was his, proud of her grace and wifely carriage. But now, after the kindling again of so many memories, the first touch of her body, musical and strange and perfumed, sent through him a keen pang of lust. Under cover of her silence he pressed her arm closely to his side; and, as they stood at the hotel door, he felt that they had escaped from their lives and duties, escaped from home and friends and run away together with wild and radiant hearts to a new adventure.

An old man was dozing in a great hooded chair in the hall. He lit a candle in the office and went before them to the stairs. They followed him in silence, their feet falling in soft thuds on the thickly carpeted stairs. She mounted the stairs behind the porter, her head bowed in the ascent, her frail shoulders curved as with a burden, her skirt girt tightly about her. He could have flung his arms about her hips and held her still for his arms were trembling with desire to seize her and only the stress of his nails against the

palms of his hands held the wild impulse of his body in check. The porter halted on the stairs to settle his guttering candle. They halted too on the steps below him. In the silence Gabriel could hear the falling of the molten wax into the tray and the thumping of his own heart against his ribs.

The porter led them along a corridor and opened a door. Then he set his unstable candle down on a toilet-table and asked at what hour they were to be called in the morning.

—Eight, said Gabriel.

The porter pointed to the tap of the electric-light and began a muttered apology but Gabriel cut him short.

—We don't want any light. We have light enough from the street. And I say, he added, pointing to the candle, you might remove that handsome article, like a good man.

The porter took up his candle again, but slowly for he was surprised by such a novel idea. Then he mumbled good-night and went out. Gabriel shot the lock to.

A ghostly light from the street lamp lay in a long shaft from one window to the door. Gabriel threw his overcoat and hat on a couch and crossed the room towards the window. He looked down into the street in order that his emotion might calm a little. Then he turned and leaned against a chest of drawers with his back to the light. She had taken off her hat and cloak and was standing before a large swinging mirror, unhooking her waist. Gabriel paused for a few moments, watching her, and then said:

—Gretta!

She turned away from the mirror slowly and walked along the shaft of light towards him. Her face looked so serious and weary that the words would not pass Gabriel's lips. No, it was not the moment yet.

—You looked tired, he said.

—I am a little, she answered.

—You don't feel ill or weak?

—No, tired: that's all.

She went on to the window and stood there, looking out. Gabriel waited again and then, fearing that diffidence was about to conquer him, he said abruptly:

—By the way, Gretta!

—What is it?

—You know that poor fellow Malins? he said quickly.

—Yes. What about him?

—Well, poor fellow, he's a decent sort of chap after all, continued Gabriel in a false voice. He gave me back that sovereign[20] I lent him and I didn't expect it really. It's a pity he wouldn't keep away from that Browne, because he's not a bad fellow at heart.

He was trembling now with annoyance. Why did she seem so abstracted? He did not know how he could begin. Was she annoyed, too, about something? If she would only turn to him or come to him of her own accord! To take her as she was would be brutal. No, he must see some ardour in her eyes first. He longed to be master of her strange mood.

—When did you lend him the pound? she asked, after a pause.

Gabriel strove to restrain himself from breaking out into brutal language about the scottish Malins and his pound. He longed to cry to her from his soul, to crush her body against his, to overmaster her. […]

He was in such a fever of rage and desire that he did not hear her come from the window. She stood before him for an instant, looking at him strangely. Then, suddenly raising herself on tiptoe and resting her hands lightly on his shoulders, she kissed him.

—You are a very generous person, Gabriel, she said.

Gabriel, trembling with delight at her sudden kiss and at the quaintness of her phrase, put his hands on her hair and began smoothing it back, scarcely touching it with his fingers. The washing had made it fine and brilliant. His heart was brimming over with happiness. Just when he was wishing for it she had come to him of her own accord. Perhaps her thoughts had been running with his. Perhaps she had felt the impetuous desire that was in him and then the yielding mood had come upon her. Now that she had fallen to him so easily he wondered why he had been so diffident.

He stood, holding her head between his hands. Then, slipping one arm swiftly about her body and drawing her towards him, he said softly:

—Gretta dear, what are you thinking about?

She did not answer nor yield wholly to his arm. He said again, softly:

—Tell me what it is, Gretta. I think I know what is the matter. Do I know?

She did not answer at once. Then she said in an outburst of tears:

—O, I am thinking about that song, *The Lass of Aughrim*[21].

She broke loose from him and ran to the bed and, throwing her arms across the bed-rail, hid her face. Gabriel stood stock-still for a moment in astonishment and then followed her. As he passed in the way of the cheval-glass he caught sight of himself in full length, his broad, well-filled shirt-front, the face whose expression always puzzled him when he saw it in a

mirror and his glimmering gilt-rimmed eyeglasses. He halted a few paces from her and said:

—What about the song? Why does that make you cry?

She raised her head from her arms and dried her eyes with the back of her hand like a child. A kinder note than he had intended went into his voice.

—Why, Gretta? he asked.

—I am thinking about a person long ago who used to sing that song.

—And who was the person long ago? asked Gabriel, smiling.

—It was a person I used to know in Galway when I was living with my grandmother, she said.

The smile passed away from Gabriel's face. A dull anger began to gather again at the back of his mind and the dull fires of his lust began to glow angrily in his veins.

—Someone you were in love with? he asked ironically.

—It was a young boy I used to know, she answered, named Michael[22] Furey. He used to sing that song, *The Lass of Aughrim.* He was very delicate.

Gabriel was silent. He did not wish her to think that he was interested in this delicate boy.

—I can see him so plainly, she said after a moment. Such eyes as he had: big dark eyes! And such an expression in them—an expression!

—O then, you were in love with him? said Gabriel.

—I used to go out walking with him, she said, when I was in Galway.

A thought flew across Gabriel's mind.

—Perhaps that was why you wanted to go to Galway with that Ivors girl? he said coldly.

She looked at him and asked in surprise:

—What for?

Her eyes made Gabriel feel awkward. He shrugged his shoulders and said:

—How do I know? To see him perhaps.

She looked away from him along the shaft of light towards the window in silence.

—He is dead, she said at length. He died when he was only seventeen. Isn't it a terrible thing to die so young as that?

—What was he? asked Gabriel, still ironically.

—He was in the gasworks,[23] she said.

Gabriel felt humiliated by the failure of his irony and by the evocation of this figure from the dead, a boy in the gasworks. While he had been full

of memories of their secret life together, full of tenderness and joy and desire, she had been comparing him in her mind with another. A shameful consciousness of his own person assailed him. He saw himself as a ludicrous figure, acting as a pennyboy for his aunts, a nervous well-meaning sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians and idealising his own clownish lusts, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror. Instinctively he turned his back more to the light lest she might see the shame that burned upon his forehead.

He tried to keep up his tone of cold interrogation but his voice when he spoke was humble and indifferent.

—I suppose you were in love with this Michael Furey, Gretta, he said.

—I was great with him[24] at that time, she said.

Her voice was veiled and sad. Gabriel, feeling now how vain it would be to try to lead her whither he had purposed, caressed one of her hands and said, also sadly:

—And what did he die of so young, Gretta? Consumption, was it?

—I think he died for me, she answered.

A vague terror seized Gabriel at this answer as if, at that hour when he had hoped to triumph, some impalpable and vindictive being was coming against him, gathering forces against him in its vague world. But he shook himself free of it with an effort of reason and continued to caress her hand. He did not question her again for he felt that she would tell him of herself. Her hand was warm and moist: it did not respond to his touch but he continued to caress it just as he had caressed her first letter to him that spring morning.

—It was in the winter, she said, about the beginning of the winter when I was going to leave my grandmother's and come up here to the convent. And he was ill at the time in his lodgings in Galway and wouldn't be let out and his people in Oughterard[25] were written to. He was in decline, they said, or something like that. I never knew rightly.

She paused for a moment and sighed.

—Poor fellow, she said. He was very fond of me and he was such a gentle boy. We used to go out together, walking, you know, Gabriel, like the way they do in the country. He was going to study singing only for his health. He had a very good voice, poor Michael Furey.

—Well; and then? asked Gabriel.

—And then when it came to the time for me to leave Galway and come up to the convent he was much worse and I wouldn't be let see him so

I wrote a letter saying I was going up to Dublin and would be back in the summer and hoping he would be better then.

She paused for a moment to get her voice under control and then went on:

—Then the night before I left I was in my grandmother's house in Nuns' Island,[26] packing up, and I heard gravel thrown up against the window. The window was so wet I couldn't see so I ran downstairs as I was and slipped out the back into the garden and there was the poor fellow at the end of the garden, shivering.

—And did you not tell him to go back? asked Gabriel.

—I implored of him to go home at once and told him he would get his death in the rain. But he said he did not want to live. I can see his eyes as well as well! He was standing at the end of the wall where there was a tree.

—And did he go home? asked Gabriel.

—Yes, he went home. And when I was only a week in the convent he died and he was buried in Oughterard where his people came from. O, the day I heard that, that he was dead!

She stopped, choking with sobs, and, overcome by emotion, flung herself face downward on the bed, sobbing in the quilt. Gabriel held her hand for a moment longer, irresolutely, and then, shy of intruding on her grief, let it fall gently and walked quietly to the window.

She was fast asleep.

Gabriel, leaning on his elbow, looked for a few moments unresentfully on her tangled hair and half-open mouth, listening to her deep-drawn breath. So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake. It hardly pained him now to think how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life. He watched her while she slept as though he and she had never lived together as man and wife. His curious eyes rested long upon her face and on her hair: and, as he thought of what she must have been then, in that time of her first girlish beauty, a strange friendly pity for her entered his soul. He did not like to say even to himself that her face was no longer beautiful but he knew that it was no longer the face for which Michael Furey had braved death.

Perhaps she had not told him all the story. His eyes moved to the chair over which she had thrown some of her clothes. A petticoat string dangled to the floor. One boot stood upright, its limp upper fallen down: the fellow of it lay upon its side. He wondered at his riot of emotions of an hour before. From what had it proceeded? From his aunt's supper, from his own

foolish speech, from the wine and dancing, the merry-making when saying good-night in the hall, the pleasure of the walk along the river in the snow. Poor Aunt Julia! She, too, would soon be a shade with the shade of Patrick Morkan and his horse. He had caught that haggard look upon her face for a moment when she was singing *Arrayed for the Bridal.* Soon, perhaps, he would be sitting in that same drawing-room, dressed in black, his silk hat on his knees. The blinds would be drawn down and Aunt Kate would be sitting beside him, crying and blowing her nose and telling him how Julia had died. He would cast about in his mind for some words that might console her, and would find only lame and useless ones. Yes, yes: that would happen very soon.

The air of the room chilled his shoulders. He stretched himself cautiously along under the sheets and lay down beside his wife. One by one they were all becoming shades. Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age. He thought of how she who lay beside him had locked in her heart for so many years that image of her lover's eyes when he had told her that he did not wish to live.

Generous tears filled Gabriel's eyes. He had never felt like that himself towards any woman but he knew that such a feeling must be love. The tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their wayward and flickering existence. His own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself which these dead had one time reared and lived in was dissolving and dwindling.

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling[27] into the dark mutinous Shannon[28] waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

Notes

1. her Academy piece. A challenging piece of music prescribed by the Royal Irish Academy of Music to test the technical proficiency of musicians and teachers of music.

2. Gabriel. In the Biblical account the angel Gabriel, one of the four great archangels, announces the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias and the coming of the Messiah to the Virgin Mary. In Hebrew the name means 'Man of God'.

3. the two murdered princes in the tower. The two young sons of the English King Edward IV were murdered in the Tower of London probably on the instructions of their uncle Richard who became Richard III in 1483. Portrayal of the unsuspecting innocents asleep or dead in the Tower, where they were suffocated, was a common Victorian genre piece.

4. the Royal University. The examining and degree granting body which awarded degrees to students of University College, Dublin, at which no doubt Gabriel attended. As the name implies it was established by the British Government, as an effort to meet the educational needs of Catholic Ireland.

5. Lancers. A kind of quadrille dance. The name is appropriately military in this story of frequent martial allusion, where even the dishes and drinks on the festive board are described as if they were armies in serried ranks.

6. West Briton. A member of the English nation in Ireland; an Anglo-Irishman; one who sympathizes with the Unionist cause. Originally a strictly descriptive term employed by those who felt proud to be such, by the early twentieth century it was a term of opprobrium employed by Home Rulers and separatists.

7. at the University. University College did not admit women at the time when Gabriel and Miss Ivors might be reckoned to have attended university, so she must have studied at one of two other institutions which prepared candidates for the examinations of the Royal University. These were St Mary's University College, established by the Dominican nuns and Loreto College established by Loreto nuns. Both colleges were affiliated to the Royal University, so their students took their degrees within that institution.

8. Robert Browning. English Victorian poet (1812-89). Although his passionate wooing of his wife, the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, was a famous love story, his poetry was often reckoned by Victorian and Edwardian readers to be obscure and difficult.

9. the Aran Islands. This group of islands of County Galway were predominantly Irish-speaking. As such they were the focus of much nationalist mythologizing.

10. your own language ... Irish. The Irish Ireland movement considered that Gaelic was the national language of Ireland and that all self-respecting Irish people should learn it as soon as possible. It was part of the movement's propagandist endeavour to ensure that the language was called Irish, and not Gaelic or Celtic, thereby affording it the same status as English enjoyed in England.

11. Galway the principal city of County Galway and of the province Connacht

12. Wellington Monument. Large monument in Phoenix Park in memory of Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (1769-1852), the hero of Waterloo. Wellington was born in Dublin but refused to consider himself as Irish, famously declaring that to be born in a stable does not make one a horse. Possibly his distinctive contribution to Irish debates on identity is in Gabriel's mind after his encounter with Miss Ivors.

13. the Three Graces. In Greek mythology the daughters of Zeus and Eurynome as Aglaia (Brilliance), Euphrosyne (Joy), and Thalia (Bloom) are reckoned the patrons of pleasant, gracious social intercourse.

14. Paris. In Greek mythology Paris was required to choose to which of three goddesses (Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite) he would award the golden apple mischievously thrown by Eris (Discord). He chose Aphrodite (the goddess of Love) and awarded Helen with all the discordant consequences for the Greeks and the Trojans.

15. Fifteen Acres. An open grass space in Phoenix Park.

16. the world will not willingly let die. Gabriel is quoting the English poet John Milton who hoped in *The Reason of Church Government* that he would leave writings 'to after times as they would not willingly let die'.

17. For they are ... tells a lie. Gifford allows us to hear in this well-known traditional song an addition to the many military references which this story contains. The word 'gay' here of course means only merry and bright.

18. the old Irish tonality. The folk music of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and Brittany employed a pentatonic scale. Melodies which exploited this five-note scale often embraced a range of two octaves and were a challenge to the singer.

19. O, the rain falls ... lies cold. From the folk song *The Lass of Aughrim,* a version of a widely dispersed Scots and Irish ballad.

20. sovereign. a gold coin, one pound

21. The Lass of Aughrim. Irish song about a peasant girl seduced by a lord, who leaves her with child. The girl seeks out the lord, only to be turned away by his mother, who pretends to be the lord. The girl and her child are drowned when they put to sea, and the lord, who has dreamt of the girl's visit, arrives to see them drowned. The song became renowned as a nationalist ballad, with the lass of Aughrim, symbolic of Ireland and the lord of English aristocracy

22. Michael. Many critics have noted that Gretta's love in this story like her husband bears the name of an Archangel. His name in Hebrew means 'Who is like God?'

23. in the gasworks. Was employed in a plant which manufactured town gas from coal, a distinctly unromantic occupation and one scarcely conducive to good health for the 'delicate'.

24. great with him. Slang: got along very well with him to the point where the relationship might well have become serious, though as yet without any great sexual connotation.

25. Oughterard. Village about seventeen miles to the north of Galway. Michael Furey was accordingly a countryboy despite his city job.

26. Nuns' Island. A district of Galway city, known as such because of a convent situated there on one of the city's several river islands created by the Galway River which runs through the city.

27. falling softly ... softly falling. This poetic inversion anticipates Joyce's poem 'She weeps over Rahoon' (Rahoon is a small village just outside Galway) composed in 1913.

28. Shannon. One of Ireland's principal rivers. To cross the Shannon is to enter or leave the west of Ireland, the river has a broad estuary.

CHAPTER 7

Susan Hill's Style in *A Bit of Singing and Dancing*

TEXT and CONTEXT

Biographical details

Susan Hill was born in 1942 in the town of Scarborough, Yorkshire. At the age of 16, she moved with her parents to Coventry in the Midlands. From a young age she developed a love of reading which led her from grammar school to study literature at King's College, London.

She has lived in Leamington Spa and Stratford, places deliberately chosen for their charm and atmosphere. During her most prolific period of creative writing, she would escape to the peacefulness of the Dorset countryside or to a small seaside town in Suffolk, for inspiration for her novels. There she wrote *I'm the King of the Castle.* In this novel, as in all her work, her evocative descriptions reflect her familiarity with the natural landscape and her deep affection for the English countryside.

In 1975, she met and married Stanley Wells, a Shakespeare scholar. Following the birth of their first child, the family moved from Stratford into the Oxfordshire countryside. They now have two daughters and live in Gloucestershire.

Susan Hill has a strong sense of place. She has written autobiographically about the places in which she has lived, exploring her belief that places are influential in making people what they are.

Susan Hill is a popular and distinguished writer. It is unsurprising that her first book was published when she was only nineteen years old, and she has gone on to produce many acclaimed works. During a period of remarkable creativity between 1968 and 1974, she wrote six novels, two collections of short stories, and several radio plays.

I'm the King of the Castle, The Mist in the Mirror, The Albatross and Other Stories, and *The Bird of Night* have all won literary awards. *The Woman in Black* is a compelling ghost story, which has also been staged as a play. Her books for children include *Can It Be True?,* which won the Smarties prize. She has written two autobiographical books, *The Magic Apple Tree* and *Family.* In 2004, Hill began a series of crime novels featuring

detective Simon Serrailler, entitled *The Various Haunts of Men* (2004). This was followed by *The Pure in Heart* (2005), *The Risk of Darkness* (2006), *The Vows of Silence* (2009), *Shadows in the Street* (2010), and *The Betrayal of Trust* (2011).

Her enthusiasm for literature is apparent in all her work. She is respected as a literary reviewer and broadcaster and has edited two books of short stories.

Summary

In 1973, Susan Hill wrote the short story after which her anthology is titled *A Bit of Singing and Dancing*. The main theme of almost every story from the collection is death, the leading motif that underscores the stories from beginning to end. Although the story begins with the death of Miss Fanshaw's mother, and her death has an important part to play in the plot, the reader experiences the 'optimistic' ending. By treating Esme Fanshaw's feelings and showing the tragic result of her unhappiness, Susan Hill invites the reader to reconsider perceptions of her previous life with her mother and acknowledge the real existence of such misery.

Miss Fanshaw, who lost her mother, decided to let one of the rooms in the house. Mr. Curry, a neat and spruce gentleman, became her lodger. He worked and paid four pounds a week for his living and one pound for his food. At the same time, the 'discovery' made by Miss Fanshaw speaks eloquently of what his 'job' was costing him: Mr. Curry earned his bread by singing and dancing for the summer tourists for money.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

During the 20th century, writers wrote in more detail about the psychology of their characters. They explored the importance of past experiences and social relationships, and provided more insight into their characters' thoughts and feelings, although each of their novels or stories is anything but a direct presentation of life.

Hill's characters are always controlled, her descriptions extremely laconic. There is never a superfluous word, never a superfluous stroke of her brush. As a psychologist, Hill's way of working is very different both from the traditional way of writing, and from the successors of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, who were the leaders of all that was new in the study of human consciousness and the subconscious for many years. Still

the chain of associations has a large part to play in her style of writing (the subtext is based upon it), but it is never more than suggested: she never reveals it fully in any kind of inner monologue.

As it has been already remarked, Susan Hill's style is characterized by simplicity and sharp focus. From the opening sentence of the novel, which summarizes Esme Fanshaw's unhappiness of her life, the reader's attention is engaged and directed to important events, without detailed introduction.

The main events in the story take place during a short period of time. But much of it deals with Esme's past. Susan Hill uses 'flashbacks', the technique of bringing the past into the story and the tradition of telling a story in this way. It allows the author to select and emphasize particular features, and present events from the point of view of different narrators. By allowing the character to use her own voices to recount experiences, the author provides insight into her thoughts and feelings and shows how her life has been shaped and influenced.

Discussion

● Susan Hill has written that 'settings are always very, very important to me, every bit as much as characters or themes'. What does the setting contribute to this story? What is the topic sentence of the first paragraph? Does it contain any hidden implication?

● In this story it is significant which of Esme's memories and thoughts are recorded. By recording her thoughts, Susan Hill gives an insight into Esme's inability to relate to other people or understand their motives and behaviour.

(a) Explain how the dream and flashback sections of the story contribute to our understanding of Esme's character and feelings.

(b) What thoughts haunt Esme after her mother's death? Do they arouse our sympathy for her or evoke any other feelings?

(c) What effect does the constant repetition of 'She thought…' create?

● Name the characters.

(a) Who is the protagonist? The antagonist?

(b) Give examples of how despotic she was with Esme and how she is alive in her daughter's mind. Can you call Esme's mother a hypocrite?

(c) Give a one-sentence character sketch of Esme Fanshaw.

(d) Give a full character sketch of Mr. Curry and fill in **Table 1**.

Table 1

Mr. Curry	**What the author says about it**
Age	
Background	
Social position	
Appearance	
Habits	
Motto	
Significant details	

● The story emphasizes that Esme is forced into isolation by the lack of love in her family. Is the theme of isolation reinforced through the description of the setting and natural environment?

● There are some other themes in the story: death, freedom, happiness, etc. How does the story explore them?

● Analyse the plot structure of the story. What are its peculiarities? What event serves to be the climax of the story?

● What type of conflict is the plot based on?

● Explain the metaphorical essence of the title.

(a) Would you call the title a musical metaphor?

(b) To what extent does the title prepare the reader for what is to follow?

(c) Why is it useful for the author to arouse expectation in the mind of the reader? In what way is the atmosphere of growing suspense created?

● What is the message of the story? How do implications reveal the author's message?

(a) What is implied in the contrast between the dead Mrs. Fanshaw and Mr. Curry – their mode of life, their morale, the motives that urge them to act in a certain way?

(b) Illustrate the contrasts between Esme's old and new life. Why was she 'half-alive' before? Analyse how Esme gradually becomes alive. How is she in her subconscious revived by Mr. Curry's tune he whistles in the morning?

(c) Esme doesn't try to convince herself that her solitude is a tragedy. Yet, the reader senses the depths of her unhappiness. How does the writer suggest this implication? Do the descriptions of her state of mind create an impression of truth?

● Susan Hill conveys the vivid images of the characters, events, and places through her use of direct and easily understood descriptive language:

(a) She conveys images through precise description: peculiar colours in the setting, Esme's future plans and chances, her relatives' tyranny, etc. How are the visual details in Esme's imagination recorded in the story?

(b) She chooses lexical and syntactic repetitions, some of them forming chain-repetitions. Can they be treated as key words in the story? Why does the author fix so much attention on them? What effect do they have? Which of them are artistic details?

(c) The similes in the story are simple and effective. Give examples.

Writing

● Follow the author's method of gradual unfolding of Esme's life story. Support your answer with references to the facts you learn, for example:

a. Esme is finally free.
b. The past eleven years her mother dictated her tastes.
c. Her mother died two weeks before. She was bedridden.
d.
e. …

● Susan Hill's gift for penetration into the very depths of man's inner world is truly remarkable. The theme of loneliness has its own resonance in the story.

Write a short essay on the frightening loneliness of Esme Fanshaw. Was it the result or the cause of the kind of life she had to live?

● An offer of friendship with Mr. Curry was not an easy decision for Esme. Does the final scene shatter the reader's hopes for any change in Esme's relations with Mr. Curry? Do you see any continuation of the story?

BEYOND THE TEXT

Writing

● Interpret the phrase as the principle of tolerance 'live and let live' once uttered by Mr. Curry. Do you find it a maxim of the golden rule? Support your answer with references to dictionaries.

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Susan Hill, A BIT OF SINGING AND DANCING

There was no one else on the beach so late in the afternoon. She walked very close to the water, where there was a rim of hard, flat sand, easier on her feet than the loose shelves of shingle, which folded one on top of the other, up to the storm wall. She thought, I can stay out here just as long as I like, I can do anything I choose, anything at all, for now I am answerable only to myself.

But it was an unpromising afternoon, already half dark, an afternoon for early tea and banked-up fires and entertainment on television. And a small thrill went through her as she realised that that, too, was entirely up to her, she could watch whichever programme she chose, or not watch any at all. There had not been an evening for the past eleven years when the television had stayed off and there was silence to hear the ticking of the clock and the central heating pipes.

'It is her only pleasure,' she used to say. 'She sees things she would otherwise be quite unable to see, the television has given her a new lease of life. You're never too old to learn.' But in truth her mother had watched variety shows, Morecambe and Wise and the Black and White Minstrels, whereas she herself would have chosen BBC 2 and something cultural or educational. 'I like a bit of singing and dancing, it cheers you up, Esme, it takes you out of yourself. I like a bit of spectacular.'

But tonight there might be a play or a film about Arabia or the Archipelagoes, or a master class for cellists, tonight she would please herself, for the first time. Because it was two weeks now, since her mother's death, a decent interval.

It was February. It was a cold evening. As far as she could see the beach and the sea and the sky were all grey, merging into one another in the distance. On the day of her mother's funeral it had been blowing a gale, with sleet, she had looked round at all their lifeless, pinched faces under the black hats and thought, this is right, this is fitting, that we should all of us seem bowed and old and disconsolate. Her mother had a right to a proper grief, a proper mourning. She had wanted to leave the beach and walk back, her hands were stiff with cold inside the pockets of her navy-blue coat—navy, she thought, was the correct first step away from black. She wanted to go back and toast scones and eat them with too much butter,

of which her mother would have strongly disapproved. '*We* never had it, we never allowed to indulge ourselves in rich foods, and besides, they've been discovering more about heart disease in relation to butter, haven't you read that in the newspapers, Esme? I'm surprised you don't pay attention to these things. I pay attention. I don't believe in butter at every meal—butter on this, butter with that.'

Every morning, her mother had read two newspapers from cover to cover—the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mirror,* and marked out with a green ball point pen news items in which she thought that her daughter ought to take an interest. She said, 'I like to see both sides of every question.' And so, whichever side her daughter or some visitor took, on some issue of the day, she was informed enough by both her newspapers to take the opposing view. An argument, she had said, sharpened the mind.

'I do not intend to become a cabbage, Esme, just because I am forced to be bedridden.'

She had reached the breakwater. A few gulls circled, bleating, in the gunmetal sky, and the waterline was strewn with fish-heads, the flesh all picked away. She thought, I am free, I may go on or go back, or else stand here for an hour, I am mistress of myself. It was a long time since she had been out for so long, she could not quite get used to it, this absence of the need to look at her watch, to scurry home. But after a while, because it was really very damp and there was so little to see, she did turn, and then she thought of tomorrow, and the outing she had promised herself to buy new clothes. It would take some months for her mother's will to be proven, the solicitor had explained to her, things were generally delayed, but there was no doubt that they would be settled to her advantage and really, Mrs. Fanshaw had been very-careful, very prudent, and so she would not be in want. Meanwhile, perhaps an advance for immediate expenses? Perhaps a hundred pounds?

When the will was read, her first reaction had been one of admiration, she had said, 'The cunning old woman' under her breath, and then put her hand up to her mouth, afraid of being overheard. 'The cunning old woman.' For Mildred Fanshaw had saved up £6,000, scattered about in bank and savings accounts. Yet they had always apparently depended upon Esme's salary and the old age pension, they had had to be careful, she said, about electricity and extra cream and joints of beef. 'Extravagance,' Mrs. Fanshaw said, 'it is a cardinal sin. That is where all other evils stem from, Esme. Extravagance. We should all live within our means.'

And now here was £6,000. For a moment or two it had gone to her head, she had been quite giddy with plans, she would buy a car and learn to drive, buy a washing machine and a television set, she would have a holiday abroad and get properly fitting underwear and eat out in a restaurant now and again, she would...

But she was over fifty, she should be putting money on one side herself now, saving for her own old age, and besides, even the idea of spending made her feel guilty, as though her mother could hear, now, what was going on inside her head, just as, in life, she had known her thoughts from the expression on her face.

She had reached the steps leading up from the beach. It was almost dark.

She shivered, then, in a moment of fear and bewilderment at her new freedom, for there was nothing she had to do, she could please herself about everything, anything, and this she could not get used to. Perhaps she ought not to stay here, perhaps she could try and sell the house, which was really far too big for her, perhaps she ought to get a job and a small flat in London. London was the city of opportunity ...

She felt flushed and a little drunk then, she felt that all things were possible, the future was in her power, and she wanted to shout and sing and dance, standing alone in the February twilight, looking at the deserted beach. All the houses along the seafront promenade had blank, black windows, for this was a summer place, in February it was only half alive.

She said, 'And that is what I have been. But I am fifty-one years old and look at the chances before me.'

Far out on the shingle bank the green warning light flashed on-on-off, on-on-off. It had been flashing the night of her mother's stroke, she had gone to the window and watched it and felt comforted at three a.m. in the aftermath of death. Now, the shock of that death came to her again like a hand slapped across her face, she thought, my mother is not here, my mother is in a box in the earth, and she began to shiver violently, her mind crawling with images of corruption, she started to walk very quickly along the promenade and up the hill towards home.

When she opened the front door she listened, and everything was quite silent, quite still. There had always been the voice from upstairs, 'Esme?' and each time she had wanted to say, 'Who else would it be?' and bitten back the words, only said, 'Hello, it's me.' Now, again, she called, 'It's me. Hello,' and her voice echoed softly up the dark stair well, when she heard

it, it was a shock, for what kind of woman was it who talked to herself and was afraid of an empty house? What kind of woman?

She went quickly into the sitting-room and drew the curtains and then poured herself a small glass of sherry, the kind her mother had preferred. It was shock, of course, they had told her, all of them, her brother-in-law and her Uncle Cecil and cousin George Golightly, when they had come back for tea and ham sandwiches after the funeral. 'You will feel the real shock later. Shock is always delayed.' Because she had been so calm and self-possessed, she had made all the arrangements so neatly, they were very surprised.

'If ever you feel the need of company, Esme—and you will—of course you must come to us. Just a telephone call, that's all we need, just a little warning in advance. You are sure to feel strange.'

Strange. Yes. She sat by the electric fire. Well, the truth was she had got herself thoroughly chilled, walking on the beach like that, so late in the afternoon. It had been her own fault.

After a while, the silence of the house oppressed her, so that when she had taken a second glass of sherry and made herself a poached egg on toast, she turned on the television and watched a variety show, because it was something cheerful, and she needed taking out of herself. There would be time enough for the educational programmes when she was used to this new life. But a thought went through her head, backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, it was as though she were reading from a tape.

'She is upstairs. She is still in her room. If you go upstairs you will see her. Your mother.' The words danced across the television screen, intermingling with the limbs of dancers, issuing like spume out of the mouths of comedians and crooners, they took on the rhythm of the drums and the double basses.

'Upstairs. In her room. Upstairs. In her room.

Your mother. Your mother. Your mother.

Upstairs...'

She jabbed at the push button on top of the set and the picture shrank and died, there was silence, and then she heard her own heart beating and the breath coming out of her in little gasps. She scolded herself for being morbid, neurotic. Very well then, she said, go upstairs and see for yourself.

Very deliberately and calmly she went out of the room and climbed the stairs, and went into her mother's bedroom. The light from the street lamp immediately outside the window shone a pale triangle of light down

onto the white runner on the dressing table, the white lining of the curtains and the smooth white cover of the bed. Everything had gone. Her mother might never have been here. Esme had been very anxious not to hoard reminders and so, the very day after the funeral, she had cleared out and packed up clothes, linen, medicine, papers, spectacles, she had ruthlessly emptied the room of her mother.

Now, standing in the doorway, smelling lavender polish and dust, she felt ashamed, as though she wanted to be rid of all memory, as though she had wanted her mother to die. She said, but that is what I did want, to be rid of the person who bound me to her for fifty years. She spoke aloud into the bedroom, T wanted you dead.' She felt her hands trembling and held them tightly together, she thought, I am a wicked woman. But the sherry she had drunk began to have some effect now, her heart was beating more quietly, and she was able to walk out into the room and draw the curtains, even though it was now unnecessary to scold herself for being so hysterical.

In the living room, she sat beside the fire reading a historical biography until eleven o'clock—when her mother was alive she had always been in bed by ten—and the fears had quite left her, she felt entirely calm. She thought, it is only natural, you have had a shock, you are bound to be affected. That night she slept extremely well.

When she answered the front doorbell at eleven fifteen the following morning and found Mr. Amos Curry, hat in hand, upon the step, enquiring about a room, she remembered a remark her Uncle Cecil had made to her on the day of the funeral. 'You will surely not want to be here all on your own, Esme, in this great house. You should take a lodger.'

Mr. Amos Curry rubbed his left eyebrow with a nervous finger, a gesture of his because he was habitually shy. 'A room to let,' he said, and she noticed that he wore gold cuff links and very well-polished shoes. 'I understand from the agency ... a room to let with breakfast.'

'I know nothing of any agency. I think you have the wrong address.'

He took out a small loose-leaf notebook. 'Number 23, Park Close.'

'Oh no, I'm so sorry, we are...' she corrected herself, 'I am, twenty-three Park *Walk.*'

A flush of embarrassment began to seep up over his face and neck like an ink stain, he loosened his collar a little until she felt quite sorry for him, quite upset.

'An easy mistake, a perfectly understandable mistake. Mr. ... Please do not feel at all...'

'...Curry. Amos Curry.'

'...embarrassed.'

'I am looking for a quiet room with breakfast. It seemed so hopeful. Park Close. Such a comfortable address.'

She thought, he is a very clean man, very neat and spruce, he has a gold incisor tooth and he wears gloves. Her mother had always approved of men who wore gloves. 'So few do, nowadays. Gloves and hats. It is easy to pick out a gentleman.'

Mr. Curry also wore a hat.

'I do apologize, Madam, I feel so... I would not have troubled...'

'No... no, please...'

'I must look for Park Close, Number 23.'

'It is just around the bend, to the left, a few hundred yards. A very secluded road.'

'Like this. This road is secluded. I thought as I approached this house, how suitable, I should... I feel one can tell, a house has a certain... But I am so sorry.'

He settled his hat upon his neat grey hair, and then raised it again politely, turning away.

She took in a quick breath. She said, 'What exactly ... that is to say, if you are looking for a room with breakfast, I wonder if I...'

Mr. Amos Curry turned back.

He held a small pickled onion delicately on the end of his fork. 'There is,' he said, 'the question of my equipment.'

Esme Fanshaw heard his voice as though it issued from the wireless—there was a distortion about it, a curious echo. She shook her head. He is not real, she thought... But he was here, Mr. Amos Curry, in a navy-blue pin stripe suit and with a small neat darn just below his shirt collar. He was sitting at her kitchen table—for she had hesitated to ask him into the dining room, which in any case was rarely used, the kitchen had seemed a proper compromise. He was here. She had made a pot of coffee, and then, after an hour, a cold snack of beef and pickles, bread and butter, her hands were a little moist with excitement. She thought again how rash she had been, she said, he is a total stranger, someone from the street, a casual caller, I know nothing at all about him. But she recognized the voice of her mother, then, and rebelled against it. Besides, it was not true, for Mr. Curry had told her a great deal. She thought, this is how life should be, I should be daring, I should allow myself to be constantly surprised. Each day I should be ready

for some new encounter. That is how to stay young. She was most anxious to stay young.

In his youth, Mr. Curry had been abroad a great deal, had lived, he said, in Ceylon, Singapore and India. 'I always keep an open mind, Miss Fanshaw, I believe in the principle of tolerance, live and let live. Nation shall speak peace unto nation.' 'Oh, I do agree.'

'I have seen the world and its ways. I have no prejudices. The customs of others may be quite different from our own but human beings are human beings the world over. We learn from one another every day. By keeping an open mind, Miss Fanshaw.' 'Oh yes.'

'You have travelled?'

'I — I have visited Europe. Not too far a field, I'm afraid.'

'I have journeyed on foot through most of the European countries, I have earned my passage at all times.'

She did not like to ask how, but she was impressed, having only been abroad once herself, to France.

Mr. Curry had been an orphan, he said, life for him had begun in a children's home. 'But it was a more than adequate start, Miss Fanshaw, we were all happy together. I do not think memory deceives me. We were one big family. Never let it be said that the Society did not do its best by me. I see how lucky I am. Well, you have only to look about you, Miss Fanshaw— how many people do you see from broken families, unhappy homes? I know nothing of that: I count myself fortunate. I like to think I have made the best of my circumstances.'

His education, he said, had been rather elementary, he had a good brain which had never been taxed to the full.

'Untapped resources,' he said, pointing to his forehead.

They talked so easily, she thought she had never found conversation flowing along with any other stranger, any other man. Mr. Curry had exactly the right amount of formal politeness, mixed with informal ease, and she decided that he was destined to live here, he had style and he seemed so much at home.

He had an ordinary face, for which she was grateful, but there was something slightly unreal about it, as though she were seeing it on a cinema screen. All the same, it was very easy to picture him sitting in this kitchen, eating breakfast, before putting on his hat, which had a small feather in the band, each morning and going off to work.

'I do have some rather bulky equipment.'

'What exactly...'

'I have two jobs. Miss Fanshaw, two strings to my bow, as it were. That surprises you? But I have always been anxious to fill up every hour of the day, I have boundless energy.'

She noticed that he had some tufts of pepper coloured hair sprouting from his ears and nostrils and wondered if, when he visited the barber for a haircut, he also had these trimmed. She knew nothing about the habits of men.

'Of course, it is to some extent seasonal work.'

'Seasonal?'

'Yes. For those odd wet and windy days which always come upon us at the English seaside, and of course during the winter, I travel in cleaning utensils.'

He looked around him quickly, as though to see where she kept her polish and dusters and brooms, to make note of any requirements.

'Perhaps you would require some extra storage space? Other than the room itself.'

Mr. Curry got up from the table and began to clear away dishes, she watched him in astonishment. The man on the doorstep with a note of the wrong address had become the luncheon visitor, the friend who helped with the washing up.

'There is quite a large loft.'

'Inaccessible.'

'Oh.'

'And I do have to be a little careful. No strain on the back. Not that I am a sick man, Miss Fanshaw, I hasten to reassure you, you will not have an invalid on your hands. Oh no. I am extremely healthy for my age. It is because I lead such an active life.'

She thought of him, knocking upon all the doors, walking back down so many front paths. Though this was not what he did in the summer.

'Sound in wind and limb, as you might say.'

She thought of racehorses, and tried to decide whether he had ever been married. She said, 'Or else, perhaps, the large cupboard under the stairs, where the gas meter...'

'Perfect.'

He poured just the right amount of washing up liquid into the bowl; his sleeves were already unbuttoned and rolled up to the elbows, his jacket hung on the hook behind the back door. She saw the hairs lying like thatch

on his sinewy arms, and a dozen questions sprang up into her mind, then, for although he seemed to have told her a great deal about himself, there were many gaps.

He had visited the town previously, he told her, in the course of his work, and fell for it. T never forgot it, Miss Fanshaw. I should be very happy here, I told myself. It is my kind of place. Do you see?'

'And so you came back.'

'Certainly. I know when I am meant to do something. I never ignore that feeling. I was intended to return here.'

'It is rather a small town.'

'But select.'

'I was only wondering — we do have a very short season, really only July and August...'

'Yes?'

'Perhaps it would not be suitable for your — er — summer work?'

'Oh, I think it would, Miss Fanshaw, I think so, I size these things up rather carefully, you know, rather carefully.

She did not question him further, only said, 'Well, it is winter now,'

'Indeed. I shall, to coin a phrase, be plying my other trade. In a town like this, full of ladies such as yourself, in nice houses with comfortable circumstances, the possibilities are endless, endless.'

'For — er — cleaning materials?'

'Quite so.'

'I do see that.'

'Now you take a pride, don't you? Anyone can see that for himself.'

He waved a hand around the small kitchen, scattering little drops of foamy water, and she saw the room through his eyes, the clean windows, the shining taps, the immaculate sinks. Yes, she took a pride, that was true. Her mother had insisted upon it. Now, she heard herself saying, 'My mother died only a fortnight ago,' forgetting that she had told him already and the shock of the fact overcame her again, she could not believe in the empty room, which she was planning to give to Mr. Curry, and her eyes filled up with tears of guilt. And what would her mother have said about a strange man washing up in their kitchen, about this new, daring friendship.

'You should have consulted me, Esme, you take far too much on trust. You never think. You should have consulted me.'

Two days after her mother's funeral, Mrs. Bickerdike, from The Lilacs, had met her in the pharmacy, and mentioned, in lowered voice, that she

'did work for the bereaved', which, Esme gathered, meant that she conducted seances. She implied that contact might be established with the deceased Mrs. Fanshaw. Esme had been shocked, most of all by the thought of that contact, and a continuing relationship with her mother, though she had only said that she believed in letting the dead have their rest. 'I think, if you will forgive me, and with respect, that we are not meant to enquire about them, or to follow them on.'

Now, she heard her mother talking about Mr. Curry. 'You should always take particular notice of the eyes, Esme, never trust anyone with eyes set too closely together.'

She tried to see his eyes, but he was turned sideways to her.

'Or else too widely apart. That indicates idleness.'

She was ashamed of what she had just said about her mother's recent death, for she did not at all wish to embarrass him, or to appear hysterical. Mr. Curry had finished washing up and was resting his reddened wet hands upon the rim of the sink. When he spoke, his voice was a little changed and rather solemn. 'I do not believe in shutting away the dead, Miss Fanshaw, I believe in the sacredness of memory. I am only glad that you feel able to talk to me about the good lady.

She felt suddenly glad to have him here in the kitchen, for his presence took the edge off the emptiness and silence which lately had', seemed to fill up every corner of the house.

She said, 'It was not always easy... My mother was a very ... forthright woman.'

'Say no more. I understand only too well. The older generation believed in speaking their minds.'

She thought, he is obviously a very sensitive man, he can read between the lines: and she wanted to laugh with relief, for there was no need to go into details about how dominating her mother had been and how taxing were the last years of her illness—he knew, he understood.

Mr. Curry dried his hands, smoothing the towel down one finger at a time, as though he were drawing on gloves. He rolled down his shirtsleeves and buttoned them and put on his jacket. His movements were neat and deliberate. He coughed. 'Regarding the room—there is just the question of payment, Miss Fanshaw, I believe in having these matters out at once. There is nothing to be embarrassed about in speaking of money, I hope you agree.'

'Oh no, certainly, I...'

'Shall we say four pounds a week?'

Her head swam. She had no idea at all how much a lodger should pay, how much his breakfasts would cost, and she was anxious to be both business-like and fair. Well, he had suggested what seemed to him a most suitable sum, he was more experienced in these matters than herself.

'For the time being I am staying at a commercial guest house in Cedars Road. I have only linoleum covering the floor of my room, there is nothing cooked at breakfast. I am not accustomed to luxury, Miss Fanshaw, you will understand that from what I have told you of my life, but I think I am entitled to comfort at the end of the working day.'

'Oh, you will be more than comfortable here, I shall see to that, T shall do my very best. I feel...'

'Yes?'

She was suddenly nervous of how she appeared in his eyes.

'I do feel that the mistake you made in the address was somehow...'

'Fortuitous.'

'Yes, oh yes.'

Mr. Curry gave a little bow.

'When would you wish to move in, Mr. Curry? There are one or two things...'

'Tomorrow evening, say?'

'Tomorrow is Friday."

'Perhaps that is inconvenient.'

'No ... no ... certainly ... our week could begin on a Friday, as it were.'

'I shall greatly look forward to having you as a landlady, Miss Fanshaw.'

Landlady. She wanted to say, ' I hope I shall be a friend, Mr. Curry,' but it sounded presumptuous.

When he had gone she made herself a pot of tea, and sat quietly at the kitchen table, a little dazed. She thought, this is a new phase of my life. But she was still a little alarmed. She had acted out of character and against what she would normally have called her better judgement. Her mother would have warned her against inviting strangers into the house, just as, when she was a child, she had warned her about speaking to them in the street. 'You can never be sure, Esme, there are some very peculiar people about.' For she was a great reader of the crime reports in her newspapers, and of books about famous trials. The life of Doctor Crippen had particularly impressed her.

Esme shook her head. Now, all the plans she had made for selling the house and moving to London and going abroad were necessarily curtailed, and for the moment she felt depressed, as though the old life were going to continue, and she wondered, too, what neighbours and friends might say, and whether anyone had seen Mr. Curry standing on her doorstep, paper in hand, whether, when he went from house to house selling cleaning utensils, they would recognize him as Miss Fanshaw's lodger and disapprove. There was no doubt that her mother would have disapproved, and not only because he was a 'stranger off the streets'.

'He is a salesman, Esme, a doorstep pedlar, and you do not *know* what his employment in the summer months may turn out to be.'

'He has impeccable manners, mother, quite old-fashioned ones, and a most genteel way of speaking.' She remembered the gloves and the raised hat, the little bow, and also the way he had quietly and confidently done the washing up, as though he were already living here.

'How do you know where things will lead, Esme?'

'I am prepared to take a risk. I have taken too few risks in my life so far.'

She saw her mother purse her lips and fold her hands together, refusing to argue further, only certain that she was in the right. Well, it was her own life now, and she was mistress of it, she would follow her instincts for once. And she went and got a sheet of paper, on which to write a list of things that were needed to make her mother's old bedroom quite comfortable for him. After that, she would buy cereal and bacon and kidneys for the week's breakfasts.

She was surprised at how little time it took for her to grow quite accustomed to having Mr. Curry in the house. It helped, of course, that he was a man of very regular habits and neat, too, when she had first gone into his room to clean it, she could have believed that no one was using it at all. The bed was neatly made, clothes hung out of sight in drawers—he had locked the wardrobe, she discovered, and taken away the key. Only two pairs of shoes side by side, below the washbasin, and a shaving brush and razor on the shelf above it, gave the lodger away.

Mr. Curry got up promptly at eight—she heard his alarm clock and then the pips of the radio news. At eight twenty he came down to the kitchen for his breakfast, smelling of shaving soap and shoe polish. Always, he said, 'Ah, good morning, Miss Fanshaw, good morning to you,' and then commented briefly upon the weather. It was 'a bit nippy' or 'a touch

of sunshine, I see' or 'bleak'. He ate a cooked breakfast, followed by toast and two cups of strong tea.

Esme took a pride in her breakfasts, in the neat way she laid the table and the freshness of the cloth, she warmed his plate under the grill and waited until the last minute before doing the toast so that it should still be crisp and hot. She thought, it is a very bad thing for a woman such as myself to live alone and become entirely selfish. I am the sort of person who needs to give service.

At ten minutes to nine, Mr. Curry got his suitcase from the downstairs cupboard, wished her good morning again, and left the house. After that she was free for the rest of the day, to live as she had always lived, or else to make changes—though much of her time was taken up with cleaning the house and especially Mr. Curry's room, and shopping for something unusual for Mr. Curry's breakfasts.

She had hoped to enrol for lampshade-making classes at the evening institute but it was too late for that year, they had told her she must apply again after the summer, so she borrowed a book upon the subject from the public library and bought frames and card and fringing, and taught herself. She went to one or two bring-and-buy sales and planned to hold a coffee morning and do a little voluntary work for old people. Her life was full. She enjoyed having Mr. Curry in the house. Easter came, and she began to wonder when he would change to his summer work, and what that work might be. He never spoke of it.

To begin with he had come in between five thirty and six every evening, and gone straight to his room. Sometimes he went out again for an hour, she presumed to buy a meal somewhere and perhaps drink a glass of beer, but more often he stayed in, and Esme did not see him again until the following morning. One or twice she heard music coming from his room—presumably from the radio, and she thought how nice it was to hear that the house was alive, a home for someone else.

One Friday evening, Mr. Curry came down into the kitchen to give her the four pounds rent, just as she was serving up lamb casserole, and when she invited him to stay and share it with her, he accepted so quickly that she felt guilty, for perhaps he went without an evening meal altogether. She decided to offer him the use of the kitchen, when a moment should arise which seemed suitable.

But a moment did not arise. Instead, Mr. Curry came down two or three evenings a week and shared her meal, she got used to shopping for

two, and when he offered her an extra pound a week, she accepted, it was so nice to have company, though she felt a little daring, a little carefree. She heard her mother telling her that the meals cost more than a pound a week. 'Well, I do not mind, they give me pleasure, it is worth it for that.'

One evening, Mr. Curry asked her if she were good at figures, and when she told him that she had studied bookkeeping, asked her help with the accounts for his kitchen utensil customers. After that, two or three times a month, she helped him regularly, they set up a temporary office on the dining-room table, and she remembered how good she had been at this kind of work, she began to feel useful, to enjoy herself.

He said, 'Well, it will not be for much longer, Miss Fanshaw, the summer is almost upon us, and in the summer, of course, I am self-employed.'

But when she opened her mouth to question him more closely, he changed the subject. Nor did she like to enquire whether the firm who supplied him with the cleaning utensils to sell, objected to the dearth of summer orders.

Mr. Curry was an avid reader, 'in the winter', he said, when he had the time. He read not novels or biographies or war memoirs, but his encyclopedia, of which he had a handsome set, bound in cream mock-leather and paid for by monthly instalments. In the evenings, he took to bringing a volume down to the sitting-room, at her invitation, and keeping her company, she grew used to the sight of him in the opposite armchair. From time to time he would read out to her some curious or entertaining piece of information. His mind soaked up everything, but particularly of a zoological, geographical or anthropological nature, he said that he never forgot a fact, and that you never knew when something might prove of use. And Esme Fanshaw listened, her hands deftly fringing a lampshade—it was a skill she had acquired easily—and continued her education.

'One is never too old to learn, Mr. Curry.'

'How splendid that we are of like mind! How nice!'

She thought, yes, it is nice, as she was washing up the dishes the next morning, and she flushed a little with pleasure and a curious kind of excitement. She wished that she had some woman friend whom she could telephone and invite round for coffee, in order to say, 'How nice it is to have a man about the house, really, I had no idea what a difference it could make.' But she had no close friends, she and her mother had always kept

themselves to themselves. She would have said, 'I feel younger, and it is all thanks to Mr. Curry. I see now that I was only half-alive.'

Then, it was summer. Mr. Curry was out until half-past nine or ten o'clock at night, the suitcase full of brooms and brushes and polish was put away under the stairs and he had changed his clothing. He wore a cream linen jacket and a straw hat with a black band, a rose or carnation in his buttonhole. He looked very dapper, very smart, and she had no idea at all what work he was doing. Each morning he left the house carrying a black case, quite large and square. She thought, I shall follow him. But she did not do so. Then, one evening in July, she decided to explore, to discover what she could from other people in the town, for someone must know Mr. Curry, he was a distinctive sight, now, in the fresh summer clothes. She had, at the back of her mind, some idea that he might be a beach photographer.

She herself put on a quite different outfit—a white pique dress she had bought fifteen years ago, but which still not only fitted, but suited her, and a straw boater, edged with ribbon, not unlike Mr. Curry's own hat. When she went smartly down the front path, she hardly dared to look about her, certain that she was observed and spoken about by the neighbours. For it was well known now that Miss Fanshaw had a lodger.

She almost never went on to the promenade in the summer. She had told Mr. Curry so. 'I keep to the residential streets, to the shops near home, I do so dislike the summer crowds.' And besides, her mother had impressed on her that the summer visitors were 'quite common'. But tonight walking along in the warm evening air, smelling the sea, she felt ashamed of that opinion, she would not like anyone to think that she had been brought up a snob—live and let live, as Mr. Curry would tell her. And the people sitting in the deck-chairs and walking in couples along the seafront looked perfectly nice, perfectly respectable, there were a number of older women and families with well-behaved children, this was a small, select resort, and charabancs were discouraged.

But Mr. Curry was not to be seen. There were no beach photographers. She walked quite slowly along the promenade, looking all about her. There was pool, in which children could sail boats, beside the War Memorial, and a putting green, alongside the gardens of the Raincliffe Hotel. Really, she thought, I should come out more often, really it is very pleasant here in the summer, I have been missing a good deal.

When she reached the putting green she paused, not wanting to go

back, for her sitting-room was rather dark, and she had no real inclination to make lampshades in the middle of July. She was going to sit down, next to an elderly couple on one of the green benches, she was going to enjoy the balm of the evening. Then, she heard music. After a moment, she recognized it. The tune had come quite often through the closed door of Mr. Curry's bedroom.

And there, on a corner opposite the hotel, and the putting green, she saw Mr. Curry. The black case contained a portable gramophone, the old-fashioned kind, with a horn, and this was set on the pavement. Beside it was Mr. Curry, straw hat tipped a little to one side, cane beneath his arm. buttonhole in place. He was singing, in a tuneful, but rather cracked voice, and doing an elaborate little tap dance on the spot, his rather small feet moving swiftly and daintily in time with the music.

Esme Fanshaw put her hand to her face, feeling herself flush, and wishing to conceal herself , from him: she turned her head away and looked out to sea, her ears full of the sentimental music. But Mr. Curry was paying attention only to the small crowd which had gathered about him. One of two passers by, on the opposite side of the road, crossed over to watch, as Mr. Curry danced, a fixed smile on his elderly face. At his feet was an upturned bowler hat, into which people dropped coins, and when the record ended, he bent down, turned it over neatly, and began to dance again. At the end of the second tune, he packed the gramophone up and moved on, farther down the promenade, to begin his performance all over again.

She sat on the green bench feeling a little faint and giddy, her heart pounding. She thought of her mother, and what she would have said, she thought of how foolish she had been made to look, for surely someone knew, surely half the town had seen Mr. Curry? The strains of his music drifted up the promenade on the evening air. It was almost dark now, the sea was creeping back up the shingle.

She thought of going home, of turning the contents of Mr. Curry's room out onto the pavement and locking the front door, she thought of calling the police, or her Uncle Cecil, of going to a neighbour. She had been humiliated, taken in, disgraced, and almost wept for the shame of it.

And then, presently, she wondered what it was she had meant by 'shame'. Mr. Curry was not dishonest. He had not told her what he did in the summer months, he had not lied. Perhaps he had simply kept it from her because she might disapprove. It was his own business. And certainly there was no doubt at all that in the winter months he sold cleaning utensils from door to

door. He paid his rent. He was neat and tidy and a pleasant companion. What was there to fear?

All at once, then, she felt sorry for him, and at the same time, he became a romantic figure in her eyes, for he had danced well and his singing had not been without a certain style, perhaps he had a fascinating past as a music hall performer, and who was she, Esme Fanshaw, to despise him, what talent had she? Did she earn her living by giving entertainment to others?

'I told you so, Esme. What did I tell you?'

'Told me what, mother? What is it you have to say to me? Why do you not leave me alone?'

Her mother was silent.

Quietly then, she picked up her handbag and left the green bench and the promenade and walked up through the dark residential streets, past the gardens sweet with stocks and roses, past open windows, towards Park Walk, and when she reached her own house, she put away the straw hat, though she kept on the dress of white pique, because it was such a warm night. She went down into the kitchen and made coffee and set it, with a plate of sandwiches and a plate of biscuits, on a tray, and presently Mr. Curry came in, and she called out to him, she said, 'Do come and have a little snack with me, I am quite sure you can do with it, I'm quite sure you are tired.'

And she saw from his face that he knew that she knew.

But nothing was said that evening, or until some weeks later, when Mr. Curry was sitting opposite her, on a cold, windy August night, reading from the volume COW to DIN. Esme Fanshaw said, looking at him, 'My mother used to say, Mr. Curry, "I always like a bit of singing and dancing, some variety. It takes you out of yourself, singing and dancing."'

Mr. Curry gave a little bow.

CHAPTER 8

The Use of *Nadsat* in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*

TEXT and CONTEXT

Biographical details

Anthony Burgess (25 February 1917 – 22 November 1993) was predominantly seen as a comic writer, and although this was how his works were read, he claimed that his works were not intended to be humorous. He wished people viewed him as a musician who writes novels instead of as a novelist who writes music. 'Music is a purer art because it has no direct relationship to human events. It's totally outside the field of moral judgment. That's why I prize it'.

Born in Manchester, he lived for long periods in Southeast Asia, the USA and Mediterranean Europe as well as in England. His fiction includes the Malayan trilogy *The Long Day Wanes* on the dying days of Britain's empire in the East; *Enderby* and *The Right to an Answer,* which touch on the theme of death and dying; *One Hand Clapping,* a satire on the vacuity of popular culture; *Nothing Like the Sun*, a recreation of Shakespeare's love life; *Earthly Powers*, a panoramic saga of the 20th century. He published studies of Joyce, Hemingway, Shakespeare, and Lawrence, produced treatises on linguistics and was a prolific journalist, writing in several languages.

The brutality depicted in his best-known novel *A Clockwork Orange* (the author, however, dismissed it as one of his lesser works) emerged after an assault on Burgess's first wife Lynne in 1943 by the deserters from the U.S. Army in London, which resulted in the loss of their expected child.

In 2008, *The Times* placed Burgess number 17 on their list of 'The 50 greatest British writers since 1945'.

Historical and cultural background of the novel

A Clockwork Orange (1962) was written in Hove, then a senescent seaside town. Burgess had arrived back in Britain after his stint abroad to see that

much had changed. A youth culture had grown, including coffee bars, pop music, and teenage gangs. Just up the road in Brighton, mods and rockers were regularly fighting each other, and England was gripped by fears over juvenile delinquency. Burgess claimed that the novel's inspiration was his wife Lynne's beating and subsequent miscarriage by a gang of drunken American servicemen stationed in England during World War II. In its investigation of free will, the book's target is ostensibly the concept of behaviourism, pioneered by such figures as B. F. Skinner, the most influential American psychologist of the 20th century.

The teen subculture depicted in the novel is called *nadsat,* which is also a fictional register or argot used by teenagers. In addition to being a novelist, Burgess was also a linguist, and he used this background to depict his characters as speaking a form of Russian-influenced English. The name itself comes from the Russian suffix equivalent of '*-teen*' as in '*thirteen*' (**-**надцать, *-nadtsat'*).

A Clockwork Orange was originally written with the intent to show that people can change from their past: the book ends with Alex (the main character of the novel) transforming into adult life in a healthy, non-violent manner.

Summary

A Clockwork Orange represents a satirical portrait of a future dystopian Western society with a culture of extreme youth rebellion and violence. In this society, ordinary citizens have fallen into a passive stupor of complacency, blind to the insidious growth of a rampant, violent youth culture. The protagonist of the story is Alex, a fifteen-year-old boy who narrates in a teenage slang called *nadsat*, which incorporates elements of Russian and Cockney English. Alex leads a small gang of teenage criminals – Dim, Pete, and Georgie – through the streets, robbing and beating men and raping women. Alex and his friends spend the rest of their time at the Korova Milkbar, an establishment that serves milk laced with drugs.

After one of particularly brutal crimes, Alex is sentenced to fourteen years in prison. Known as number '6655321' he spends two years in State jail, dealing with brutal wardens, homosexual prisoners, and mindless labour. A cell scuffle results in Alex's killing a new prisoner, and the powerful Minister of the Interior asks the prison Governor to use Alex as a guinea pig for a new experimental treatment called Ludovico's Technique. The technique is a form of aversion therapy in which Alex receives an injection

that makes him feel sick while watching violent films, eventually conditioning him to suffer nausea at the mere thought of violence.

Alex's treatment over, he is released into society, a harmless human being incapable of vicious acts. Soon, however, Alex finds he is not only harmless but also defenseless, as his earlier victims begin to take revenge on him. His old friend Dim and an old enemy named Billyboy are both police officers now, and they take the opportunity to settle old scores. They drive him to a field in the country, beat him, and leave him in the rain.

Feeling devastated and miserable, Alex attempts suicide by leaping out of an attic window, but the fall doesn't kill him. While he lies in the hospital, unconscious, the doctors reverse the effects of the Ludovico's Technique and restore Alex's old vicious self.

Back to normal, Alex assembles a new gang and engages in the same behaviour as he did before prison, but he soon begins to tire of a life of violence. A chance encounter with Pete, now married and settled down, inspires Alex to seek a wife and family of his own. He contemplates the likelihood of his future son being a delinquent as he was, a prospect Alex views fatalistically.

The passages below enable the reader to envision the *nadsat* subculture, created by the author as a part of the fictional world of the novel (esp. in **Excerpt 1**) and reflect the universally valid teenager resistance to authority and contempt for the adult world (esp. in **Excerpt 2**).

Anthony Burgess, A CLOCKWORK ORANGE (excerpts)

Excerpt 1

'What's it going to be then, eh?'

There was me, that is Alex, and my three ***droogs***, that is Pete, Georgie, and Dim. Dim being really dim, and we sat in the ***Korova*** Milkbar making up our ***rassoodocks*** what to do with the evening, a flip dark chill winter bastard though dry. The ***Korova*** Milkbar was a milk-plus ***mesto***, and you may, O my brothers, have forgotten what these ***mestos*** were like, things changing so ***skorry*** these days and everybody very quick to forget, newspapers not being read much neither. Well, what they sold there was milk plus something else. They had no license for selling liquor, but there was no law yet against prodding some of the new ***veshches*** which they used to put into the old ***moloko***, so you could ***peet*** it with *vellocet* or *synthemesc*

or *drencrom* or one or two other ***veshches*** which would give you a nice quiet ***horrorshow*** fifteen minutes admiring ***Bog*** And All His Holy Angels and Saints in your left shoe with lights bursting all over your ***mozg***. Or you could ***peet*** milk with knives in it, as we used to say, and this would sharpen you up and make you ready for a bit of dirty twenty-to-one, and that was what we were ***peeting*** this evening I'm starting off the story with.

Our pockets were full of ***deng***, so there was no real need from the point of view of ***crasting*** any more pretty polly to ***tolchock*** some old ***veck*** in an alley and ***viddy*** him swim in his blood while we counted the takings and divided by four, nor to do the ultra-violent on some shivering ***starry*** grey-haired ***ptitsa*** in a shop and go ***smecking*** off with the till's guts. But, as they say, money isn't everything.

The four of us were dressed in the height of fashion, which in those days was a pair of black very tight tights with the old jelly mould, as we called it, fitting on the crotch underneath the tights, this being to protect and also a sort of a design you could ***viddy*** clear enough in a certain light, so that I had one in the shape of a spider, Pete had a ***rooker*** (a hand, that is), Georgie had a very fancy one of a flower, and poor old Dim had a very hound-and-horny one of a clown's ***litso*** (face, that is). Dim not ever having much of an idea of things and being, beyond all shadow of a doubting thomas, the dimmest of we four. Then we wore waisty jackets without lapels but with these very big built-up shoulders ('***pletchoes***' we called them) which were a kind of a mockery of having real shoulders like that. Then, my brothers, we had these off-white cravats which looked like whipped-up ***kartoffel*** or spud with a sort of a design made on it with a fork. We wore our hair not too long and we had flip ***horrorshow*** boots for kicking. 'What's it going to be then, eh?'

There were three ***devotchkas*** sitting at the counter all together, but there were four of us ***malchicks*** and it was usually like one for all and all for one. These sharps were dressed in the heighth of fashion too, with purple and green and orange wigs on their ***gullivers***, each one not costing less than three or four weeks of those sharps' wages, I should reckon, and make-up to match (rainbows round the ***glazzies***, that is, and the ***rot*** painted very wide). Then they had long black very straight dresses, and on the ***groody*** part of them they had little badges of like silver with different ***malchicks***' names on them – Joe and Mike and suchlike. These were supposed to be the names of the different ***malchicks*** they'd ***spatted*** with before they were fourteen. They kept looking our way and I nearly felt like

saying the three of us (out of the corner of my ***rot***, that is) should go off for a bit of ***pol*** and leave poor old Dim behind, because it would be just a matter of ***kupetting*** Dim a demi-litre of white but this time with a dollop of *synthemesc* in it, but that wouldn't really have been playing like the game. Dim was very very ugly and like his name, but he was a ***horrorshow*** filthy fighter and very handy with the boot.

[…]

The stereo was on and you got the idea that the singer's ***goloss*** was moving from one part of the bar to another, flying up to the ceiling and then swooping down again and whizzing from wall to wall. It was Berti Laski rasping a real ***starry*** oldie called 'You Blister My Paint'. One of the three ***ptitsas*** at the counter, the one with the green wig, kept pushing her belly out and pulling it in in time to what they called the music. I could feel the knives in the old ***moloko*** starting to prick, and now I was ready for a bit of twenty-to-one. So I yelped: 'Out out out out!' […].

'Where out?' said Georgie.

'Oh, just to keep walking,' I said, 'and ***viddy*** what turns up, O my little brothers.'

So we scatted out into the big winter ***nochy*** and walked down Marghanita Boulevard and then turned into Boothby Avenue, and there we found what we were pretty well looking for, a ***malenky*** jest to start off the evening with. There was a doddery ***starry*** schoolmaster type ***veck***, glasses on and his ***rot*** open to the cold ***nochy*** air. He had books under his arm and a crappy umbrella and was coming round the corner from the Public Biblio, which not many ***lewdies*** used these days. You never really saw many of the older bourgeois type out after nightfall those days, what with the shortage of police and we fine young ***malchickiwicks*** about, and this prof type ***chelloveck*** was the only one walking in the whole of the street. So we ***goolied*** up to him, very polite, and I said: 'Pardon me, brother.'

He looked a ***malenky*** bit ***poogly*** when he ***viddied*** the four of us like that, coming up so quiet and polite and smiling, but he said: 'Yes? What is it?' in a very loud teacher-type ***goloss***, as if he was trying to show us he wasn't ***poogly***. I said:

'I see you have books under your arm, brother. It is indeed a rare pleasure these days to come across somebody that still reads, brother.'

'Oh,' he said, all shaky. 'Is it? Oh, I see.' And he kept looking from one to the other of we four, finding himself now like in the middle of a very smiling and polite square.

'Yes,' I said. 'It would interest me greatly, brother, if you would kindly allow me to see what books those are that you have under your arm. I like nothing better in this world than a good clean book, brother.'

'Clean,' he said. 'Clean, eh?' And then Pete ***skvatted*** these three books from him and handed them round real ***skorry***. Being three, we all had one each to ***viddy*** at except for Dim. The one I had was called 'Elementary Crystallography', so I opened it up and said: 'Excellent, really first-class,' keeping turning the pages. Then I said in a very shocked type ***goloss***: 'But what is this here? What is this filthy ***slovo***? I blush to look at this word. You disappoint me, brother, you do really.'

[…]

'An old man of your age, brother,' I said, and I started to rip up the book I'd got, and the others did the same with the ones they had. Dim and Pete doing a tug-of-war with 'The Rhombohedral System'. The ***starry*** prof type began to ***creech***: 'But those are not mine, those are the property of the municipality, this is sheer wantonness and vandal work,' or some such ***slovos***. And he tried to sort of wrest the books back off of us, which was like pathetic. 'You deserve to be taught a lesson, brother,' I said, 'that you do.' This crystal book I had was very tough-bound and hard to ***razrez*** to bits, being real ***starry*** and made in days when things were made to last like, but I managed to rip the pages up and chuck them in handfuls of like snowflakes, though big, all over this ***creeching*** old ***veck***, and then the others did the same with theirs […].

The old ***veck*** began to make sort of chumbling ***shooms*** – 'wuf waf wof' – so Georgie let go of holding his ***goobers*** apart and just let him have one in the toothless ***rot*** with his ringy fist, and that made the old ***veck*** start moaning a lot then, then out comes the blood, my brothers, real beautiful. So all we did then was to pull his outer ***platties*** off, stripping him down to his vest and long underpants (very ***starry***; Dim ***smecked*** his head off near), and then Pete kicks him lovely in his pot, and we let him go. […] In the trousers of this ***starry veck*** there was only a ***malenky*** bit of cutter (money, that is) – not more than three gollies – so we gave all his messy little coin the scatter treatment, it being hen-***korm*** to the amount of pretty polly we had on us already. Then we smashed the umbrella and ***razrezzed*** his ***platties*** and gave them to the blowing winds, my brothers, and then we'd finished with the ***starry*** teacher type veck. We hadn't done much, I know, but that was only like the start of the evening and I make no appy polly loggies to thee or thine for that. The knives in the milk plus were stabbing away nice and ***horrorshow*** now.

Excerpt 2

The next morning I woke up at oh eight oh oh hours, my brothers, and as I still felt shagged and fagged and fashed and bashed and my ***glazzies*** were stuck together real ***horrorshow*** with sleepglue, I thought I would not go to school. I thought how I would have a ***malenky*** bit longer in the bed, an hour or two say, and then get dressed nice and easy, perhaps even having a splosh about in the bath, make toast for myself and ***slooshy*** the radio or read the ***gazetta***, all on my ***oddy knocky***. And then in the afterlunch I might perhaps, if I still felt like it, ***itty*** off to the old skolliwoll and see what was ***vareeting*** in the great seat of ***gloopy*** useless learning, O my brothers. I heard my papapa grumbling and trampling and then ***ittying*** off to the dyeworks where he rabbited, and then my mum called in in a very respectful ***goloss*** as she did now I was growing up big and strong:

'It's gone eight, son. You don't want to be late again.'

So I called back: 'A bit of pain in my ***gulliver***. Leave us be and I'll try to sleep it off and then I'll be right as dodgers for this after.' I ***slooshied*** her give a sort of a sigh and she said:

'I'll put your breakfast in the oven then, son. I've got to be off myself now.'

[…]

I woke up real ***skorry***, my heart going bap bap bap, and of course there was really a bell going brrrrr, and it was our front-door bell. I let on that nobody was at home, but this brrrrr still ***ittied*** on, and then I heard a ***goloss*** shouting through the door: 'Come on then, get out of it, I know you're in bed.' I recognized the ***goloss*** right away. It was the ***goloss*** of P. R. Deltoid (a real ***gloopy nazz***, that one) what they called my Post-Corrective Adviser, an overworked ***veck*** with hundreds on his books. I shouted right right right, in a ***goloss*** of like pain, and I got out of bed and attired myself, O my brothers, in a very lovely over-gown of like silk, with designs of like great cities all over this over-gown. Then I put my ***nogas*** into very comfy wooly ***toofles***, combed my luscious glory, and was ready for P. R. Deltoid. When I opened up he came shambling in looking shagged, a battered old ***shlapa*** on his ***gulliver***, his raincoat filthy. 'Ah, Alex boy,' he said to me. 'I met your mother, yes. She said something about a pain somewhere. Hence not at school, yes.'

'A rather intolerable pain in the head, brother, sir,' I said in my gentleman's ***goloss***. 'I think it should clear by this afternoon.'

'Or certainly by this evening, yes,' said P. R. Deltoid. 'The evening is the great time, isn't it, Alex boy? Sit,' he said, 'sit, sit,' as though this was

his ***domy*** and me his guest. And he sat in this ***starry*** rocking-chair of my dad's and began rocking, as if that was all he had come for. I said:

'A cup of the old ***chai***, sir? Tea, I mean.'

'No time,' he said. And he rocked, giving me the old glint under frowning brows, as if with all the time in the world. 'No time, yes,' he said, ***gloopy***. So I put the kettle on. Then I said:

'To what do I owe the extreme pleasure? Is anything wrong, sir?'

'Wrong?' he said, very ***skorry*** and sly, sort of hunched looking at me but still rocking away. Then he caught sight of an advert in the ***gazetta***, which was on the table – a lovely ***smecking*** young ***ptitsa*** with her ***groodies*** hanging out to advertise, my brothers, the Glories of the Jugoslav Beaches. Then, after sort of eating her up in two swallows, he said: 'Why should you think in terms of there being anything wrong? Have you been doing something you shouldn't, yes?'

'Just a manner of speech,' I said, 'sir.'

'Well,' said P. R. Deltoid, 'it's just a manner of speech from me to you that you watch out, little Alex, because next time, as you very well know, it's not going to be the corrective school any more. Next time it's going to be the barry place and all my work ruined. If you have no consideration for your horrible self you at least might have some for me, who have sweated over you. A big black mark, I tell you in confidence, for every one we don't reclaim, a confession of failure for every one of you that ends up in the stripy hole.'

'I've been doing nothing I shouldn't, sir,' I said. 'The ***millicents*** have nothing on me, brother, sir I mean.'

'Cut out this clever talk about ***millicents***,' said P. R. Deltoid very weary, but still rocking. 'Just because the police have not picked you up lately doesn't, as you very well know, mean you've not been up to some nastiness. There was a bit of a fight last night, wasn't there? There was a bit of shuffling with ***nozhes*** and bike-chains and the like. One of a certain fat boy's friends was ambulanced off late from near the Power Plant and hospitalized, cut about very unpleasantly, yes. Your name was mentioned. The word has got through to me by the usual channels. Certain friends of yours were named also. There seems to have been a fair amount of assorted nastiness last night. Oh, nobody can prove anything about anybody, as usual. But I'm warning you, little Alex, being a good friend to you as always, the one man in this sick and sore community who wants to save you from yourself.'

'I appreciate all that, sir,' I said, 'very sincerely.'

'Yes, you do, don't you?' he sort of sneered. 'Just watch it, that's all, yes. We know more than you think, little Alex.' Then he said, in a ***goloss*** of great suffering, but still rocking away: 'What gets into you all? We study the problem and we've been studying it for damn well near a century, yes, but we get no further with our studies. You've got a good home here, good loving parents, you've got not too bad of a brain. Is it some devil that crawls inside you?'

'Nobody's got anything on me, sir,' I said. 'I've been out of the ***rookers*** of the ***millicents*** for a long time now.'

'That's just what worries me,' sighed P. R. Deltoid. 'A bit too long of a time to be healthy. You're about due now by my reckoning. That's why I'm warning you, little Alex, to keep your handsome young proboscis out of the dirt, yes. Do I make myself clear?'

'As an unmuddied lake, sir,' I said. 'Clear as an azure sky of deepest summer. You can rely on me, sir.' And I gave him a nice ***zooby*** smile.

But when he'd ***ookadeeted*** and I was making this very strong pot of ***chai***, I grinned to myself over this ***veshch*** that P. R. Deltoid and his ***droogs*** worried about.

[…]

So now, this smiling winter morning, I drink this very strong ***chai*** with ***moloko*** and spoon after spoon after spoon of sugar, me having a ***sladky*** tooth, and I dragged out of the oven the breakfast my poor old mum had cooked for me. It was an egg fried, that and no more, but I made toast and ate egg and toast and jam, smacking away at it while I read the ***gazetta***. The ***gazetta*** was the usual about ultra-violence and bank robberies and strikes and footballers making everybody paralytic with fright by threatening to not play next Saturday if they did not get higher wages, naughty ***malchickiwicks*** as they were. Also there were more space-trips and bigger stereo TV screens and offers of free packets of soapflakes in exchange for the labels on soup-tins, amazing offer for one week only, which made me ***smeck***. And there was a ***bolshy*** big article on Modern Youth (meaning me, so I gave the old bow, grinning like ***bezoomny***) by some very clever bald ***chelloveck***. I read this with care, my brothers, slurping away at the old ***chai***, cup after ***tass*** after ***chasha***, crunching my ***lomticks*** of black toast dipped in jammiwam and eggiweg. This learned ***veck*** said the usual ***veshches***, about no parental discipline, as he called it, and the shortage of real ***horrorshow*** teachers who would lambast bloody beggary out of their

innocent poops and make them go boohoohoo for mercy. All this was ***gloopy*** and made me ***smeck***, but it was like nice to go on knowing one was making the news all the time, O my brothers. Every day there was something about Modern Youth, but the best ***veshch*** they ever had in the old ***gazetta*** was by some ***starry pop*** in a doggy collar who said that in his considered opinion and he was ***govoreeting*** as a man of ***Bog*** IT WAS THE DEVIL THAT WAS ABROAD and was like ferreting his way into like young innocent flesh, and it was the adult world that could take the responsibility for this with their wars and bombs and nonsense. So that was all right. So he knew what he talked of, being a Godman. So we young innocent ***malchicks*** could take no blame. Right right right. When I'd gone erk erk a couple of ***razzes*** on my full innocent stomach, I started to get out day ***platties*** from my wardrobe, turning the radio on. There was music playing, a very nice ***malenky*** string quartet, my brothers, by Claudius Bird-man, one that I knew well. I had to have a ***smeck***, though, thinking of what I'd ***viddied*** once in one of these like articles on Modern Youth, about how Modern Youth would be better off if A Lively Appreciation Of The Arts could be like encouraged. Great Music, it said, and Great Poetry would like quieten Modern Youth down and make Modern Youth more Civilized. Civilized my syphilised yarbles. Music always sort of sharpened me up, O my brothers, and made me feel like old ***Bog*** himself, ready to make with the old ***donner*** and ***blitzen*** and have ***vecks*** and ***ptitsas creeching*** away in my ha ha power. And when I'd ***cheested*** up my ***litso*** and ***rookers*** a bit and done dressing (my day platties were like student-wear: the old blue pantalonies with sweater with A for Alex) I thought here at last was time to ***itty*** off to the disc-bootick (and cutter too, my pockets being full of pretty polly) to see about this long-promised and long-ordered stereo Beethoven Number Nine (the Choral Symphony, that is), recorded on Masterstroke by the Esh Sham Sinfonia under L. Muhaiwir. So out I went, brothers.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Setting

The events of the novel take place in 'the not so distant future'. The boys live in a medium-sized city in England. They visit a variety of locations, the main ones include: the Korova Milk Bar, where they go to drink the milk-drug cocktails, the streets (as in **Excerpt 1**), and many

different people's houses where they break in, steal from, and attack the owners.

Alex himself goes to his house a few times where he winds down and relaxes (as in **Excerpt 2**). Each location represents something different about Alex. His house shows his relaxed side where he displays his love for classical music and the arts. It is like a sanctuary for him. The streets and the bar combine to make his angry and violent side. After drinking the drug-laced milk, Alex and his friends roam the streets and break in and terrorize people. (In the further chapters of the book, the elements of the story setting are expanded to include the jail and the mental institution, where the main character is expected to change his perspective on life, and the hospital, where he recovers from his attempted suicide).

Discussion

From Burgess's autobiography *You've Had Your Time*:

'My problem in writing the novel was wholly stylistic. The story had to be told by a young thug of the future, and it had to be told in his own version of English. This would be partly the slang of his group, partly his personal dialect. It was pointless to write the book in the slang of the early sixties: it was ephemeral like all slang and might have a lavender smell by the time the manuscript got to the printers […] soon it flashed upon me that I had found a solution to the stylistic problem of "A Clockwork Orange". The Vocabulary of my space-age hooligans could be a mixture of Russian and demotic English, seasoned with rhyming slang and the gypsy's bolo'.

The text, narrated by Alex, contains many words in a slang argot, which Burgess invented for the book, called *nadsat.* It is a mix of modified Slavic words, rhyming slang, derived Russian (like *babooshka*), and words invented by Burgess himself. For instance, these terms have the following meanings in Nadsat: *droog* = friend; *korova* = cow; *gulliver* ('golova') = head; *malchick* or *malchickiwick* = boy; *soomka* = sack or bag; *Bog* = God; *prestoopnick* = criminal; *rooka* ('rooker') = hand; *veck* ('chelloveck') = man or guy; *litso* = face; *malenky* = little; and so on.

Alex uses *nadsat* in the first-person narrative to relate the story to the reader. He also uses it to communicate with the other characters in the novel, such as his *droogs*, parents, victims, and any authority figures with whom he comes in contact. As with many speakers of non-standard varieties of English, Alex is capable of speaking Standard English when he wants

to. It is not a written language: the sense that readers get is of a transcription of vernacular speech.

● After reading the text, think of the communicative strategy of the author. What effect does the insertion of foreign words (the phenomenon known as interlingualism) have on the reader's perception? Does the author try to alienate the reader from the world of the narrator, or vice versa — to catch the recipient's attention by using the *nadsat* words as foregrounded devices?

● What concerns are raised in **Excerpt 2**? Consider the words of P. R. Deltoid:

> *'What gets into you all? We study the problem and we've been studying it for damn well near a century, yes, but we get no further with our studies. You've got a good home here, good loving parents, you've got not too bad of a brain. Is it some devil that crawls inside you?'*

Why do you think Alex dodges these questions? What is the author's intention in letting the narrator drop the subject? In what way does *A Clockwork Orange* challenge traditional ideas about the fundamental function of music?

● The phrase '*as queer as a clockwork orange*' is a Cockney expression, the meaning of which is easy to deduce.
Comment on the semantic realization of the title in the context of the passages given above.

● What emotions do the scenes in both passages arouse? Are they related to the message?

● Can language shape thought and vice versa? Does Alex's violation of linguistic norms reinforce his indifference to the norms of the surrounding society?

● What conflicts can be traced within the novel? Are they external or internal? Do they disrupt the boundary between the fictional world of the novel and the realities of the actual world?

● Everyone at the Korova Milkbar drinks milk 'with knives in it' as it 'would sharpen you up'. Alex drinks milk with almost every meal. Would you agree that this drugged version of milk has some symbolic implication? Could it be defined as an oxymoron? Explain your answer.

● How does the theme of violence in **Excerpt 2** arise? Comment on the narrator's perspective on his actions. Does he try to justify himself?

Use of *nadsat*

● Anthony Burgess's novel abounds in interlingual elements. What do you think allows an English-speaking reader to decipher the interlingual elements used in the novel (considering the fact that some publications appeared without the *Nadsat* Dictionary)?

● Analyze the way in which the Russian lexical units are anglicized in terms of morphology and syntax. Make a list of at least 20 units used in the passages above according to the part-of-speech classification; provide their English equivalents.

● Another means of constructing *nadsat* words is the employment of homophones. What extra semantic dimension might be implied by transcribing the Russian words '*хорошо'* as *'horrorshow', 'голова'* as *'gulliver'*?

● Try to find lexical units with figurative meaning containing interlingual elements.

Writing

Write an essay on one of the topics below. Remember that quotations are essential to prove and illustrate the points you make.

● *A Clockwork Orange*: Linguistic Reflection of the Narrator's Worldview.

● Fictional World Model in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*.

BEYOND THE TEXT

Research

- Provide some information about the following:

  (a) the reception of the novel *A Clockwork Orange* and its film adaptation

  (b) the Runglish language

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CHAPTER 9

Donald Barthelme's *The Balloon:* a rhizomatic postmodernist text

TEXT & CONTEXT

Biographical details

Donald Barthelme was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on 7 April 1931.

Barthelme attended the University of Houston, where he majored in journalism and graduated in 1956. While in college, Barthelme became a reporter for the *Houston Post* in 1951. Two years later, in 1953, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and sent to Korea. There, he edited the army's official newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*. After being discharged from the army, he returned to the *Houston Post* in 1955, but later that year took a public relations job at the University of Houston. In 1956, Barthelme founded *Forum*, the university's literary magazine, and later he joined the board of directors of the Houston Contemporary Arts Museum. He taught for brief periods at Boston University, the University at Buffalo, and the College of the City of New York, where he served as Distinguished Visiting Professor from 1974 to 1975.

Barthelme's writing has been said to reject traditional forms of writing and take on a life of its own. Many critics have not appreciated his writing because of its unusual nature. Other critics have dubbed it extremely modern and individualistic. His first novel, *Snow White*, was a parody based upon both Grimm's fairytale of Snow White and Disney's version of the story. On the opposite side of the spectrum, Barthelme won a National Book Award in 1972 for his children's book, *The Slightly Irregular Fire Engine.* In 1981, Barthelme published his first collection of author's best works, *Sixty Stories*, for which he won a PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction.

Barthelme died from cancer in Houston, Texas, on 23 July 1989.

Summary

Donald Barthelme's *The Balloon* is originally from his volume *Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts* (1968), but is also included in his more readily available collection *Sixty Stories.*

In the short story, an anonymous narrator relates his experiences with others' conceptions and expectations of a gigantic balloon he decides to inflate over Manhattan. The narrator mocks the people's awkward attempts to 'interpret' the giant gray balloon, which, one day, suddenly appeared above the city of New York, covering the sky from the fourteenth street to Central Park. 'The balloon [...] is a spontaneous autobiographical disclosure, having to do with the unease I felt at [his lover's] absence, and with sexual deprivation', the narrator reveals at the end, as he embraces his love back. The balloon was nothing but a strange embodiment of his longing for his lover, who happened to be on a trip in Bergen, of all places. At this, all the full-blown, pseudo-scientific, big-worded descriptions of the balloon deflate. Now the artist (the narrator, who erected the giant balloon) gives away its meaning. The story becomes a playful satire of the postmodern attempts to escape the meaning which is so 'insignificant' in the business of the world. The narrator concludes the story with yet another excessive specificity: 'removal of the balloon was easy; trailer trucks carried away the depleted fabric, which is now stored in West Virginia, awaiting some other time of unhappiness'.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

A reading of *The Balloon* requires a consideration of the postmodern approach to reality. Postmodernism scrutinizes fundamental aspects of human experience in a search for truth and, while doing so, departs from conventions of the narrative form. Postmodernists present an ideal original reflection of reality – this representation is what we can consider to actually exist, though we may not actually see or interact with it. The next level is a perversion of this reflection that emerges when someone tries to represent the original; we can initially classify art as part of this level. The reaction to the perversion is a pretence of reality. Following the pretence, any further representation is a simulacrum; this level of attempting at a sketch of reality is essentially a copy of a copy (of yet another copy), with no substantial resemblance to the truth. The postmodernist response to the artwork with its avoidance of meaning itself tempts but escapes critical readings and resists both rationalisation and interpretation.

Donald Barthelme, THE BALLOON

The balloon, beginning at a point on Fourteenth Street, the exact location of which I cannot reveal, expanded northward all one night, while people were sleeping, until it reached the Park. There, I stopped it; at dawn the northernmost edges lay over the Plaza; the free-hanging motion was frivolous and gentle. But experiencing a faint irritation at stopping, even to protect the trees, and seeing no reason the balloon should be allowed to expand upward, over the parts of the city it was already covering, into the "air space" to be found there, I asked the engineers to see to it. This expansion took place throughout the morning, soft imperceptible sighing of gas through the valves. The balloon then covered forty-five blocks north-south and an irregular area east-west, as many as six crosstown blocks on either side of the Avenue in some places. This was the situation, then.

But it is wrong to speak of "situations," implying sets of circumstances leading to some resolution, some escape of tension; there were no situations, simply the balloon hanging there—muted heavy grays and browns for the most part, contrasting with the walnut and soft yellows. A deliberate lack of finish, enhanced by skillful installation, gave the surface a rough, forgotten quality; sliding weights on the inside, carefully adjusted, anchored the great, vari-shaped mass at a number of points. Now we have had a flood of original ideas in all media, works of singular beauty as well as significant milestones in the history of inflation, but at that moment, there was only this balloon, concrete particular, hanging there.

There were reactions. Some people found the balloon "interesting." As a response, this seemed inadequate to the immensity of the balloon, the suddenness of its appearance over the city; on the other hand, in the absence of hysteria or other societally induced anxiety, it must be judged a calm, "mature" one. There was a certain amount of initial argumentation about the "meaning" of the balloon; this subsided, because we have learned not to insist on meanings, and they are rarely even looked for now, except in cases involving the simplest, safest phenomena. It was agreed that since the meaning of the balloon could never be known absolutely, extended discussion was pointless, or at least less purposeful than the activities of those who, for example, hung green and blue paper lanterns from the warm gray

underside, in certain streets, or seized the occasion to write messages on the surface, announcing their availability for the performance of unnatural acts, or the availability of acquaintances.

Daring children jumped, especially at those points where the balloon hovered close to a building, so that the gap between balloon and building was a matter of a few inches, or points where the balloon actually made contact, exerting an ever-so-slight pressure against the side of a building, so that balloon and building seemed a unity. The upper surface was so structured that a "landscape" was presented, small valleys as well as slight knolls, or mounds; once atop the balloon, a stroll was possible, or even a trip, from one place to the another. There was pleasure in being able to run down an incline, then up the opposing slope, both gently graded, or in making a leap from one side to the other. Bouncing was possible MAKE THIS BIG, because of the pneumaticity of the surface, or even falling, if that was your wish. That all these varied motions, as well as others, were within one's possibilities, in experiencing the "up" side of the balloon, was extremely exciting for children, accustomed to the city's flat, hard skin. But the purpose of the balloon was not to amuse children.

Too, the number of people, children and adults, who took advantage of the opportunities described was not so large as it might have been; a certain timidity, lack of trust in the balloon, was seen. There was, furthermore, some hostility. Because we had hidden the pumps, which fed helium to the interior, and because the surface was so vast that the authorities could not determine the point of entry —that is, the point at which the gas was injected—a degree of frustration was evidenced by those city officers into whose province such manifestations normally fell. The apparent purposelessness of the balloon was vexing (as was the fact that it was "there" at all). Had we painted, in great letters, "LABORATORY TESTS PROVE" or "18% MORE EFFECTIVE" on the sides of the balloon, this difficulty would have been circumvented. But I would not bear to do so. On the whole, these officers were remarkably tolerant, considering the dimensions of the anomaly, this tolerance being the result of, first, secret tests conducted by night that convinced them that little or nothing could be done in the way of removing or destroying the balloon, and, secondly, a public warmth that arose (not uncolored by touches of the aforementioned hostility) toward the balloon, from ordinary citizens.

As a single balloon must stand for a lifetime of thinking about balloons, so each citizen expressed, in the attitude he chose, a complex of attitudes. One man might consider that the balloon had to do with the notion *sullied,* as in the sentence *The big balloon sullied the otherwise clear and radiant Manhattan sky.* That is, the balloon was, in each man's view, an imposture, something inferior to the sky that had formerly been there, something interposed between the people and their "sky." But in fact it was January, the sky was dark and ugly; it was not a sky you could look up into, lying on your back in the street, with pleasure, unless pleasure, for you, proceeded from having been threatened, from having been misused. And to the underside of the balloon was a pleasure to look up into, we had seen to that, muted grays and browns for the most part, contrasted with walnut and soft, forgotten yellows. And so, while this man was thinking *sullied,* still there was an admixture of pleasurable cognition in his thinking, struggling with the original perception.

Another man, on the other hand, might view the balloon as if it were part of a system of unanticipated rewards, as when one's employer walks in and says, "Here, Henry, take this package of money I have wrapped for you, because we have been doing so well in the business here, and I admire the way you bruise the tulips, without which bruising your department would not be a success, or at least not the success that it is." For this man the balloon might be a brilliantly heroic "muscle and pluck" experience, even if an experience poorly understood.

Another man might say, "Without the example of—, it is doubtful that— would exist today in its present form," and find many to agree with him, or to argue with him. Ideas of "bloat" and "float" were introduced, as well as concepts of dream and responsibility. Others engaged in remarkably detailed fantasies having to do with a wish either to lose themselves in the balloon, or to engorge it. The private character of these wishes, of their origins, deeply buried and unknown, was such that they were not much spoken of; yet there is evidence that they were widespread. It was also argued that what was important was what you felt when you stood under the balloon; some people claimed that they felt sheltered, warmed, as never before, while enemies of the balloon felt, or reported feeling, constrained, a "heavy" feeling.

Critical opinion was divided:

"monstrous pourings"

"harp"

XXXXXXX "certain contrasts with darker portions"

"inner joy"

"large, square corners"

"conservative eclecticism that has so far governed
modern balloon design"

"abnormal vigor"

"warm, soft lazy passages"

"Has unity been sacrificed for a sprawling quality?"

"Quelle catastrophe!"

"munching"

People, began in a curious way, to locate themselves in relation to aspects of the balloon. "I'll be at that place where it dips down into Forty-seventh Street almost to the sidewalk, near the Alamo Chile House, " or, "Why don't we go stand on top, and take the air, and maybe walk about a bit, where it forms a tight, curving line with the façade of the gallery of Modern Art–" Marginal intersections offered entrances within a given time duration, as well as "warm, soft, lazy passages" in which ... But it is wrong to speak of "marginal intersections," each intersection was crucial, none could be ignored (as if, walking there, you might not find someone capable of turning your attention, in a flash, from old exercises to new exercises, risks and escalations). Each intersection was crucial, meeting of balloon and building, meeting of balloon and man, meeting of balloon and balloon.

It was suggested that what was admired about the balloon was finally this: that it was not limited, or defined. Sometimes a bulge, blister, or subsection would carry all the way east to the river on its own initiative, in the manner of an army's movements on a map, as seen in a headquarters remote from the fighting. Then the part would be, as it were, thrown back again, or would withdraw into new dispositions, the next morning, that part would have made another sortie, or disappeared altogether. This ability of the balloon to shift its shape, to change, was very pleasing, especially to people whose lives were rather rigidly patterned, persons to whom change, although desired, was not available. The balloon, for the twenty-two days of its existence, offered the possibility, in its randomness, of mislocation of the self, in contradistinction to the grid of precise, rectangular pathways under our feet. The amount of specialized training currently needed, and the

consequent desirability of long-term commitments, has been occasioned by the steadily growing importance of complex machinery, in virtually all kinds of operations, as this tendency increases, more and more people will turn, in bewildered inadequacy, to solutions for which the balloon may stand as a prototype, or "rough draft."

I met you under the balloon, on the occasion of your return from Norway, you asked if it was mine, I said it was. The balloon, I said, is a spontaneous autobiographical disclosure, having to do with the unease I felt at your absence, and with sexual deprivation, but now that your visit to Bergen has been terminated, it is no longer necessary or appropriate. Removal of the balloon was easy, trailer trucks carried away the depleted fabric, which is now stored in West Virginia, awaiting some other time of unhappiness, some time, perhaps, when we are angry with one another.

Discussion

- While reading the story, note the narrative method used by the author.

  (a) Who is the narrator? From what perspective is the story told?

  (b) Who does the balloon belong to? What does the author gain by resorting to a first-person narration? What is meant by 'a spontaneous autobiographical disclosure'?

  (c) Does the shift in the narrative method affect the general impression of the story?

- Barthelme's story can be read in numerous ways and is itself concerned with a multiplicity of critical interpretations. As Peter Childs suggests (2006, 131), the story is unusual in that it implicitly includes a survey of responses and reactions to experimentalism and the unexpected—particularly in art and architecture. At first there are 'reactions' to the balloon from various people, some of whom argue about 'the meaning'.

  Consider the responses made by children and adults. Are they searching for the meaning or interpretation?

- What lines of the story account for the responses and feelings of the citizens? Fill in the **Tables (1 & 2)** to analyze the variety of responses and feelings.

Table 1

Responses	**Examples from the text**
an adult response	
a modern intellectual response	
an effective response	
a utilitarian response	

Table 2

Feelings	**Examples from the text**
enjoyment	
disappointment	
identification	

- Does the story contain the components of the plot structure?

- How successfully is the surprise ending technique used in the story?

- What, in your opinion, are the theme and the message of *The Balloon*?

- Consider the story's symbolism. Is the balloon an image of desire without centre and without containment or limits?

- The story's end suggests that the balloon is a personal artefact.

  (a) Is the surprise ending plausible?

  (b) Has the reader been prepared for it?

- Reread the story. What is your 'critical opinion'? Does it coincide with that of the divided 'critical opinion' given by citizens? Give some reasons for your decision.

- For Niall Lucy (1997), unlike traditional Western philosophy, which analyzes and fixes, literature 'spreads'—it is associative, experimental, and disseminatory. Thus *The Balloon* could be considered as an assertion of this understanding of literature in opposition to the realist model of verisimilitude.

In terms of postmodern literature, is the story closer to the metaphor of the lamp (image) or the mirror (reflection)? Explain you suggestions.

● The approach that can best accommodate the multiple meanings of the text is arguably a poststructuralist one, which is an assembly of varied pieces that can be enjoyed or not, repeated, played or skipped, attended to in a different order, and so on. Deleuze and Guattari developed the idea of the rhizome in their book *A Thousand Plateaus,* which can help to illuminate a perspective on the story.

Rhizome *(in philosophy)* is used to describe theory and research that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation. As a metaphor for the organisation of human experience, rhizome has the capacity to make the world afresh rather than the obligation to attempt to describe it mimetically.

In terms of the concept of the rhizome, try to explain that:

(a) the balloon could be a metaphor for life and a metaphor for the world;

(b) the balloon is seemingly positioned as a manifestation of desire at the end of Barthelme's story;

(c) the balloon could be an alternative to the rigid patterning of the city and to regularised urban living;

(d) the balloon expands over the cityscape like the economic and informational flows of globalisation, spreading in multiple directions and meeting with divergent aspects of people's lives.

BEYOND THE TEXT

Writing

● The balloon in *The Balloon* is an artificial construct, 'something inferior to the sky that had formerly been there, something interposed between the people and their "sky"'. It reveals art as a product and it is concerned with

the movements, meanings and flows of culture and capital where multiple viewpoints understand the world in vastly different ways.

Write an essay about the power of the market in some Western countries which is recognised to extend over a range of cultural production where everything is a commodity (including education, health, morality, and information).

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CHAPTER 10

Julian Barnes's *Love, etc*: What Makes the World Go Round

TEXT and CONTEXT

Genre and techniques of speech presentation

Love, etc (2000) is the ninth novel of the contemporary British writer-postmodernist Julian Barnes. After it was published, the reviewers pointed to its original narrative technique and confessional style. Adapting the convention of the epistolary novel (a novel told in letters), the book is composed of dramatic monologues by the protagonists and a few minor characters. Each monologue is preceded by the name of the character so that to a certain extent the novel resembles a play. The form of the book most resembles a television play done in narration and voice-over. The key feature of the author's technique is that the monologues are not interior but spoken ones that allow the protagonists to talk about their lives, views, thoughts, different accounts of the same events and to answer questions given to them by the audience.

Thus the genre of the book is the talk-show novel which presents the characters (all of them, major and minor) speaking directly to the reader without the visible presence of the author.

Summary

Julian Barnes's novel *Love, etc* is a sequel to the novel *Talking It Over*, written 10 years earlier. Both novels present a conventional triangular relationship. The novel *Talking It Over* contrasts two best friends: dull Stuart, an investment banker, and witty Oliver, a teacher of English to foreigners. Stuart is already a complacent bourgeois householder aged 32. As his friend Oliver recalls, he 'owns two medium-dark-gray suits and two dark-dark-gray suits'. He has never been terribly good with women and thinks of himself as socially inept. He says his parents always seemed faintly disappointed by him. Oliver is Stuart's alter ego: handsome, charming, garrulous, full of energy and wit. Always short of funds, Oliver teaches English to foreigners at a school in London. He is eventually dismissed for

making advances towards a student and fails to find another job. Stuart meets Gillian and marries her. Gillian is an ordinary young woman with fairly modest needs and desires. She works as a picture restorer. Stuart believes his life has finally changed. For the first time ever, he is a happy, contented man. Oliver realizes at their wedding that he is in love with Gillian, too, and he decides to try to win her away from his friend. Soon Gillian gets a divorce from Stuart and marries Oliver. Stuart is desperate and leaves for the United States while Oliver and Gillian move to the South of France and give birth to their daughter.

Love, etc presents the characters' lives 10 years later. Gillian and Oliver have moved back to London and have two daughters. Gillian is a bread-winner and Oliver has had a nervous breakdown and is jobless. Stuart comes back from the USA, where he has made a fortune, married Terry, and divorced. In London, Stuart sets up a successful organic food business. Now he is rich, independent, self-assured, and he decides to help Gillian and Oliver financially by having them go back to the house where he and Gillian lived when they were married and getting a job for Oliver. Besides, Stuart wants to win Gillian back.

Both books are composed of monologues by the three protagonists and by a few secondary characters (Terry—Stuart's second ex-wife, an American; Mme Wyatt—Gillian's mother, a Frenchwoman). Each character takes turns addressing the reader in this 'he said / she said / he said' novel.

(Chapter 14 of the novel *Love, etc* is printed in the Appendix of this section).

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Chapter 14 of *Love, etc* (2000, 146–159) has been chosen because it represents the characters' views on love, life, and truth, which are the key concepts in all Julian Barnes's novels. The text gives us the possibility of penetrating into the protagonists' psyche, of learning about the system of values and the emotional state of each of them.

Discussion

The novel's technique of speech presentation representing monologues of each of the protagonists helps the author to be invisible in his creation and

not to interfere into the characters' lives. The only elements of the novel that represent the author's attitude are the title *Love, etc* and the epigraph *'He lies like an eye-witness'*.

● Look through the passage below and speak of the main conflict appearing in the novel—between the male protagonists Stuart and Oliver, who used to be best friends.

> I'm suspicious of people comparing things with other things. In the days when I was more impressed with Oliver, I used to think that this mania of his proved he had not just better powers of description than I had, but also a better understanding of the world. The memory is like a left-luggage office. Love is like the free market. So-and-so is behaving just like some character you've never heard of in some opera you've never heard of. Now I think all these fancy comparisons were a way of not looking at the original object, of not looking at the world. They were just distractions. And this is why Oliver hasn't changed—developed—grown up—call it what you will. Because it's only by looking at the world out there as it is and the world in here as it is that you grow up.

● Discuss chronology and order of events and actions in the plot structure of the excerpt (for example, the use of digression, flashback, etc.).

● Oliver says, '*It's the vileness that ruins love. And the laws, and properties, and financial worries and the police state. If conditions had been different, love would have been different* '. Do you agree with the statement? Compare it with the phrase uttered by Mme Wyatt: '*he was heroic, because he was also beginning to love me, and that is when heroism is possible*'. Is love liable to change depending on the circumstances, or vice versa?

● Comment on the title *Love, etc*. What are its main functions? Look through the text and find out who makes the observations about human nature that may explain the title. Give your own point of view on what can be hidden behind the *etc.*

● Julian Barnes says in one of his interviews, 'I came across the phrase "*He lies like an eye-witness"* in Shostakovich's memoir, *Testimony*. It's an old saying that if you get five people who've witnessed a drunkard run down by a horse, they'll all see something different'.

Comment in what way the epigraph refers to the situation in the novel. Think of the probability of being told different 'truths' (subjective accounts) about one and the same event. Say whether you consider it possible for the reader to learn what really happens in the lives of the characters, or we are just forced to believe what we are told.

● Scan the text to find allusions. Explain their meanings in the applied contexts as compared to their primary meanings in the original context.

For example, Mme Wyatt says, '*Nowadays La Fontaine's Fables take place in the supermarket*'. She makes such a conclusion after telling the story of her last affair with a married man. *The Fables* of Jean de La Fontaine were issued in several volumes from 1668 to 1694. They are considered classics of French literature. Their characteristic feature is keen insight into the foibles of human nature. The main point of a fable is its moral side. In the applied context, the moral aspect is focused on, namely the problem of adultery, and the author implies that every day and everywhere (even in a supermarket) a person can happen to make some vital conclusions on his or her past and decide to change the future for the better.

● In the text, find all the attributes of love (*fragile, solid,* etc). What aspects of human relationship do they focus on?

● Look through the text to find similes. Usually they help the author to create an appropriate image of the described notion. Think of the functions of such images. As, for example,

Love is like the free market,
Stuart, the pocket cyclopaedia.
The memory is like a left-luggage office.

Consider the passage:

Love, etc. That has always been my formula, my theory, my wisdom. I knew it at once, as an infant knows its mother's smile, as a fledged duckling takes to the water, as a fuse burns towards a bomb.

Analyse the similes. What image do they help to create? Look at the utterance once more and say if the comparison in the last line is appropriate. What effect is achieved with the help of combining contrasting images (as

the image of the mother and the infant, as well as the fledged duckling, arouses positive feelings, whereas the image of a bomb which is going to explode is negative)? Do you find the utterance ironic?

● Look at the passage below. Analyse and compare the images of life created by Oliver. What aspects of human life do they highlight? What helps to express the ironic tone of the utterance?

> Life is first boredom, then fear? No, I think not, except for the emotionally constipated.
> Life is first comedy, then tragedy? No, the genres swirl like paint in a centrifuge.
> Life is first comedy, then farce?
> Life is first tipsiness, then addiction and hangover at the same time?
> Life is first soft drugs, then hard? Soft porn, then hard? Soft-centred chocolates, then hard?
> Life is first the scent of wild flowers, then of toilet freshener?

In the text, find some more passages marked with irony.

● Consider the sentence from the text: '*love cannot be contained within the structure of marriage*'.

What type of conceptualization process, according to Lakoff and Johnson, does it involve?

● Very often ontological metaphors undergo creative elaboration providing a new and fresh perspective onto the traditional interpretation of the basic concepts where the entity is further specified as being a person. For example, consider the ontological metaphor LIFE IS AN ORGANIZED ACTIVITY that allows Gillian to say, '*Do you run your life, or does your life run you*?' In the first part of the sentence we see the conventional usage of the metaphor (as it is common for the English speaker to say 'I run my life'), while in the second part (*does your life run you*?) the usage is not conventional and the metaphor is reinterpreted so that LIFE is conceptualized as the PERSON who himself organizes this ACTIVITY (which is also LIFE).

Find some examples of personification in the excerpt: '*How it <love> lives. How it <love> dies*'; '*They love once and, whatever happens, it <love> doesn't go away*'; '*passion is sure to die*'.

● Scan the text and try to find the conceptual metaphors that objectify and describe the key concepts of the text (such as love, marriage, life, etc.).

● Find rhetorical questions in the text. What functions do they perform?

● Scan the text for French words. Who uses them and why? What is the purpose of Oliver's using French and Latin words in his speech? What can you conclude about his personality?

● Look at the sentence '*I have had my moments of pecuniary inquietude*'. In the text, find some more examples of the usage of formal and literary language units and say in what way they characterize the person who uses them.

● The notion *autointertextuality, as a peculiar kind of intertextuality,* refers to the process when there are connections between the different texts of the same author. It occurs when the author's views on some problems develop and differ or remain the same at earlier and later stages of his writing.

In the novel *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* (1989), written 11 years earlier than *Love, etc*, Julian Barnes says:

> We think of love as an active force. Love is a transforming wand, one that unlooses the ravelled knot, sprays the air with doves. But the model isn't from magic but particle physics. My love does not, cannot *make* her happy. The atomic reaction you expect isn't taking place, the beam with which you are bombarding the particles is on the wrong wavelength.

Compare the utterance with Stuart's thoughts:

> And another thing. Love leads to happiness. That's what everyone believes, isn't it? That's what I used to believe, too, all those years ago. I don't any more.
> You look surprised. Think about it. Examine your own life. Love leads to happiness? Come off it.

Think whether the author's views on love have changed since he wrote *A History*…. Compare the style of writing in the first and the second passages. Characterize Stuart's style of communication. Does he use metaphors, stylistically coloured language, etc? What helps him to express his thoughts?

Writing

- Write a paper about the author's method of presenting the characters.

  (a) Define the ways (types) of protagonists' characterization (direct, indirect).

  (b) Illustrate the protagonists' occupations (Stuart is a businessman, Oliver is a writer and a teacher of English, Gillian is a picture restorer) influencing their views and the system of values.

  (c) Analyse speech characteristics of the protagonists to reveal his/her traits of character, social position, culture (English, French, American), outlook, psychology. In the excerpt, find the markers of emotional state of the heroes, their educational level.

- Make a list of LOVE metaphors explicated in the text.

  (a) Comment on their usage on the basis of their textual references (find as many illustrations as possible).

  (b) Decide whether the conventional LOVE metaphors undergo changes due to the author's creative approach.

  (c) Give comments on the use of the novel metaphor LOVE IS A CRIME.

BEYOND THE TEXT

Writing

In *Love, etc,* we come across different points of view on the same 'eternal' themes: love, life, truth, relationships between people. The following list includes the characters' statements.

Write an essay on one of the topics below:

- It's only by looking at the world out there as it is and the world in here as it is that you grow up.
- Love makes us better people.
- Happy people are healthier than unhappy people.
- Trust leads to betrayal.

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Julian Barnes, LOVE, ETC (Chapter 14)

Epigraph: 'He lies like an eye-witness'

Gillian Each morning, as the girls set off for school, I kiss them and say, 'I love you'. I say it because it's true, because they should hear it and know it. I also say it for its magical powers, for its ability to ward off the world.

When did I last say it to Oliver? I can't remember. After a few years, we got into the habit of dropping the 'I'. One of us would say, 'Love you,' and the other would say, 'Love you too.' There's nothing shocking about that, nothing out of the ordinary, but one day I caught myself wondering if it wasn't significant. As if you weren't taking responsibility for the feeling any more. As if it had become somehow more general, less focused.

Well, I suppose that's the answer, isn't it? It's my children who bring out the 'I' in the 'I love you.' Do 'I' still love Oliver? Yes, 'I' think so, 'I' suppose so. You could say I'm managing love.

You organize a marriage, you protect your children, you manage love, you run your life. And sometimes you stop and wonder if that's true at all. Do you run your life, or does your life run you?

Stuart I've come to some conclusions in my time. I'm a grown-up person, I've been an adult longer than I've been a child and an adolescent. I've looked at the world. My conclusions may not be blindingly original, but they're still mine.

For instance, I'm suspicious of people comparing things with other things. In the days when I was more impressed with Oliver, I used to think that this mania of his proved he had not just better powers of description than I had, but also a better understanding of the world. The memory is like a left-luggage office. Love is like the free market. So-and-so is behaving just like some character you've never heard of in some opera you've never heard of. Now I think all these fancy comparisons were a way of not looking at the original object, of not looking at the world. They were just distractions. And this is why Oliver hasn't changed—developed—grown up—call it what you will. Because it's only by looking at the world out there as it is and the world in here as it is that you grow up.

Oliver. I was dozing, I confess. *Et tu?*[1] <…> To the point. Every love story begins with a crime. Agreed? How many *grandes passions* kindle between hearts innocent and unentangled elsewhere? Only in medieval romance. But among grown-ups? And as Stuart, the pocket cyclopaedia, chose to remind you, we were all in our early thirties at the time. Everyone has someone or a piece of someone, or the expectation of someone, or the memory of someone, which or whom they then discard or betray once they meet Mr, Miss, Ms or in the present case Mrs Right. <…>

And if are all, therefore criminals, which of us shall condemn the other? Is my case more egregious than yours? <…> and if, in your pressingly legalistic way, you insist on bringing charges, then what can I say except *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea culpa*[2]. Additionally and alternatively I would argue that the replacement of Stuart by Oliver in the heart of Gillian was <…> no bad thing. She was, as the phrase goes, trading up.

Anyway, that was all years ago, a quarter of our lifetimes ago. Doesn't the term *fait accompli*[3] spring to mind? (I shan't push my luck with *droit de seigneur*[4]). Hasn't anyone heard of the statute of limitations? Seven years for any number of torts and crimes, as I understand it. Isn't there a statute of limitations for wife-stealing?

Stuart. I don't mean that you like what you find, or that what you find is what you want. Usually, it isn't. <…>

Let's take love. It isn't like we thought it would be beforehand. Can we all agree on that? Better, worse, longer, shorter, overrated, underrated, but not the same. Also, different for different people. But that's something you only learn slowly: what love is like for you. How much of it you've got. What you'll give up for it. How it lives. How it dies. Oliver used to have a theory he called *Love, etc.:* in other words, the world divides into people for whom love is everything and the rest of life is a mere 'etc.,' and people who don't value love enough and find the most exciting part of life is the 'etc.' It was the sort of line he was peddling when he stole my wife and I suspected it was bollocks at the time, and now I know it's absolute bollocks not to mention boastful bollocks. People don't divide up that way.

And another thing. Beforehand, you think: when I grow up I'll love someone, and I hope it goes right, but if it goes wrong I'll love another person, and if that goes wrong I'll love another person. Always assuming that you can find these people in the first place and that they'll let you love them. What you expect is that love, or the ability to love, is always there,

waiting. I was going to say, waiting with the engine running. But I don't think that love – and life – are like that. You can't make yourself love someone, and you can't, in my experience, make yourself stop loving someone. In fact, if you want to divide people up in the matter of love, I'd suggest doing it this way: some people are fortunate, or unfortunate, enough to love several people, either one after the other, or overlapping; while other people are fortunate, or unfortunate, enough to be able to love only once in their life. They love once and, whatever happens, it doesn't go away. Some people can only do it once. I've come to realize that I'm one of these. All of which may be bad news for Gillian.

Oliver 'Life is first boredom, then fear'? No, I think not, except for the emotionally constipated.

Life is first comedy, then tragedy? No, the genres swirl like paint in a centrifuge.

Life is first comedy, then farce?

Life is first tipsiness, then addiction and hangover at the same time?

Life is first soft drugs, then hard? Soft porn, then hard? Soft-centred chocolates, then hard?

Life is first the scent of wild flowers, then of toilet freshener?

The poet[5] has it that the three events of life are 'birth, copulation and death'[6], a bleak wisdom which thrilled my adolescence. Later, I realized Old Possum[7] had omitted some of the other central moments: the first cigarette, snow on a tree in blossom, Venice, the joy of shopping, flight in all its senses, fugue in all its senses, that moment when you change gear at high speed and your passenger's beloved head does not even stir on its spinal column, the chuckle of a child, that second cigarette, a longed-for face coming into focus at airport or railway station…

<…> The world is full of vile things. Agreed? And I'm not just referring to toilet freshener, vile, viler than any bog-pong as it is. Let me quote you what I quoted you once before. 'It's the vileness that ruins love. And the laws, and properties, and financial worries and the police state. If conditions had been different, love would have been different.' Agreed? Love in a leafy democratic suburb on six figures a year is different from love in a Stalinist prison camp.

Love, etc. That has always been my formula, my theory, my wisdom. I knew it at once, as an infant knows its mother's smile, as a fledged duckling

takes to the water, as a fuse burns to wards a bomb. I always knew. I got there earlier – half a lifetime earlier—than some I could mention.

'Financial worries.' Yes, they do drag one down, don't they? I leave that side of things to Gillian, but I have had my moments of pecuniary *inquietude.* Do you think the local police state, benign version, should give out love grants? There's family benefit, there are funeral grants, so why not some state allowance for lovers? Isn't the state there to facilitate the pursuit of happiness? Which in my book is just as important as life or liberty. Just as important, I realize, because synonymous. Love is my life and it is my liberty.

Another argument, one for the bureaucrats. Happy people are healthier than unhappy people. Make people happier and you reduce the burden on the National Health Service. Imagine the news headlines: NURSES SENT HOME ON FULL PAY OWING TO OUTBREAK OF HAPPINESS. Oh, I know there are certain instances where illness strikes regardless. But don't quibble, just dream along. <…>

Mme Wyatt Love and marriage. The Anglo-Saxons have always believed that they themselves marry for love, while the French marry for children, for family, for social position, for business. No, wait a minute, I am merely repeating what one of your own experts has written. She—it was a woman—divided her life between the two worlds, and she was observing, not judging, not at first. She said that for the Anglo-Saxons marriage was founded on love, which was an absurdity since love is anarchic and passion is sure to die, and that this was no sound basis for marriage. On the other hand, she said, we French marry for sensible, rational reasons of family and property, because unlike you we recognize the necessary fact that love cannot be contained within the structure of marriage. Therefore we have made sure that it exists only outside of it. This, of course, is not perfect either, in fact in some ways it is equally absurd. But perhaps it is a more rational absurdity. Neither solution is ideal and neither can be expected to lead to happiness. She was a wise woman, this expert of yours, and therefore a pessimist.

I do not know why Stuart chose to tell you all those years ago that I was having an affair. I told him in confidence and he acted like the popular press in your country. Well, it was a difficult time for him, with his marriage breaking up, so perhaps I forgive him.

But since you know, I will inform you a little about it. He—Alan—was English, he was married, we were both in our ... no, that is my secret.

He had been married for ... well, for many years. At first it was about sex. You are shocked? It always is, whatever anyone says. Oh, it is about an end to loneliness, and interests to share, and talking, talking, but it is really about sex. He said that after so many years making love to his wife, it had become like driving along a familiar stretch of motorway, you knew all the curves and the signs so well. I did not find this comparison exactly *gallant.* But we had agreed—as lovers habitually do, with a kind of arrogant *naïveté* – only to speak the truth to one another. After all, there were so many lies to be told every time, simply so that we could meet. And I had set the example. I told him that I did not intend to marry again and I did not intend to live with another man. This did not mean that I was not going to fall in love again, but—well, I have explained that. Indeed, I was beginning to love him at the time of the . . . incident.

He had arrived for the weekend. He lived about twenty miles away. I had been busy that week and so, when he came, I said we must go shopping for what we need. We drove to the Waitrose[8], we parked the car, we got the *chariot*—the trolley—we talked about what I would cook, we filled the trolley, I put in various things I needed for when he wasn't there, I paid with my Waitrose card. By the time we got into the car again I saw he was in a sudden depression. I did not ask, not at first, I waited to see what he would do—after all, it was his depression, not mine. And he was heroic, because he was also beginning to love me, and that is when heroism is possible. I mean, the heroism to fight your own character.

We passed a happy weekend together and at the end of it I asked him why he had suddenly become depressed in the supermarket. And his face became sombre all over again, and he said, 'My wife pays with a Waitrose card as well.' At that moment, I saw it all and I knew that the relationship was without hope. It was not just the card, of course, it was the carpark, the trolley, the Friday night shoppers filling the store, it was the fact, the terrible fact that your new mistress also needs rolls of kitchen towel just so much as your wife. He had walked along the same aisles, even if they were twenty miles separated. And it probably made him think that before very long, with me, he would be driving along that too familiar stretch of motorway.

I did not blame him. We just thought differently about love. I was able to enjoy the day, the weekend, the sudden time. I knew that love was fragile, volatile, *fugace*[9]*,* anarchic, so I would allow love its entire space, its empire. He knew, or at least he could not persuade himself from thinking,

that love was not a magical state, or not one only, but rather the start of a journey, which led, sooner or later, to a Waitrose card. That was the only way he could think, despite me telling him that I did not want to live with anyone again, or marry. So, fortunately, in a way, he had found out sooner rather than later.

He went back to his wife. And—I do not say this because I want to pretend to virtue—he may even have been happier when he went back. He had learned the lesson of the kitchen towel. What do you think? Nowadays La Fontaine's *Fables*[10] take place in the supermarket.

Terri You know how, you're falling in love, everything seems, like, totally original? The words they use, the way they hold you in bed, the way they drive a car? You think, I've never been talked to, or made love to, or driven, like this before. And you have, of course, most likely. Unless you're twelve or something. It's just that you've never noticed before, or you've forgotten. And then if there's something you really haven't heard or done before, however small, then it seems, well, so original you could scream, and such a part of how you are together. Like, I had this Mickey Mouse watch—I know it sounds . . . I don't know what—anyway, I did. Never wore it to work <…> So I kept the watch at home, by the bed, and wore it only on Sundays when we were closed. And when Stuart moved in with me one of the first things I noticed was he always knew exactly which day of the week it was when he woke up, even if he was half asleep. And I knew he knew it was Sunday because when he stirred and put his arm across me and burrowed into the back of me, he'd ask, 'What does Mickey say it is?' And I'd look, and I'd go, 'Mickey says it's twenty of nine,' or whatever.

Does that embarrass you? It still makes me almost want to cry, just thinking of it. And because he was a Brit, there were all kinds of little phrases he used that I didn't know and they seemed, like I say, totally original. And part of him. And part of us. He'd say, 'Bob's your uncle,' and 'I'm only here for the beer,' and 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating.'

<…> Some people lie when they fall in love, some people tell the truth. Some people do both, by telling honest lies, which is what most of us do. 'Yes, I like jazz,' we'll say, when we mean, 'I could like it with you.' Love is meant to change your life—right? So it's an honest lie if you say things you aren't sure of. <…>

Stuart First love is the only love.

Oliver As much love as possible is the only love.

Gillian True love is the only love.

Stuart I don't mean you can't love again. Some people can, even if some people can't. But whether you can or can't, first love can never be repeated. And whether you can or can't, first love never lets you go. Second love lets you go. First, never.

Oliver Misprise me not. 'Twas not the catechism of Casanova[11], the justification of Giovanni. Sexual Stakhanovism[12] is for those with no imagination. I meant, if anything, the contrary. We need as much love as possible because there is so little of it to go round, don't you find?

Gillian True love is solid love, day-to-day love, reliable love, love that never lets you down. You think that sounds boring? I don't. I think it sounds deeply romantic.

Stuart P.S. By the way, and incidentally, who ever said that love makes us better people, or makes us behave better? Who ever said that?

Stuart P.P.S. I'd like to make another point because nobody else has done so. Someone said that being in love makes you liable to fall in love. I'd just like to say: not half as much as *not* being in love does.

Stuart P.P.P.S. And another thing. Love leads to happiness. That's what everyone believes, isn't it? That's what I used to believe, too, all those years ago. I don't any more.

You look surprised. Think about it. Examine your own life. Love leads to happiness? Come off it.

Notes

1. **Et tu?** – Fr. 'And you?'

2. Mea culpa – a Latin phrase that is translated into English as 'my mistake' or 'my fault'. The origin of the expression is from a prayer of confession of sinfulness used in the Mass of the Roman Catholic Church known as *Confiteor* (Latin for 'I confess'), of which the first evidence dates from shortly before 1100. The phrase 'mea culpa' appears in the prayer from the 16th century.

3. **Fait accompli** – Fr. An accomplished fact; an action which is completed before those affected by it are in a position to query or reverse it.

4. Droit du seigneur – a putative legal right allowing the lord of a medieval estate to take the virginity of his serfs' maiden daughters. The French expression is translated as 'right of the lord'.

5. **Thomas Stearns Eliot** (1888 – 1965) – a publisher, playwright, literary and social critic, and English-language poet of the 20th century.

6. **'Birth, and copulation, and death'** – a quotation from *Sweeney Agonistes* by Th.S. Eliot, which was his first attempt at writing a verse drama.

7. Old Possum's *Book of Practical Cats* (1939) is a collection of light verse by Th.S. Elliot.

8. **Waitrose Limited** is an upmarket chain of supermarkets in the United Kingdom.

9. **Fugace** – Fr. 'fleeting'

10. **Jean de La Fontaine's *The Fables*** were issued in several volumes from 1668 to 1694. They are considered classics of French literature. Their characteristic feature is keen insight into the foibles of human nature.

11. **Giacomo Casanova**, was an Italian adventurer. He has become so famous for his often complicated and elaborate affairs with women that his name is now synonymous with 'womanizer'.

12. **Alexey Stakhanov** was a miner in the Soviet Union, Hero of Socialist Labour (1970), and a member of the CPSU (1936). He became a celebrity in 1935 as part of a movement that was intended to increase worker productivity and demonstrate the superiority of the socialist economic system. Stakhanov's records set an example throughout the country and gave birth to the Stakhanovite movement, where workers who exceeded production targets could become 'Stakhanovites'.

CHAPTER 11

Time, Ambivalent Emotions, and the Narrator's Attitude in Bret Easton Ellis's *Lunar Park*

TEXT and CONTEXT

Biographical details

Bret Easton Ellis (born March 7, 1964) is an American novelist, screenwriter, and short story writer. He was born in Los Angeles, California, and raised in Sherman Oaks in the San Fernando Valley; he is the son of Robert Martin Ellis, a wealthy property developer, and Dale Ellis, a homemaker. His parents divorced in 1982. He was educated at The Buckley School; he then took a music-based course at Bennington College in Vermont.

His works have been translated into 27 languages. He is a self-proclaimed satirist, whose trademark technique, as a writer, is the expression of extreme acts and opinions in an affectless style. Ellis employs a technique of linking novels with common, recurring characters. Though Ellis made his debut at 21 with the controversial 1985 bestseller *Less Than Zero*, a zeitgeist novel about amoral young people in Los Angeles, the work he is most known for is his third novel, 1991's *American Psycho*. On its release, the literary establishment widely condemned the novel as overly violent and misogynistic. 2005's *Lunar Park*, a semi-autobiographical novel and ghost story, received positive reviews, and 2010's *Imperial Bedrooms*, marketed as a sequel to *Less Than Zero*, continues in this vein.

An interpretative framework for reading an excerpt from *Lunar Park*

Lunar Park (2006) is a horror story concerning supernatural events (Ellis says that he was influenced by Stephen King in the conception and composition of the novel), but it is also a satire about a sector of contemporary American society. The expectations of both these genres are fulfilled in great part by the narrative voice and the presentation of the way in which the central character interacts with his environs. The horror genre relies

often on a disconnect between perception and expectation (that is to say, on experiencing the supernatural with one's own senses), while the genre of satire requires a detached evaluation of the events surrounding the narrator. Both of these are managed by the manipulation of linguistic and discourse features, and specifically by the narrative voice.

A key structuring feature for the novel is that there is an I-narrator throughout, and thus the focalizing agent (the person from whose perspective the events are viewed) and the narrator (the person doing the telling) are one and the same. As such, the narrative voice is able to represent directly the way that the protagonist perceives events, and when other voices or perspectives are introduced, it is nearly always via the mediating presence of this I-narrator. This allows for the mixture of evaluation and perturbed self-reflection that drives the two genres.

Summary

Lunar Park is basically a chronological account of a series of events that take place in the life of a writer called Bret Easton Ellis. It is a ghost story about a successful writer haunted by the spectre of his late father and memories from his childhood. The passage below describes a conversation between the protagonist, his eleven-year-old son, Robby, and his six-year-old step-daughter, Sarah. The narrator's wife, Jayne, is a celebrated film actress, and at this juncture in the narrative their marriage is beginning to show signs of stress. Living now in the suburbs, the narrator is finding it difficult to adjust to domestic life, and recently he has begun to notice supernatural occurrences cropping up around him.

The rest of the novel is the story of the different strange events that take place in the new life of the fictional Ellis, who cannot fully adapt to the suburbs. He is unable to be a responsible father for Robby and Sarah, he takes drugs and drinks, and tries to have an affair with Aimee Light, a post-graduate student who is writing a thesis on Bret Easton Ellis's literary work. The ghost of his dead father haunts him; the house keeps 'peeling off' and rearranging the furniture to look like the house Ellis lived in with his family in California; Sarah's doll (a bird called Terby) comes to life and a hairy monster tries to attack him. The ending is a lyrical passage in which the ashes of Ellis's father fly over the ocean and through time bringing up different memories of his past family life.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The following passage from *Lunar Park* (2006, 140–145) has been chosen because it consists of two temporally separate episodes, one of which is embedded within the other in the form of a memory. It also includes the narrator's account of his engagement with his social circle and the portrait this presents of a certain section of modern American society. Both the structure of the act of memory and the perception of the social world he presently inhabits combine to convey something of the character's state of mind.

In this passage, the protagonist is taking the two children to the cinema when he has cause to remember an incident from a few weeks ago which he now interprets with added significance.

Bret Easton Ellis's LUNAR PARK (an excerpt from Chapter 10)

I had scanned the papers to see what was playing at the Fortinbras Mall sixteen-plex and chose something that wouldn't confuse Sarah or annoy Robby (a movie about a handsome teenage alien's disregard for authority and his subsequent reformation), and since I suspected there was no way Robby would have agreed to this excursion unless he'd been cajoled into it by Jayne (I didn't even want to imagine that scene—her pleading versus his furtive begging) I anticipated that he wouldn't come without a fight, so I was surprised by how calm and placid Robby was (after a shower and a change of clothes) as he shuffled out the front door and walked with his head bowed down to the Range Rover, where Sarah sat in the front seat, trying to open a Backstreet Boys CD (which I eventually helped her with and slipped into the disc player), and where I was staring out the windshield thinking about my novel. When Robby climbed into the back seat I asked how soccer practice had gone, but he was too busy untangling the headphones to the Discman in his lap. So I asked again and all I got back from him was "It's soccer practice, Bret. What do you mean, how did it go?" This was not the way I wanted to spend my Saturday—*Teenage Pussy* was waiting for me—but I owed Jayne this outing (and besides, Saturdays weren't mine anymore). The guilt that had been building since I moved into the house in July was announcing itself more clearly and it was coming down to: I was the one responsible for Robby's misery, yet Jayne was the one trying to cut

the distance between me and him. She was the one on her knees pleading, and this reminded me again of why I was with her.

"Seat belts on?" I asked cheerfully as I pulled out of the driveway.

"Mommy doesn't let me sit in the front seat," Sarah said. She was wearing a Liberty-print shirt with a Peter Pan collar and cotton velvet bootcut pants and a pure angora poncho. ("Are all six-year-olds dressing like Cher?" I asked Marta when she delivered Sarah to my office. Marta just shrugged and said, "I think she looks cute.") Sarah was holding a tiny Hello Kitty purse that was filled with Halloween candy. She took a small canister and started popping Skittles into her mouth and throwing her head back as if they were prescription pills while kicking her legs up and down to the beat of the boy band.

"Why are you eating your candy that way, honey?"

"Because this is how Mommy does it when she's in the bathroom."

"Robby, will you take that candy away from your sister?"

"She's not my real sister," I heard from the back seat.

"Well, I'm not her real father," I said. "But that has nothing to do with what I just asked you."

I looked in the rearview mirror. Robby was glaring at me through his orange-tinted wraparounds, one eyebrow raised, while tugging uncomfortably at his crewneck merino sweater, which I was certain Jayne had forced him to wear.

"I can see that you're very cold and withdrawn today," I said.

"I need my allowance upped" was his response.

"I think if you were friendlier that wouldn't be a problem."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Doesn't your mom handle your allowance?"

A huge sigh emanated from him.

"Mommy doesn't let me sit in the front seat," Sarah said again.

"Well, Daddy thinks it's okay. Plus you look quite comfortable. And will you please stop eating the Skittles that way?"

We suddenly passed a three-story mock-colonial monstrosity on Voltemand Drive when Sarah sat up and pointed at the house and cried out, "That's where Ashleigh's birthday was!"

The mention of that party in September caused a surge of panic, and I gripped the steering wheel tightly.

I had taken Sarah to Ashleigh Wagner's birthday party as a favor to Jayne, and there was a sixty-foot stegosaurus balloon and a traveling animal

show and an arch made up of Beanie Babies framing the entrance and a machine spewing a continuous stream of bubbles around the backyard. Two weeks prior to the actual event there had been a "rehearsal" party in order to gauge which kids "worked" and which did not, who caused trouble and who seemed serene, who had the worst learning disability and who had heard of Mozart, who responded best to the face painting and who had the coolest SCO (special comfort object), and somehow Sarah had passed (though I suspected that being the daughter of Jayne Dennis was what got her the invite). The Wagners were serving the lingering parents Valrhona hot chocolate that had been made without milk (other things excised that day: wheat, gluten, dairy, corn syrup) and when they offered me a cup I stayed and chatted. I was being a dad and at the point at which I vowed that nothing would ever change that (plus the Klonopin was good at reinforcing patience) and I appeared hopefully normal even though I was appalled by what I was witnessing. The whole thing seemed harmless—just another gratuitously whimsical upscale birthday party—until I started noticing that all the kids were on meds (Zoloft, Luvox, Celexa Paxil) that caused them to move lethargically and speak in affectless monotones. And some bit their fingernails until they bled and a pediatrician was on hand "just in case." The six-year-old daughter of an IBM executive was wearing a tube top and platform shoes. Someone handed me a pet guinea pig while I watched the kids interact—a jealous tantrum over a parachute, a relay race, kicking a soccer ball through a glowing disc, the mild reprimands, the minimal vomiting, Sarah chewing on a shrimp tail *("Une crevette!"* she squealed; yes, the Wagners were serving poached prawns)—and I just cradled the guinea pig until a caterer look it away from me when he noticed it writhing in my hands. And that's when it hit: the desire to flee Elsinore Lane and Midland County. I started craving cocaine so badly, it took all my willpower not to ask the Wagners for a drink and so I left after promising to pick Sarah up at the allotted time. During those two hours I almost drove back to Manhattan but then calmed down enough that my desperate plan became a gentle afterthought, and when I picked up Sarah she was holding a goody bag filled with a Raffi CD and nothing edible and after telling me she'd learned her four least favorite words she announced, "Grandpa talked to me."

I turned to look at her as she innocently nibbled a prawn. "Who did, honey?".

"Grandpa."

"Grandpa Dennis?" I asked. "No. The other grandpa."

I knew that Mark Strauss (Sarah's father) had lost both parents before he met Jayne and that's when the anxiety hit. "What other grandpa?" I asked carefully.

"He came up to me at the party and said he was my grandpa".

"But honey, that grandpa's dead", I said in a soothing tone.

"But Grandpa isn't dead, Daddy", she said happily, kicking the seat.

It was silent in the car—except for the Backstreet Boys—as that day came rushing back and I forced myself to forget about it while I cruised onto the interstate.

"Daddy, why don't you work?" Sarah now asked. She was making satisfied smacking sounds after swallowing each Skittle.

"Well, I do work, honey."

"Why don't you go to an office?"

"Because I work at home."

"Why?"

"Because I'm a stay-at-home dad," I answered calmly. "Hey, where are we? A cocktail party?"

"Why?"

"Please don't do this now, honey, okay?"

"Why do you stay at home?"

"Well, I work at the college too."

"Daddy?"

"Yes, honey?"

"What's a college?"

"A place I go to teach singularly untalented slackers how to write prose."

"When do you go?"

"On Wednesdays."

"But is that work?"

"Work puts people in bad moods, honey. You don't really want to work. In fact you should avoid work."

"You don't work and you're in a bad mood."

Robby had said this. Tensing up, I glanced at him in the rearview mirror. He was staring out the window, his chin in his hand.

"How do you know I'm in a bad mood?" I asked.

He didn't say anything. I realized the answer to that question required an elaboration that Robby wasn't capable of. I also realized: Let's not go there.

"I think I come off as a pretty happy guy," I said.

A long, horrible pause.

"I'm very lucky," I added.

Sarah considered this. "Why are you lucky, Daddy?"

"Well, you guys are very lucky too. You lead very lucky lives. In fact you're even luckier than your dad."

"Why, Daddy?"

"Well, Daddy has a very hard life. Daddy would like snack time. Daddy would like to take a nap. Daddy would like to go to the playground."

I could see in the rearview mirror that Robby had clamped his hands over his ears.

We were passing a waterslide that had closed for the season when Sarah shouted, "I want to go on the waterslide!"

"Why?" It was my turn to ask.

"Because I wanna slide down it!"

"Why?"

"Because it's fun," she said with less enthusiasm, confused at being on this side of the questioning.

"Why?"

"Because ... I like it?"

"Why do you — "

"Will you stop asking her why?" Robby said fervently, pleading.

I quickly glanced in the rearview mirror at Robby, who looked stricken.

I averted my gaze to where the Backstreet Boys CD was spinning. "I don't know why you kids listen to this crap," I mumbled. "I should buy you some CDs. Make you listen to something decent. Springsteen, Elvis Costello, The Clash . . ."

Discussion

The narrative in the excerpt above is broadly divided into two discrete periods of time: the first part is predominantly about the 'now' in which the narrative is unfolding, which acts as the 'implicit present' for the story.

The passage recounts an event that happened some weeks earlier, and which is now being recalled as a memory which has been triggered by an action in the present. With the simple past established as the base line against which the unfolding of narrated events takes place, the use of other temporal markers, including tense and aspect, can create a hierarchal temporal system.

● What details in the passage are listed to describe a satire on a contemporary American society after the narrator has confessed to being 'appalled by what I was witnessing'?

● What literary vocabulary introduces the mediating presence of the I-narrator? What is the reason for the use of items from specialised lexicons? What is the effect of the pharmaceutical and psychological terms?

● Have a look at the passage below.

What temporal reference do the past progressive and the past simple express in sentence **(a)**? What temporal reference does the past simple express in sentence **(b)**? What temporal reference does the past progressive express in sentence **(c)**? What temporal reference does the past perfect express in sentence **(d)**?

Do all the three tenses create a hierarchical temporal system?

> ***(a)*** *The guilt that had been building since I moved into the house in July was announcing itself more clearly and it was coming down to: I was the one responsible for Robby's misery, yet Jayne was the one trying to cut the distance between me and him.* ***(b)*** *I looked in the rearview mirror.* ***(c)*** *Robby was glaring at me through his orange-tinted wraparounds, one eyebrow raised, while tugging uncomfortably at his crewneck merino sweater, which* ***(d)*** *I was certain Jayne had forced him to wear.*

● From the list below, rearrange in chronological order the events which stretch back to the death of Sarah's paternal grandparents. Indicate the line numbers at which these events occur within the narrative.

Narrator driving Robby and Sarah to the cinema
Jayne forces Robby to wear a sweater
Sarah points out the Wagner house)
Narrator takes Sarah to the party
The practice party
Narrator leaves for a two-hour drive
Sarah talks to her 'grandfather'
Narrator picks Sarah up from party
The death of Sarah's paternal grandparents
Mark Strauss and Jayne meet

● How well does the author use dialogues to create real characters and episodes? Do such dialogues sound realistic? How is dialogue used to develop suspense? What is the function of the suspense as a stylistic (or compositional?) device in the excerpt?

Choose several passages of dialogue that can prove the effectiveness of this technique.

● Pick out the statement that corresponds to the following definitions of suspense:

(a) A state or condition of uncertainty and excitement, with some anxiety, as the outcome of something is unknown;

(b) The state or quality of being undecided, uncertain, or doubtful;

(c) A feeling of tension, worry, etc. about what may happen.

● Part of the emotional journey that the narrator takes throughout the story is to reconcile anxieties about fatherhood with his own ambivalent emotions to his experience of being a son. The narrator uses the statement 'I was being a dad'.

How does it dwell on the relationship he has with his own children?

● The transition from one time period to another is marked, for example, by the sentence 'We suddenly **passed** a three-story mock-colonial monstrosity on Voltemand Drive when Sarah **sat up** and **pointed** at the house and **cried** out'.

How do the verbs in bold type represent the narrator's perception of the situation? Does this situation prove to be the trigger for the memory?

● How many times are the words *Grandpa, Daddy* repeated in the excerpt? Is it foregrounded by being repeated in the development of the narrative?

● Consider the sentence 'I was being a dad'.

What is the sense of the stative verb *to be* used in the progressive aspect? Does this grammatical construction foreground the narrator's attitude towards his situation?

● The names of two of the streets that are mentioned in this passage—Voltemand Drive and Elsinore Lane—are both allusions to *Hamlet* (the

former being the name of one of the Danish ambassadors to Norway; and the latter, of course, being the place where the action of the play predominantly takes place).

(a) What is the significance of these references? Do intertextual references introduce intimations of an authorial presence and an autobiographical narrator?

(b) Do the geographical names contribute to verisimilitude?

● Social classes and groups can be indexed in the use of types of brand names. Which of them are used in the passage? Comment on their stylistic colouring.

● The lack of any direct evaluation of the various details can be seen as a notable feature of Ellis's overall style.

What is the content of the description of the Wagner house which is referred to as a 'three-story mock-colonial monstrosity'?

Writing

● Answer the following questions and write a paper about the narrator of *Lunar Park*.

(a) Does Ellis represent the novel as a true story of what took place in his life? Are the fictional biographical events separated from the real ones, or do fictional and real events intermingle in the novel?

(b) What can we learn about Ellis by considering his narrator made up of the personalities of key characters from his previous books *Less Than Zero, American Psycho,* and *Glamorama*?

BEYOND THE TEXT

Writing

In *Lunar Park,* the author plays with well-known facts about his life by exaggerating, disguising, or simply re-inventing them. In the novel, we have the story of Ellis and his dead father, who was physically and verbally

abusive to his family; and we have Ellis and his son Robby. Ellis's failure as a father in the story is similar to his own father's failure with him.

Write an essay on one of the topics below:

- It is never too late to forgive.
- Like father, like son.
- 'Many men can make a fortune, but very few can build a family'. *J.C. Bryan*

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CHAPTER 12

Cultural Space in *Three Cuckoo Birds with Songs and Kind Regards* by Hryhir Tyutyunnyk

TEXT and CONTEXT

● What do you know about the modern Ukrainian writer Hryhir Tyutyunnyk and his style of writing?

Summary
The metaphoric sense of the title *Three Cuckoo Birds with Songs and Kind Regards*, a short story by Hryhir Tyutyunnyk, needs interpreting: sending someone three cuckoo birds 'with songs and kind regards' means making someone forget about their love. Sending good wishes ('kind regards') is a code for unwanted love, especially if you don't need his/her love. (See A*ppendix* for the full text of the story.)

The events take place in a Ukrainian village in the period from the early 1930s to the mid-1950s. Tyutyunnyk's characters are common country people. What follows is the plot summary. Marfa is a young woman, who falls in love with her neighbour, Mykhailo, a married man, who is 'stately, sun-tanned, his black eyes like coals'. When Mykhailo is taken to Siberian exile, Marfa looks forward to a letter from him. In Siberia, Mykhailo feels 'Marfa's soul wandering somewhere' near him. He asks his wife Sofia to forward 'three cuckoo birds' to Marfa and help 'call her soul to come back to herself'. Sofia does not feel angry with Marfa at all. On the contrary, Sofia wants to relieve Marfa's suffering. Sofia, Marfa, and Mykhailo all hope for happiness and love but vainly; all of them get 'cuckoo birds with kind regards'.

The nobility of the feelings and actions of these peasants can be observed not only in the way they express their love but also in their everyday life. Mykhailo loves his family—his wife Sofia, his son, and his homeland. He avoids complaining about his troubles in exile. He tries not to give emotional pain to his family. However, the reader can see it. Certain details give away

his real life there—he grows old; he is 'all thumbs'; he describes 'togs that they give us, nothing the have-nots from the countryside like us would complain about'. Such a deeply spiritual world of common people from the countryside helped them survive during Stalin's regime.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The focus on analysing the short story falls on decoding its subtle meanings and commenting on the culture-specific references of the source text in the translated version. **Table 1** contains explanations of places, characters' actions, and symbols in the story.

Discussion

● Hryhir Tyutyunnyk is a great master of detail. In *Three Cuckoo Birds with Songs and Kind Regards,* pick out details which create or bring out the setting. Think of some distinct features of the culture's lifestyle, including clothes, occupation, social activities in the first half of the past century.

● Identify the point of view and the type of narrator in the story.

(a) What advantage does the author gain in having the story told by different narrators? Does it increase the credibility of the story or reveal the personality of the narrator?

(b) How do you account for the use of unuttered (inner) represented speech at the end of the story? Whose voice can you hear through it?

● Are there any flashbacks or foreshadowing? Comment on the use of present and past tenses in the story.

● Reread the passage from Tyutyunnyk's short story *'Marfa (she was a short stature…) …and the wind keeps trying and fails to dry her tears'* and define the climax of the passage. What is the climax of the whole story?

● Formulate the message of the story. Who / What is the short story written for? Comment on the story's dedication *To Love Supreme.*

● Analyse the characters.

(a) Which of the characters are multi-dimensional (or dynamic) and mono-dimensional (or static)?

(b) How are the characters of Mykhailo, Sofia, and Marfa introduced into the story? Through what character is the message of the story conveyed?

(c) Are the diminutive names of Myshko and Sonya significant in the story?

(d) Give a full character sketch of the hero/heroine, considering the following points: appearance (face, eyes, hair, body), social background, occupation, philosophy of life, and relationships with other characters.

● Does the plot comprise a variety of events? Are the events arranged chronologically? Are they all logically related to the theme of the story? Do they catch and hold the reader's attention? What time span does the story cover?

● Compare the typical lifestyle features of the first half of the past century to those of today.

Typical culture-bound items in the story may be as follows:

threshing machine – a machine used to separate grains of wheat, corn, etc. from the rest of the plant; **scytheman** – a person who cuts grain or long grass using a scythe, a tool with a long blade on a long wooden handle; **sheaf** (pl. *sheaves*) – a bunch of wheat, corn, etc. cut and bound together; **rick** – a haystack kept in a field; **halushky** (pl., singular – *halushka*) – a special sort of dumplings, a dish of Ukrainian cuisine; **togs** [plural] *informal* – clothes for toilers; **bandura –** a popular Ukrainian folk musical instrument.

● Fill in **Table 1** and comment on the places, characters' actions, and symbols in the story. What cultural values are foregrounded for the reader?

Table 1. Interpreting the cultural implications of the story

Passages from *Three Cuckoo Birds with Songs and Kind Regards* by Hryhir Tyutyunnyk	**Interpretation by the reader**
(a) I swear by the Holy Cross!	
(b) […] have a drink to his health, please	
(c) cuckoo bird	
(d) […] looked like a tender quail	
(e) Father's pine	
(f) Siberia which is so vast …	

- Find allusions to the historical period and society described in the text.

- Does the language reflect the characters' emotional state? Comment on the following:

  (a) the effect of similes, metaphors, informal and old-fashioned words

  (b) the lines where you can trace irony

  (c) the use of silence for purposes of emphasis (presented graphically by means of dots)

Presentation

- In pairs or small groups, dramatize (sketch out a script and perform) a few crucial scenes that you have been told about but have not 'seen': the conversation between Sofia and Marfa about 'three cuckoo birds' from Mykhailo or Mykhailo talking about his real life in Siberian exile with other prisoners, etc.

After each presentation, discuss the assumptions that the group made about key issues.

BEYOND THE TEXT

Writing

● Write an essay on the topic below:

True and pure love is much written about in the world literature.

Find out and write about world authors who have written about great love and greatness of heart. What cultures and historical periods do these texts come from?

Discussion

● Choose a piece of literary translation from a Ukrainian historical or contemporary writing (for example, Yuri Andrukhovych's novels) and find different translations of one and the same text.

Do various translated versions need different interpretations? Pay attention to the use of culturally specific imagery in the translation, and note places that many readers will view differently.

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Hryhir Tyutyunnyk, THREE CUCKOO BIRDS WITH SONGS AND KIND REGARDS

Dedicated to Love Supreme

I stride past the community centre. I am wearing a brand-new but cheap suit (to earn enough money for it I worked nights unloading freight trains in a team with other students like myself). Also, I am carrying a battered suitcase. I walk around the corner and the first thing that comes into view is Karpo Yarkovy's house with even rows of little, young pines in front of it. On the porch of Karpo's house stands Marfa Yarkova who immediately spots me. As I keep walking, she follows me with her eyes. She is standing there without a scarf on her head, her lush hair grey. Her braids used to shine like gold but there is no lustre left in her hair. The hair, I think, seems to die earlier than the person whose head it covers…

I come closer and say, passing in front of the young pines,

"Good day to you, Aunt Marfa."

Marfa's lips move but no sounds reach me. I know her eyes are on me as I walk away into a pine grove. These pines are usually referred to as "the big ones," or as "those that your father once planted."

My mother is overjoyed to see me, she weeps with joy, offering her pale lips for a kiss.

I tell my mother whatever little there is to tell about my student's life, "See, I've bought a new suit!" And then I ask,

"Mother, why does Marfa Yarkova always look at me in such a strange way?"

Mother does not answer; then sighs after a long silence and says, "She loved your father very much. And you look very much like him."

Marfa (she was of a short stature and when she was young people called her *The Little One*) always felt when a letter from my father was about to come. When her heart told her a letter had arrived, she would go to the post office, sit down on the porch, lissom and svelte, wearing an old but neat embroidered shirt and plated skirt, her feet bare. She would sit there, on the post office porch, her hair that showed from under the dark headscarf shining bright yellow. To start her vigil at the post office, she

had to sneak away from her work at the threshing machine, or in the grain field where she followed a scytheman picking up what he mowed and tying it into sheaves, or at the meadows where she helped pile hay into ricks.

She sat there, stripping a daisy of its petals, and murmuring as each petal was torn off, "Yes, there is a letter, no there is not, yes there is…"

When at last the postman, Levko, one-armed, very tall, lean to the point of gauntness, the strap of his tarpaulin mail bag over his shoulder that stuck upwards at a jaunty angle, walked out of the post office door, Marfa would spring up to her feet, rush to him and ask in a low voice, looking up from her low height into the man's eyes, "Uncle Levko, Uncle Levko, is there a letter from Myshko?"

"No, no letters from him," the postman said, blinking and, to avoid Marfa's eyes, looking into the distance above her head of golden hair that stuck out from under the black scarf.

"Uncle Levko, you must be lying, I know for sure there is."

"No, no letters… well, there is. But it's not for you, anyway, it's for Sofia."

"Uncle Levko, Uncle Levko, please, may I just hold it in my hands?"

"No, you may not. Somebody else's letters must not be given to anyone except the addressee. It's just forbidden you know."

"I'm not going to read it, I'll just hold it for a few moments, and I'll give it back to you."

Tears began to well up in Marfa's blue eyes, which are looking up beseechingly at Levko; the eyes, now sparkling with tears, seem to be even bluer than before.

Levko looks around, sees no one, sighs feebly, his weak chest rising and falling slightly, and beckons Marfa to follow him. They walk around the post office, and when they are behind it, he pulls a letter out of his bag and offers it to Marfa.

"All right, here it is. But tell no one that I've let you hold it … or I'll lose my job."

"Oh, Uncle Levko, no, no, no, no, of course I won't tell anyone!" In her earnestness Marfa speaks so fast the separate words become almost indistinguishable. She is overwhelmed with gratitude. "I swear by the Holy Cross!" And she makes a quick sign of the cross over her chest.

She snatches the letter from Levko's hand, copious tears rolling down her cheeks, and presses the letter to her bosom. Then she brings it to her lips and kisses the return address.

"Careful with your tears. Don't let them smudge the ink," Levko mutters, turning away and waiting.

If there is still no one in sight, she holds on to the letter for some more time, keeping it pressed to her bosom, and whispering feverishly, "See, I've done no damage to it … Thank you so much, Uncle Levko, thank you. It's so kind of you … Now, take this, please, and have a drink to his health, please."

She pulls a crumpled one-rouble bill from the bosom of her shirt, and quickly shoves it into Levko's hand.

"If it were not for drinking his health, I'd never take it …" Levko mumbles.

And he shuffles off in the direction of the village, his right shoulder with the strap of the almost empty bag over it, sticking angularly upwards.

Marfa takes off too, running back to her work, back to tying straw sheaves. She's almost flying, light as a bird, and the wind keeps trying and failing to dry her tears.

"Mother, who told you about all this? Uncle Levko?"

"No, he wouldn't dare. I saw a lot myself, and I heard a lot … See, I often followed her when she slipped away from work. I took a slightly different route, through the ravines, but when I got to the post office she'd already be there, sitting on the porch, waiting … She was the first one to guess that there was a message from your father."

"Weren't you mad at her?"

"How can you be angry with someone who is distressed and sorrowing? Woe does not invite anger, only pity."

"But how come she could guess when the letter would be coming and you did not?"

"I don't know, son, why it was like this. Each person's heart feels differently. Her heart let her know, and mine was different … She was much younger than your father. He was thirty three and she was nineteen … A couple of years of life with her Karpo was like a hundred for her … And your father did not seem to get older at all. He looked the same at twenty and at thirty. He was stately! Sun-tanned, his black eyes like coals, burning into you. When he just glanced at you, you felt your heart miss a beat. That is probably why he so rarely raised his eyes to look at people. More often he would put his hand over his brow thinking something over. The last time though when I saw his eyes, it was in the town of Romny

where he was taken and where I followed him. And then … That last time his eyes did not burn into me, they were gentle, they only caressed. And they were very sad. He stared at me as though through a haze …

They, Karpo and Marfa that is, used to come to our place for visits. In fact, almost every night. The three of us — your father, Marfa and I chattered and gossiped and sang keeping our voices down a bit. Your father had a singing baritone, Marfa was in the lead, and I followed her in singing. Her voice was like she herself, tender and thin, it seemed it might snap like a twig at any moment, but she could sing, oh, so well! And that Karpo of hers was good for nothing. He'd just sit there, at the table, staring at the ceiling. Or, he'd blow air through his moustache, to sort of fluff it up. First on one side, then on the other. But I tell you he was one for eating! I'd give him a big plateful of hot *halushky*, thrust a tablespoon into his hand, and tell him, 'Go ahead, help yourself!' And while we sang, he'd dig in with great gusto. He bent his head low over the plate, catching the steam with his moustache as they say, and gobbled up what was in it so fast as though instead of the mouth he were throwing *halushky* over the shoulder. And he huffed and puffed so much that he'd almost blow out the flame of our little oil lamp on the other end of the table. 'Yeah,' he would repeat once in a while, 'I love them *halushky*. Only you should put more potatoes into them.' And what a meaty face he had! His legs were like heavy stumps. And his hair was the colour of old straw. By his side, Marfa looked like a tender quail … She would glance at him, bent low over his *halusky*, slurping, sigh in the middle of a song and turn away, with tears in her eyes … Her eyes were like two blue candles … And all the time they were on your father. I saw that. And he would just go on singing, with his hand over his brow. Once in a while he would smile at you, lying in your cradle, and rock it gently.

Later, I'd tell him, "Mykhailo, why don't you ever look at her, just give her a glance! Can't you see the way she lights up in your presence?" And all he said was, "Why should I make things worse for her than they are? Isn't she suffering enough?"

When she is telling me all this, my mother's eyes are dry, her voice does not tremble, and I know that these recollections do not rend her heart, do not hurt any longer — they've become petrified.

My father's last letter to my mother

"My dear Sofia, my sweet Sonya,

Yesterday a friend of mine gave me a splinter of a looking-glass, and when I looked into it I could not recognize myself. Not only the hair on my head, but even my eyebrows have gone grey. I even thought it must be hoarfrost — I was out of doors at that moment — but I passed my palm over the hair and discovered it was not the hoarfrost after all.

I won't look at myself in a mirror ever again.

I often dream at night of my carpentering. In my dreams I make window frames, fancy doors, tables, and benches. After I wake up, my hands are itching to do some work, so much that I carve wooden spoons for the boys. But I seem to be all thumbs when I do it. The trees here provide very good timber — palaces could be built with it. But the timber's not dry enough. Besides, here I don't have carpenter instruments like the ones I have at home. Have you sold my instruments yet? If you find yourself in dire straits, don't hesitate, sell them. When I return, we'll earn for new instruments.

Sonya, if you only knew how I want to survive. But it's such a long way home.

You asked me in your letter what they feed us with and what clothes we get for the winter. They give us such good slops that Karpo Yarkovy would put away a dozen platefuls at one sitting, and would ask for another helping! Togs that they give us are all right too, nothing the have-nots from the countryside like us would complain about.

The previous night in my dream I saw the pine I had planted. It must be waist high, or even taller now. And there, in the distance I saw a blue stretch of the river, like a bird's wing. But neither you, nor my son, the apple of my eye, come to me in my night dreams. I see you in my visions when I am awake instead.

The man who sleeps next door to me in our dugout mumbles prayers in his sleep, but he never utters the name of God he is praying to.

Sonya, my dearest,

Do not judge me too harshly. I've never told anyone a lie, and I'll tell the truth now too — everyday I feel Marfa's soul wandering somewhere near me. She's so heartsick. Sonya, do me a favour — go to her place and tell her I've sent her three cuckoo birds with three little songs and kind regards, songs like the ones the puny little *bandura*-player sang at the fairs, remember? But I am not sure though these three birds will be able to fly all the way from Siberia which is so vast, so impassable, so cold, and reach her. They may be nipped in flight by the fierce cold.

("Siberia which is so vast…" is crossed out thickly in blue ink with an unsure hand, but above the crossed-out words, it is written anew, "Siberia which is so vast…").

Please, go see her, my Sonya, my only one. Maybe she'll call her soul to come back to her, and then I'll have peace, at least for a little while."

I embrace you, and I'll carry my son in his cradle in my heart, as long as I live…"

It was a long time ago, but I keep wondering, Isn't it amazing how close they, Marfa and my father, were to each other in feeling? How do things like this happen?

And also I can't help thinking, Why didn't they get married if there was an invisible but such a strong bond between them?

And the answer comes in a whisper from the tall "Father's pine," rustling in the wind, "If they had married, there would be no you."

GLOSSARY

Allegory Related to fables, parables, and tales, allegories are narratives which contain concealed second meanings which are apparent in the similarities between a character or event in the narrative and real characters and events. Allegory was much beloved in the Middle Ages, but in contemporary fiction it is rare.

Allusion serves to be used as a way of adding cultural value to a text. One of the reasons for making allusions is that they are thought to invoke some of the cultural connotations of the source text.

American Criticism (New Criticism) Firstly, it was predominantly interested in the interpretation of literary texts; secondly, it was methodologically explicit excluding from consideration the author's intentions and biography, or the reader's reaction to the text; thirdly, it valued a literary work primarily for formal and aesthetic reasons (C. Ransom, C. Brooks, W. K. Wimsatt).

Antagonist is the personage opposing the protagonist. See also the entry for **Protagonist**.

Antithesis Opposite situations, words or phrases placed side by side.

Atmosphere is the general mood of a literary work. It is affected by such components of a literary work as the plot, setting, characters, details, symbols and language means. Atmosphere describes the prevailing mood of prose fiction, an attempt by the writer to make the reader react, or feel, in a certain way.

Author's digression An insertion which has no immediate relation to the theme. The 'omniscient' author wanders away from the subject and breaks off into a digression to state his personal view or to make a general statement.

British Criticism typically used close reading—taking a small selection of a novel and analyzing it in exhaustive detail (I. A. Richards, W. Empson, F. R. Leavis).

Character is a presumably imagined person who inhabits a story.

Cognitive metaphor In cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, or cognitive metaphor, refers to the understanding of one idea, or conceptual domain, in terms of another, for example, understanding quantity in terms of directionality (e.g. 'prices are rising'). A conceptual domain can be any coherent organization of human

experience, and the mappings between conceptual domains correspond to neural mappings in the brain.

Cognitive Narratology Cognitive narratologists claim that the recipient uses his or her world knowledge to project fictional worlds, and this knowledge is stored in cognitive schemata called frames and scripts; readers evoke fictional worlds (or storyworlds) on the basis of their real-world knowledge; cognitive narratology seeks to describe the range of cognitive processes that are involved (M. Fludernik, D. Herman, R. Schneider, and L. Zunshine).

Cognitive stylistics focuses on hypothesizing about what happens during the reading process and how this influences the interpretations that readers generate about the texts they are reading (R. Tsur, E. Semino, P. Stockwell, J. Gavins, G. Steen).

Climax is the key event, the plot's most dramatic and revealing moment, usually the turning point of the story.

Complex (well-rounded) character undergoes change and growth, reveals various sides of his/her personality. The choice of literary character depends on his/her level of development and the extent to which he/she changes. The term 'well-rounded' was proposed by E. M. Forster.

Conflict is the opposition between forces or characters. There are external and internal conflicts.

Dénouement (or **resolution)** is the unwinding of the actions; it includes the event, or events, immediately following the climax and bringing the actions to an end. It is the point at which the fate of the main character is clarified. The dénouement suggests to the reader certain crucial conclusions.

Deviation *(in literature)* The violation of certain linguistic rules or norms. Deviation can occur at many levels—discoursal, semantic, lexical, grammatical, phonological, and graphological.

Diegesis R. Scholes compares *diegesis* to the referent and defines it as the constructed sequence of events generated by a reading of the text, whereas the referent is the sequence of events to which it (i.e., the story) refers. G. Prince defines *diegesis* as either the fictional world in which events occur in a narrative or 'telling' as against 'showing'.

Direct type of characterization means that the character is evaluated by the writer himself or by another character in the story.

Direct speech is enclosed within quotation marks and introduced by or

presented alongside a reporting clause (she said/declared/commanded, asserted, etc.).

Ellipsis The omission of words or phrases in a text.

Epiphany In storytelling, epiphany is the dramatic revelation of the truth of the story, but it also has a particular spiritual connotation of being the appearance of a spiritual truth through an ordinary occurrence.

First-person narration The story is told from a character's point of view, and the reader gets a biased understanding of the events and the other characters because he sees them through the perception of the character who narrates.

Flashback (or *analepsis*) A scene of the past inserted into the narrative. Flashbacks present background information, appear in non-chronological order and may be related to various characters.

Flashforward (or *prolapsis*) A look towards the future, a remark or hint that prepares the reader for what is to follow.

Foregrounding The term 'foregrounding', which was borrowed from the visual arts, denotes the ability of a verbal element to obtain extra significance, to say more in a definite context; it was introduced by Prague Structuralists (notably Jan Mukařovský). Essentially, foregrounding (emphasizing) is one of the effects often claimed to contribute to literature's aesthetic characterization.

Free direct speech The perspective of the narrator is minimized instead of being emphasized. The reporting clauses are dropped altogether, although inverted commas are usually preserved.

Free indirect speech This is a mixed form, consisting partly of direct speech and partly of indirect (or reported) speech, where it is difficult to separate the voice of the narrator from the voice of the character. Grammatically free indirect speech resembles indirect speech (third person singular), but it also retains some individual characteristics of characters' speech.

Heterodiegetic narration refers to the third person (Gérard Genette).

Homodiegetic narration refers to the choice of a first-person narrator (Gérard Genette).

Hyperbole distorts the truth in that speakers assert more than is objectively warranted, as in *I have ten thousand papers to grade before noon*.

Image/imagery An image/imagery in its narrowest sense is a word picture, a description of some visible scene or object. More commonly

'imagery' refers to the figurative language in a piece of literature, or all the words which refer to objects and qualities which appeal to the feelings of a character.

Indirect type of characterization The author uses indirect method of characterization when he/she depicts the character through his/her actions, manners, behaviour, speech, and the attitude to other characters.

Indirect speech By comparison with direct speech, it is presented from a slightly different perspective, with a shift from the perspective of the speaker to that of the narrator.

Interior (or **internal) monologue** is an extended presentation of a character's thoughts in such an arrangement as if the character were speaking out loud to him-/herself.

Irony A manner of speaking or writing which consists in saying one thing while you mean another. It is a method of achieving meaning via understatement, concealment and allusion, rather than by direct statement.

Intertextuality is used to describe the variety of ways that texts interact with other texts where any one literary text is made up of other texts, by means of its open or covert citations and *allusions,* its repetitions and transformations of the formal and substantive features of earlier texts.

Limited point of view The main focus is on one particular character and what he or she does, says, hears, thinks, and otherwise experiences.

Literary genre A type or category of literature marked by certain shared features or conventions. The three broadest categories of genre include poetry, drama, and fiction. These general genres are often subdivided into more specific genres and subgenres. For instance, precise examples of genres might include ghost stories, parodies, mysteries, westerns, fairy tales, sonnets, lyric poetry, tragedies, science fiction etc.

Message The most important idea that the author expresses in the process of developing the theme. See also the entry for **Theme**.

Metaphor A figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between two unlike things that actually have something in common. See also the entry for **Cognitive metaphor**.

Metonymy A figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated (such as 'crown' for 'royalty').

Narration comprises the techniques and devices used for telling the 'story' to the reader. The purpose of narration is, as much as possible, to render the story, to make it clear and to bring it alive to the reader's imagination. See also the entry for **Story**.

Narrative (or **story)** Any account that presents connected events, and may be organized into various categories: non-fiction (e.g. biographies, historiography); fictionalized accounts of historical events (e.g. anecdotes, myths and legends); and fiction proper (i.e. literature in prose, such as short stories and novels).

Narratology denotes recent concerns with the general theory and practice of narrative in all literary forms.

Narrator The individual or voice who (or even which) tells us the story.

Novel A fictional prose narrative of considerable length, typically having a plot that is unfolded by the actions, speech, and thoughts of the characters.

Objective point of view The story is confined *only* to essential reporting of actions and speeches, with no commentary and no revelation of the thoughts of any of the characters.

Omniscient narrator (or **point of view)** means 'all-knowing', and the word implies that the narrator knows everything: what has happened and what will happen, what the characters are thinking, and so on.

Paradox An apparently self-contradictory statement or one that seems in conflict with all logic and opinion.

Parallelism A literary device that is used to add lyrical flow to verse or prose as well as to exhibit the similarity in a sentence or word by means of unexpected repetition or comparison. This similarity in structure makes it easier for the reader / listener to concentrate on the message. Like deviation, parallelism can occur at more than one linguistic level at the same time. See also the entry for **Deviation**.

Parody A mock-imitation of a particular work or style of literature, with the intention of making ridiculous the conventions of that work or style.

Personification A trope or figure of speech (generally considered a type of metaphor) in which an inanimate object or abstraction is given human qualities or abilities.

Phantasmagoria A fantastic sequence of haphazardly associative imagery, as seen in dreams or fever.

Plot An ordered, organized sequence of events and actions. In a carefully

worked plot, all the actions, speeches, thoughts, and observations are inextricably linked to make up an organic unity.

Plot structure involves plot, story, and thematic elements; it refers to a literary work's overall organization and patterning, the way in which its component parts fit together to produce a totality, a satisfying whole or, the way in which they fail to do so.

Postclassical Narratology It contains classical narratology as one of its 'moments' but is marked by a profusion of new methodologies and research hypotheses; the result is a host of new perspectives on the forms and functions of narrative itself. Further, in its postclassical phase, research on narrative does not just expose the limits but also exploits the possibilities of the older, structuralist models' (M. Sternberg, T. Pavel, S. Chatman, S. Lanser).

Post-structuralism extends and universalizes the structuralist assumption that no element in a system of meaning has significance in and for itself but only as part of the system or in relations to other elements (R. Barthes, J. Derrida, M. Foucault, J-F. Lyotard, G. Deleuze).

Protagonist is clearly central and dominates the story from the beginning up to the end. Such a character is generally called the main, central, or major character.

Repetition A reiteration of the same word or phrase with the view to expressiveness.

Retardation The withholding of information until the appropriate time and the deliberate sustaining of anticipation by means of suspense.

Rhetorical question is a figure of speech in the form of a question that is asked in order to make a point and without the expectation of a reply.

Russian and Czech Formalism The Russian Formalists (R. Jakobson, V. Shklovsky, B. Tomashevsky) identified a key distinction between the *fabula* (the chronological series of events as they happen) and the *sjuzhet* (the narrative organisation of those events in a plot). In more traditional approaches to prose fiction, critics use the terms 'story' and 'plot'. The Czech formalists (often referred to as the 'Prague School') produced their own concept of *foregrounding,* which has played a useful role in the criticism of prose fiction (see also the entry for **Foregrounding**).

Sarcasm When irony is found in a somewhat sour statement tingled with mockery.

Satire (1) A literary work in which human vice or folly is attacked through irony, derision, or wit. (2) Irony, sarcasm, or caustic wit used to attack or expose folly, vice, or stupidity.

Scene a vivid or dramatic moment described in enough detail to create the illusion that the reader is practically there.

Short story A relatively brief prose narrative, usually characterized by uniformity of tone and dramatic intensity and having as plot a single action. A popular form of a story is one that tells events with a definite beginning, middle, and end.

Setting In the setting the necessary preliminaries to the events of the plot cast light on the circumstances influencing the development of the action and characters. It supplies some information on either all or some of the following questions: Who? What? Where? When?

Simile A figure of speech in which one thing is said to be like another. Similes always contain the words 'like' or 'as'.

Simple (flat) character is constructed round a single trait. The choice of literary character depends on his/her level of development and the extent to which he/she changes. The term 'flat' was proposed by E. M. Forster.

Stock character A stereotyped character as well as a unique individual who has single dominant virtues and vices.

Story consists of the basic events and actions in the chronological order in which they are supposed to have happened, together with circumstances in which the actions are performed.

Stream of consciousness technique is based on the conception of the prevalence of the subconscious over the conscious; hence, the thought processes are presented as a flow of ideas, feelings, and images. See also the entry **Interior monologue**.

Structuralist Narratology Early structuralist narratologists adopted some of the terms used by structuralist linguists. In elucidating his use of the term 'mood', for example, Genette notes, 'one can tell *more* or tell *less* than what one tells, and can tell it *according to one point of mood or another;* and this capacity, and the modalities of its use are precisely what our category of *narrative mood* aims at'. Genette further uses the term 'voice' to designate the narrative situation or its instance. Structuralist narratology gave a set of concepts and terms that denote aspects of the underlying 'grammar' of narratives. (R. Barthes, C. Bremond, T. Todorov, A. J. Greimas, G. Genette).

Structure The overall principle of organization in a work of literature. See also the entry for **Plot structure**.

Symbol is an object or an image which comes to stand for something else (often an idea or quality) by analogy or association. A tree, for example, can symbolize strength or tradition, while a dove conventionally symbolizes peace.

Synecdoche occurs when the association between the figurative and literal senses is that between a part and the whole to which it belongs. See also the entry for **Metonymy**.

Theme involves a set of issues, problems, or questions without any attempt to provide a rationale or answer to satisfy the demands of the reader.

Third-person narration is where the narrator is the author in the story and the reference to characters involves the use of third-person pronouns.

Title is the first element of the plot structure to catch our eye, but its meaning and function may be determined retrospectively.

Tone The sense of an author's or narrator's attitude to his or her character, situation or subject, as conveyed by the words he or she chooses. Sometimes used in a wider sense to describe the mood evoked in a reader by a particular work.

Understatement (or **litotes)** distorts the truth because speakers say less than is objectively warranted, as in *He seems to have had a bit too much to drink.*

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