*LITERATURE ANALYSIS*

*ELEMENTS OF LITERATURE*

**A STUDY BOOK FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS**

By Julius Kaboyo



*This book is good for both secondary and University students. It contains most important literary elements of Poetry, Drama, and Fiction as the main genres of literature. The book is well researched from re-known authors and websites and the information adapted to suit your interest.*

**LITERARY ELEMENTS**

Literary Elements are the tools that the write uses to create a good work. These elements some of them belong to poetry, Novel and Drama. Below is a list of Literary Elements, or the parts of a story, poem or play. When you examine and analyze your literary work for class presentation, ask the following questions. They will help you find the literary elements of your story.

***How to carefully read a poem***

***What kind of language is used in poetry?***

* A poet seeks the most meaningful words- “Diction”
* Poets use sounds deliberately to enhance the message of the poem. Some of the sound devices employed by the poet include: rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance and consonance.
* A poet uses words that are the most suggestive, expressive, and precise for the poet’s purpose. The words in poetry say more than they mean on the surface.

***And what IS the poet’s purpose?***

* This is a hard question to answer because it differs from poet to poet.
* Poetry communicates feelings and experiences rather than objective facts.
* Poetry “says more and talks less” than other forms of expression that is to say it’s condensed.
* It does this by using a number of language resources – “POETIC DEVICES/Figurative language”

***How then, do you respond to a poem?***

* You need to understand and react to its special language and structure. The way the poem is structured on the paper says a lot about the meaning. Some poems are in shapes or hearts, crosses, roads etc.
* It is a good idea to read a poem several times and aloud at least once. In an examination, you can imagine how the poem would sound if read a loud because you are not supposed to speak.
* It is often helpful to write a prose paraphrase of a poem to help you clarify and simplify the author’s ideas and language. Try to write in your own words what each stanza mean to you and finally the whole poem’s meaning in your own words.

**GUIDELINES FOR CLOSE READING OF POETRY**

**1**. **Read the poem aloud at least once, following the punctuation for phrasing.**

* Commas, semicolons, periods, and other marks of punctuation tell you where to pause!
* Poets do not expect the reader to pause at the end of each line! Some lines are end stopped and require pausing at the end and others are enjamble/run on which means the reader must continue reading until he/she meets the punctuation.
* Some times the whole poem or stanza is made up of one sentence only having an end mark (fullstop, exclamation, question mark) at the end of the stanza or whole poem.
* Punctuation also helps the reader to determine the tone of the poem. Most poems with short sentences have a serious tone, mood and attitude.

1. **Respond thoughtfully to key words and references.**

* Many words have both *denotative* and *connotative* meanings. Some poems are straight forward and the reader should not look for hidden meanings and this kind of language is what is called *denotative(*Dictionary meaning)
* Connotative meaning carries emotional associations most especially with the readers’ knowledge of the world. There are often two levels of meanings that is the surface meaning and the deeper meaning which the reader must find out.

1. **Write a paraphrase of any lines that need clarification or simplification.**

* A paraphrase helps a reader respond more fully to the poem and to understand imagery and figurative language this part requires critical thinking and analysis to try to figure out the meaning.
* Paraphrazing also puts inverted word order into normal word order.Some times the poet employs poetic license and uses words that are his own invention. These words should be understood in context and put in the readers’ own words.

1. **Your own response to the poem, write a statement clarifying its central idea or meaning.**

* Try to state this idea in one or two sentences.In this way you can use your own reactions as a means of exploring the poet’s message. If you have not got the general idea (subject matter), then it will be hard for you to understand the rest of the poem.

**ANALYZING A POEM**

The “**WHAT**” of the poem

Subject Matter, Themes and Ideas

What is the poem generally about?

What are the major and minor ideas in the poem?

What is the poet’s attitude towards the message?

The “**HOW**” of the poem

**TECHNIQUES**

How does the poet communicate his/her ideas (poetic devices used)

**LANGUAGE;**

Diction-conotative and denotative, similes, metaphors, personification, irony, paradoxc, allusion, allegory etc

**STRUCTURE:**

-stanzas, lineation, punctuation,

**SOUNDS:**

Rhyme, Rhythm, alliteration, Assonance, consonance, Onomatopaoia

**HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY**

• Know the text really well and answer the question properly. This requires knowledge of the plot of the story, major and minor characters; their motives, actions and feeling, the setting of the text; physical, historical, time of day (morning, afternoon, evening, night) and the narrative techniques employed by the author such as symbolism, allegory, allusion etc.

• Write a plan. This is a very important part of any essay that students most often don’t pay attention to. It is said, “If you don’t plan, you plan to fail” there are several ways of planning depending on the question. For instance if you want to write an essay on cause and effect, you can use the diagram below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Character*** | ***Setting*** | ***Theme*** |
|  |  |  |

• Structure your essay using an introduction, several body paragraphs and a conclusion. An introduction could be generally about the novel or text briefly stating the main idea, setting and author

**Example of an introduction of an extract from Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe**

The Novel *Things Fall Apartwas*written byA Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. The novel is set inboth the pre-colonial and colonial periods in Nigeria in the villages of Umuofia and Mbantaand tells the story of.......... The story also deals with / depicts / deals with, describes................. In this Novel,we are told about / learn about …………… as discussed below;

**Example of concusion**

To conclude, To sum up, In conclusion, this novel clearly reveals to us the............................................. We learn........................................................

• Use paragraphs with clear topic sentences to mark the progression of your argument. Remember ‘new paragraph = new point’. A good example of a clear topic sentence is: ‘The consequences of hatred are explored in *Romeo and Juliet*’ when………

• Use correct spelling and ensure you always spell book titles, characters’ names or authors’ names correctly; for example, ‘*Thing Fall Apart’* by Chinua Achebe. When writing a title, every key word begins with a capital letter and the title is in inverted commas.

• Put direct quotations in inverted commas; for example: Othello defends Desdemona’s loyalty to Brabantio, swearing ‘my life upon her faith’. This is very important when quoting the exact words said by the character in a novel or text.

• Display your knowledge of the text by selecting relevant references to support your views. For example, if you choose to focus on the Romeo and Juliet’s fate of dying, you might emphasize scenes where they talk about death such as the prologue, the balcony scene, Romeo’s dream while in Mantua.

• Work out your own point of view on key elements such as characters, narrators, plot, etc. Demonstrate your own undertanding and opinions especially with question that require you to comment. Sometimes you will have to differ from the author if you can find evidance in the novel or text to support your side.

• Keep to topic. Use concession words to help you keep to the topic such as; also, inaddition, further more, besides, apart from etc.

• Acknowledge the difference between genres; for example, play, fiction or poetry. For example, when discussing a play , refer to ‘scenes’, ‘acts’, ‘stage directions’, etc.

**NOTE:** The skills above are very essential for a student who wants to get good grades in a literature paper. Failure to follow them makes a student get low grades as his/her work will lack originality and deep understanding of the text which the examiners always look for in your essay. Students should endevour to quote and if they cannot do it let them paraphrase correctly the information to illustrate their points.

Students should also be very carefull with names of characters as some names are quite similar and can easily be used interchangably by a student. For exampe ‘Jero’ in “The Trials of Brother Jero” by Wole Soyinka and ‘Jere’ in “Betrayal in the city” by Francis Imbuga.

Generally students should demonstate clear understanding of the genre they are handling and its content both stylistic and content as examinations are set basing on this. An examination question will either require a candidate to discuss the language and style of the author or meaning; theme, subject matter, relevance of the title, personal opinions about the text among others.

**POETRY ANALYSIS**

A poem differs from other genres of literature due to the following characteristics:

**STRUCTURE OF A POEM**

The structure of a poem refers to its external features which can help the reader to arrive at its meaning. These features are explained in details below:

**Line**: The line is essential to the understanding of poetry, marking an important visual difference from prose. Poetry is arranged into a series of units that do not necessarily match to sentences, but rather to a series of **metrical feet**. Generally, but not always, the line is printed as one single line on the page. If it occupies more than one line, the remaining part is usually indented to indicate that it is a continuation.

In traditional verse forms, the length of each line is determined by **convention**, but in modern poetry the poet has more**liberty** for choice. This kind of poem which does not follow the conventional rule of length of a line is called ***free verse****.*Here the poet uses poetic license to express his/her ideas.

**Enjambment/ run on lines:** This is the continuation of the idea therefore the line doest end but instead continues. For example;

Why should it be Africa,

where children starve amidst food,

people die evil deaths without cause,

war wipes out entire communities and commodities

and causes panic inside our intestines--

leading to miscarriages that discourage

our courage?

This is the first staza of a poem “Why Africa” by Kaboyo Julius. In this stanza the sentense ends with a question mark at the end of the stanza since it is the same idea the author is exploring in the whole stanza. If the first line had ended with a full stop, the second would have no meaning.

***Enjamblement***is sometimes done with the title, which in effect becomes the first line of the poem. In this case the line is not marked by end marks like fullstops, question marks, exclamation marks, but line are broken down so that the idea is understood after reading the corresponding line.

**Stanza**: A division of a poem created by arranging the lines into a unit, often repeated in the same pattern of **meter** and **rhyme** throughout the poem; a unit of poetic lines (a “paragraph” within the poem). The stanzas within a poem are separated by blank lines.

**THIS LIFE!**

What offense have we committed?

We are born prematurely,

Wailing in agony, blind and mute, Stanza one

Hearing that which we can't comprehend,

Visualizing that which we cannot see,

Guilty of sins not committed.

*Why then do we live?*

We sprout amidst thorns,

Our bodies pierced to pieces;

Wander around the world, Stanza two

Yet find no nest in which to rest.

We hatch on the naked ground-

Vulnerable to heaven’s fires and sea breezes.

We try to get acclimatised,

But only suffer more.

*Why then live?*

We die violent deaths

And bequeath to our offspring our blood.

So the lineage continues: Stanza three

Murder, prostitution, defecating babies in dustbins-

And then pretentious repentance.

Since our birth is an ordeal ordained for us,

*Why live?*

Stanzas in modern poetry, such as ***free verse****,* often do not have lines that are all of the same length and meter, nor even the same number of lines in each stanza. Stanzas created by such irregular line groupings are often dictated by meaning, as in paragraphs of prose.

Stanzas are usually used to mark divisions of thought in a poem, and so they function somewhat as paragraphs do. For example in the above poem, “This Life” by Kaboyo Julius, the first stanza is about birth of a baby, the second stanza the problems people go through while growing and the last stanza is majorly about death for the whole unit-Life.

In some poems, each stanza has the same pattern; in others, each stanza is different. In some poems, when a new stanza begins, it means a new idea is being introduced. Some words can help us to know if it’s a new idea of the previous such as ‘but’, ‘then’, ‘and’ etc.

Some of the best known of the regular stanza patterns are the…

Couplet = a two line stanza

Triplet (Tercet) = a three line stanza

Quatrain = a four line stanza

Quintet = a five line stanza

Sestet (Sextet) = a six line stanza

Septet = a seven line stanza

Octave = an eight line stanza

**Stanza Forms:** The names given to describe the number of lines in a stanzaic unit, such as: *couplet (2), tercet (3), quatrain (4), quintet (5), sestet (6), septet (7),* and *octave (8).*

**SOUND DEVICES IN POETRY**

**RHYME?**Thisis the similarity in sound of the ends of words. The chief importance of rhyme is to insure the unity of the poem. Rhyme is often used also to produce humor and musicality as well as cohesion. It can be regular or irregular depending of the situation the poem is talking about.

***TYPES OF RHYMES***

**End-Rhyme**

This is when the rhyme occurs at the end of a line of poetry; that is a word at the end of one line rhymes with a word at the end of another line.

The effect of **end rhyme**is to indicate the end of the line, show that there is a pause from one line to another and satisfaction of our expectations especially when it is regular and dissatisfaction when it is irregular.

Hector the Collector

Collected bits of ***string***.

Collected dolls with broken heads

And rusty bells that would not ***ring***.

**Internal Rhyme**

When the rhyme occurs within a single line of poetry; that is a word inside a line rhymes with another word on the same line.

Once upon a midnight ***dreary***, while I pondered weak and ***weary***.

***From “The Raven” by Edgar Allan Poe***

**Perfect Rhyme**

When word rhyme exactly and they even sound almost the same except for the way they begin.

* clock, rock / rave, shave

**Eye Rhyme**

When words look like they rhyme, but are pronounced differently

* c**over**, **over** / b**ough**, t**ough/** tho**rough,** th**rough**

**Imperfect Rhyme** (also called Near-Rhyme, Off-Rhyme, Slant Rhyme, and Half-Rhyme)

Is when words partially rhyme. They may share the same vowel or consonant sounds.

– Cru**m**b, Ho**m**e / Sea**m**, Swi**m** / Kil**led**, Coo**led**

**RHYME SCHEME.**This is the pattern of rhyming lines in a poem. Use the letters of the alphabet starting with ***a***for the first rhyme sound, ***b***for the second rhyme sound, and so on to represent sounds to be able to visually “see” the pattern. When analyzing a poem, be sure to give the same rhyming sound the same letter, even if it appears in a different position in stanzas after the first. Rhyme scheme is based on end rhyme.

**EXAMPLES**

"My Shadow" by Robert Louis Stevenson

I

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me, **(a)**

And what can be the use of him is more than I can see. **(a)**

He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head; **(b)**

And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed**.(b)**

II

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow--**(c)**

Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow; **(c)**

For he sometimes shoots up taller like an India—rubber ball **(d)**

And he sometimes goes so little that there's none of him at all. **(d)**

III

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play, **(e)**

And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way. **(e)**

He stays so close behind me, he's a coward you can see; **(a)**

I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me! **(a)**

IV

One morning, very early, before the sun was up, **(f)**

I rose **(g)**

and found the shining dew on every buttercup; **(f)**

But my lazy little shadow, like an badly behaved, sleepy-head**,(b)**

Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed**. (b)**

**The Germ by Ogden Nash**

A mighty creature is the g**erm**,

Though smaller than the pachyd**erm**.

His customary dwelling pl**ace**

Is deep within the human r**ace**.

His childish pride he often pl**eases**

By giving people strange dis**eases**.

Do you, my poppet, feel inf**irm**?

You probably contain a g**erm**.

**ALLITERATION** is the repetition of the beginning sounds of nearby words. OR Consonant sounds repeated at the beginnings of words

One important function of alliteration is to give special emphasis to the words alliterated. It also creates musicality in which our ear hears the works as having special value. This is why, although alliteration is most often used in poetry and songs, it is also used in advertising and political speeches.

Alliteration is also normally used to strengthen the meaning of the literary work in which it is use and to create tone, mood and atmosphere.

If ***P***eter ***P***iper ***p***icked a ***p***eck of ***p***ickled ***p***eppers, how many ***p***ickled ***p***eppers did ***P***eter ***P***iper ***p***ick?

Tick Tock

**CONSONANCE** is the repetition of the inner consonant sounds of nearby words that do not rhyme. The repeated consonant sounds can also be anywhere in the words.

“***s***ilken,***s***ad, un***c***ertain, ru***s***tling

**EXAMPLE**

I dropped the locket in the thick mud.

The d**o**ve m**o**ved ab**o**ve the waves.

**ASSONANCE** is the repetition of inner vowel sounds of nearby words that do not rhyme.

EXAMPLE

I made my way to the lake.

Hear the mellow wedding bells.

“Slow the low gradual moan came in the snowing.”

***John Masefield***

“Shall ever medicine th**ee** to that sw**ee**t sl**ee**p.”

**Onomatopoeia**: Words that sound like their meanings. In *Hear the steady tick of the old hall clock*, the word tick sounds like the action of the clock, If assonance or alliteration can be onomatopoeic, as the sound ‘ck’ is repeated in tick and clock, so much the better. At least sounds should suit the tone – heavy sounds for weightiness, light for the delicate. *Tick* is a light word, but transpose the light *T* to its heavier counterpart, *D*; and transpose the light *CK*to its heavier counterpart *G*, and *tick* becomes the much more solid and down to earth *dig*.

*Example:* boom, buzz, crackle, gurgle, hiss, pop, sizzle, snap, swoosh, whir, zip

**Rhythm:**is the organization of lines of poetry in regular pattern of accented/ stressed syllables separated by unaccented/ unstressed syllables. Simply put, rhythm is the flow, repetition or regularity of something. When someone walks in a quiet room with noisy shoes, what you hear is rhythm. If that person starts running, the rhythm also changes and becomes faster compared to when he/she was walking.

Rhythm helps to distinguish poetry from prose. Rhythm is determined by the length of the lines and its measured using meter.

Meter is measured by the number of feet in a line. Feet are named by Greek prefix number words attached to “meter.” A line with five feet is called pentameter; thus, a line of five iambs (an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable) is known as “iambic pentameter” (the most common metrical form in English poetry, and the one favored by Shakespeare).

***The most common line lengths are:***

Monometer: one foot Diameter: two feet Trimeter: threefeet tetrameter: four feet five feet octameter: hexameter: six feetheptameter: seven feet pentameter:eight feet

Pentameter:eight feet

**REPETITION:** The purposeful re-use of words and phrases for an effect. Sometimes, especially with longer phrases that contain a different key word each time, this is called parallelism. It has been a central part of poetry in many cultures. Many of the Psalms use this device as one of their unifying elements.

Example: I was glad; so very, very glad.

Half a league, half a league,

Half a league onward…

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon in front of them

Volley’d and thunder’d…

***REFRAIN:***

This is a common form of repetition in which one or more words, phrases, or lines are repeated regularly in a poem, usually at the end of each stanza. Sometimes the whole stanza is repeated like chorus in a song. Refrains are especially common in ballads, which are story poems that are meant to be sung.

Refrains are used to help the reader memorise the most important information in the poem and to emphasize an idea being repeated. It also creates a kind of music hence making the poem enjoyable.

**TYPES OF POEMS**

**Fixed Form**: A poem which follows a set pattern of *meter, rhyme scheme, stanza form,* and *refrain* (if thereis one), is called a *fixed form.*A partial listing of these fixed forms of poetry includes:

**Ballad:** The “story” of a ballad can be a wide range of subjects but frequently deals with folklore or popular legends. A ballad is a narrative poem written witha*xaxa, xbxb*rhyme scheme with frequent use of repetition and often including a refrain. They are written in a straight-forward manner, rarely with detail, but always with vivid simplicity and force. Most ballads are suitable for singing.

**Ballade:** a French form, it consists of three, seven or eight-line stanzas using no more than three recurrent rhymes, with an identical refrain after each stanza and a closing envoi repeating the rhymes of the last four lines of the stanza.

**Concrete Poetry:** also known as ***pattern poetry***or ***shaped verse***, these are poems that are printed on the page so that they form a recognizable outline related to the subject, thus conveying or extending the meaning of the words.

Concrete poetry emphasizes appearance on the page rather than the words; it is intended to be perceived as a visual whole and often cannot be effective when read aloud. If the message for example is love, the poem will be in shape of a heart, religion will be in shape of a cross.

**Epigram:** a brief, sometimes satiric, couplet or quatrain comprising a single thought or event with a clever or humorous turn of thought.

**Epitaph:** a brief poem or statement in memory of someone who is deceased, used as, or suitable for, a tombstone inscription; now, often clever or humorous and written without intent of actual funerary use.

**Haiku:** a Japanese form of poetry consisting of three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables. Haiku are very brief descriptions of nature that convey some hidden insight or essence of a moment or season. Traditionally, they contain either a direct or indirect reference to a season.Themysterioustaste of the form, however, lies more in its touch and tone than in its syllabic structure.

**Limerick:** a light or humorous poemwith a rhyme scheme of*aabba*.It’s named for a town in Ireland; the limerick was popularized by Edward. It always tells a story of a childhood experience.

**Lyric:** derived from the Greek word for lyre, lyric poetry was originally designed to be sung. One of the three main groups of poetry (the others being narrative and dramatic), lyric verse is the most frequently used modern form, including all poems in which the speaker’s passionate expression of a (usually single) emotional element dominates. Ranging from complex thoughts to the simplicity of playful sense of humor, the musical imagery of skillfully written lyric poetry induces in the reader’s mind the recall of similar emotional experiences in the poem and the reader feel part of it.

**Ode:** any of several stanzaic forms more complex than the lyric, with complicated rhyme schemes and irregular number of lines, generally of considerable length, always written in a style marked by a rich, intense expression of an important thought praising a person or object. “Ode to a Nightingale” is an example.

**Narrative poetry:** A narrative poem is one that tells a story, generally longer than the lyric styles of poetry because the poet needs to establish characters and a plot not the humour and musicality.

**Sonnet**: a fourteen line poem in iambic pentameter with anarranged rhyme scheme; its subject was traditionally love. Three variations are found frequently in English, although others are occasionally seen.

**Shakespearean sonnet:** a style of sonnet used by Shakespeare with a rhyme scheme of *ababcdcdefefgg*

Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day? **a**

Thou art more lovely and more temperate. **b**

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, **a**

And summer’s lease hath all too short a date. **b**

Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines, **c**

And often is his gold complexion dimmed; **d**

And every fair from fair sometimes declines, **c**

By chance or nature’s changing course untrimmed. **d**

But thy eternal summer shall not fade **e**

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow’st; **f**

Nor shall Death brag thou wanderest in his shade, **e**

When in eternal lines to time thou grow’st **f**

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, **g**

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. **g**

*Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day? By William Shakespeare*

**Italian (Petrarchan) Sonnet:** a form of sonnet made popular by Petrarch with a rhyme scheme of*abbaabbacdecde*or *cdcdcd*

**Spenserian sonnet:** analternative of the Shakespearean form in which the quatrains are linked with achain or interlocked rhyme scheme, *ababbcbccdcdee.*

**Sonnet Sequence:** a series of sonnets in which there is a recognizable unifying theme, while each retains its own structural independence. All of Shakespeare’s sonnets, for example, were part of a sequence.

**Triolet:** a poem or stanza of eight lines in which the first line is repeated as the fourth and seventh lines, and the second line as the eighth, with a rhyme scheme of *ABaAabAB*, as in Adelaide Crapsey’s “Song” (the capital letters in the rhyme scheme indicate the repetition of identical lines).

**SPEAKER AND VOICE IN A POEM**

The speaker of the poem is someone who tells us about what is going on in the poem (narrator in a narrative poem).The speaker can also mean the voice in the poem. The voice in a poem differs depending on what the poem is about. It can possibly be the voice of the poet, but more likely it is the voice of an invented character (person, animal, or thing) created by the poet. Some poems even have multiple speakers especially when there is a dialogue.

One of the first things to do when you read a poem is to look for clues that identify its speaker. Don’t imagine when the poet begins the poem with “I,” that it is the poet who is the speaker. It is always best to assume the speaker is imaginary like any other literary character and that the poet does not “exist” to avoid bias of “I”.

**A freedom song**   
  
Atieno washes dishes,  
Atieno plucks the chicken,  
Atieno gets up early,  
Beds her sacks down in the kitchen,  
Atieno eight years old,  
Atienoyo.  
  
Since she is my sister’s child  
Atieno needs no pay,  
While she works my wife can sit  
Sewing every sunny day:  
With her earnings I support  
Atienoyo.  
  
Atieno’s sly and jealous,  
Bad example to the kids  
Since she minds them, like a schoolgirl  
Wants their dresses, shoes and beads  
Atieno ten years old.  
Atienoyo.  
  
Now my wife has gone to study  
Atieno is less free.  
Don’t I keep her, school my own ones,  
Pay the party, union fee,  
All for progress: aren’t you grateful  
Atienoyo?  
  
Visitors need much attention,  
All the more when I work night.  
The girl spends too long at the market,  
Who will teach her what is right?  
Atieno is raising fourteen,  
Atienoyo.  
  
Atieno had a baby  
So we know that she is bad.  
Fifty fifty it may live  
And repeat the life she had  
Ending in post-partum bleeding,  
Atienoyo.  
  
Atieno’s soon replaced.  
Meat and sugar more than all  
She ate in such a narrow life  
Were lavished on her funeral.  
Atieno’s gone to glory,  
Atienoyo.  
  
By MajorieOludheMacgoye

In this poem we can say the speaker is the Uncle of Atieno because he says “Since she is my sister’s child…” It therefore becomes easy to understand this poem since we know who is speaking by associating the speaker with the message. It would be wrong to think the speaker is MajorieOlundheMacgoye even if he is the uncle we can’t be sure that is why we don’t have to mention the poet as the speaker at any time.

**POINT OF VIEW**

In general terms, point of view refers to the position from which something is seen.

The story has an ***autho****r*, a ***narrator*,** and***characters***, not to be confused with each other.

If the narrator and a character in the story are one and the same, you have a story told in ***first person.*** If they are separate, you have a story told in ***third person***. There are three different types of third person point of view depending on the amount of knowledge the narrator has about the inner feelings and thoughts of the characters.

The author’s point of view concentrates on the vantage point (a place from which something can be viewed.) of the speaker, or “teller” of the story or poem. This may be considered the poem’s “**voice**” This is also sometimes referred to as the **persona**.

**1st Person:** the speaker is a character in the story or poem and tells it from his/herPerspective (uses “I”). "I"; tells the story through his/her perception, and is at the same time a character in the story, but not always the main character. We can know the thoughts/feelings of the narrator (the "I") but no others. He/she is a participant in the story and must be present at all times.

**3rd Person limited**: the speaker is not part of the story, but tells about the other characters through the limited perceptions of one other person (As in play/drama). The only information we receive is what the characters say and do; cannot read anyone's mind, thoughts, and feelings. He or she is just like a camera, which cannot not show what is inside people and the perfumes they wear but only what is seen.

**3rd Person omniscient:** the speaker is not part of the story, but is able to “know” and describe what all characters are thinking. It employs a non-participant narrator and is capable of moving from place to place in the story and never reveals its source.

Here there is use of third person pronouns (he/she/they), not “I" except in dialogue. The narrator is all knowing, like God; can get more than one, often many characters' thoughts and feelings, as well as their actions and words.

**Third Person Limited Omniscient**

3rd person pronouns again, but perspective is limited to **ONE** character's thoughts, feelings, vantage point. Cannot know anything in story other than what the one character knows.

**Unreliable Narrator**

This narrator is not limited to one type **(1st or 3rd),** but is unreliable and conveys information to the reader of which he/she (the narrator) is not aware. This could be because the narrator is a young child, going insane, naïve, old and senile, or other reason.

In order to clearly understand the point of view, you should ask yourself the following questions:

Who is the narrator?

Does the narrator tell the story in first person or third person?

How much of the world can the narrator perceive (omniscient or limited)?

How does the vantage point of the narrator affect the meaning of the story?

How would the story change if the narrator changed?

**TONE:** This is the quality of the speaking voice. Tone is what our mind’s ear hears as we read the poem indicated by the diction used. Special adjectives create the tone of the poem through descriptive power of the poet. It is tone which creates our attitude towards the speaker, the message and the poet sometimes as well as the mood and atmosphere of the poem.

Tone can be objective or subjective.

Objective tone is impartial. It does not show any feelings for or against a topic; therefore, it is unbiased or neutral. Often objective tone avoids pronouns such as *I*and *you*, hence creating a formal tone.

Subjective tone is personal, biased, emotional, and often informal. This is the kind of tone used in complaints, quarrel, lamentations and insults.

**To his Coy Mistress**

Had we but world enough, and time,  
This coyness, lady, were no crime.  
We would sit down and think which way  
To walk, and pass our long love's day;  
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side  
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide  
Of Humber would complain. I would  
Love you ten years before the Flood;  
And you should, if you please, refuse  
Till the conversion of the Jews.  
My vegetable love should grow  
Vaster than empires, and more slow.  
An hundred years should go to praise  
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;  
Two hundred to adore each breast,  
But thirty thousand to the rest;  
An age at least to every part,  
And the last age should show your heart.  
For, lady, you deserve this state,  
Nor would I love at lower rate.  
  
But at my back I always hear  
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;  
And yonder all before us lie  
Deserts of vast eternity.  
Thy beauty shall no more be found,  
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound  
My echoing song; then worms shall try  
That long preserv'd virginity,  
And your quaint honour turn to dust,  
And into ashes all my lust.  
The grave's a fine and private place,  
But none I think do there embrace.  
  
Now therefore, while the youthful hue  
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,  
And while thy willing soul transpires  
At every pore with instant fires,  
Now let us sport us while we may;  
And now, like am'rous birds of prey,  
Rather at once our time devour,  
Than languish in his slow-chapp'd power.  
Let us roll all our strength, and all  
Our sweetness, up into one ball;  
And tear our pleasures with rough strife  
Thorough the iron gates of life.  
Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

By Andrew Marvell

**Attitude:**

According to the Cambridge Learner’s dictionary, attitude is defined as how you think or feel about something and how this makes you behave.E.g He has a very bad attitude to/towards work.

According to TheSage dictionary, attitude is a complex mental state involving beliefs and feelings and values and dispositions to act in certain ways. E.g He had the attitude that work is fun.

From the above two definitions we can conclude that attitude refers to someone’s feeling towards the speaker, subject and poet (if necessary). The speaker normally shows his/her attitude through the words used (tone) against or for the person or thing talked about.

Attitude can be positive or negative depending on the purpose/intention of the writer. The purpose of the writer may be to mock, ridicule, satirize, criticize, demean etc. in this case the tone will be negative. The poet may also want to praise, appreciate, motivate etc. in which the tone will be positive. Students should avoid describing attitude as positive or negative and stop there. They should specify the exact adjective that describes that negative/positive attitude.

**To understand attitude one should ask him/herself the following questions**

Is the author’s attitude towards what (s) he is writing similar to your attitude?

What is the *feeling* of the whole work and the writing/artist's craft?

Is it Joyful, Melancholy, Fatalistic, Angry, Peaceful, Scar, Mysterious?

Example: The following statements each express different attitudes about a shabby apartment.

Six different tones are used: optimistic, bitter, tolerant, sentimental, humorous, and objective.

1. This place may be shabby, but since both of my children were born while we lived here,

It has a special place in my heart.

*The tone is sentimental. “It has a special place in my heart,” expresses tender emotions*

*.*

2. This isn’t the greatest apartment in the world, but it’s not really that bad.

*The tone is tolerant. The words “not really that bad” show that the writer accepts the situation while recognizing that it could be better.*

3. If only there were some decent jobs out there, I wouldn’t be reduced to living in thismiserable dump.

*The tone is bitter. The writer resents a situation that forces him or her to live in a*

*“Miserabledump”*

4. This place does need some repairs, but I’m sure the landlord will be making improvements sometime soon.

*The tone is optimistic. The writer is expecting the apartment to be improved soon.*

5. When we move away, we’re planning to release three hundred cockroaches and tow mice, so we can leave the place exactly as we found it.

*The tone is humorous. The writer claims to be planning a comic revenge on the landlord by returning the apartment to the terrible condition it was in when the tenants moved in.*

6. This is the apartment we live in. It provides shelter.

*The tone is objective. The writer does not express feelings about the apartment. He simply states facts.*

**These are some of the adjectives used for tone/attitude**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| absurd  ambivalent  amused  angry  apathetic  arrogant  bitter  cheerful  comic  compassionate  complex  condescending  critical  cruel  cynical  depressed  detached  distressed  earnest  formal  gentle  hard  incredulous  indignant  intense  intimate  ironic  irreverent  joyous | |  | | --- | | silly, ridiculous | | undecided, having mixed emotions, unsure | | entertained, finding humor, expressed by a smile or laugh | | enraged, very mad, incensed, threatening or menacing | | lacking concern, showing little or no interest | | haughty, acting with false superiority | | resentful, having strong animosity or rancor | | jovial, happy, in good spirits | | humorous, funny | | sympathetic, having feeling for others, showing pity, empathy | | complicated, having many varying characteristics | | patronizing, stooping to the level of one’s inferiors | | disapproving | | causing suffering, causing pain | | scornful of the motives or virtues of others, bitterly mocking | | dejected, sad, unhappy, troubled | | uninvolved, having no interest or feelings, objective | | upset | | sincere, showing deep feeling, seriousness | | accepting rules, stiff, using textbook style, factual | | considerate, kind, mild, soft | | unfeeling, hard-hearted, unyielding | | doubtful, disbelieving, skeptical | | angry, angered by something unjust, mean, unworthy | | deeply felt, concentrated | | personal, close, deeply associated | | wry, an unexpected opposite meaning in words or events | | lacking respect , lacking reverence | | extremely happy | |

**More words to describe tone and attitude.**

1. accusatory-charging of wrong doing

2. apathetic-indifferent due to lack of energy or concern

3. awe-solemn wonder

4. bitter-exhibiting strong animosity as a result of pain or grief

5. cynical-questions the basic sincerity and goodness of people

6. Condescension; condescending-a feeling of superiority

7. callous-unfeeling, insensitive to feelings of others

8. contemplative-studying, thinking, reflecting on an issue

9. critical-finding fault

10. choleric-hot-tempered, easily angered

11. contemptuous-showing or feeling that something is worthless or lacks respect

12. caustic-intense use of sarcasm; stinging, biting

13. conventional-lacking spontaneity, originality, and individuality

14. disdainful-scornful

15. didactic-author attempts to educate or instruct the reader

16. derisive-ridiculing, mocking

17. earnest-intense, a sincere state of mind

18. erudite-learned, polished, scholarly

19. fanciful-using the imagination

20. Forthright-directly frank without hesitation

21. gloomy-darkness, sadness, rejection

22. haughty-proud and vain to the point of arrogance

23. indignant-marked by anger aroused by injustice

24. intimate-very familiar

25. judgmental-authoritative and often having critical opinions

26. jovial-happy

27. lyrical-expressing a poet’s inner feelings; emotional; full of images; song-like

28. matter-of-fact--accepting of conditions; not fanciful or emotional

29. mocking-treating with contempt or ridicule

30. morose-gloomy, sullen, surly, despondent

31. malicious-purposely hurtful

32. Objective-an unbiased view-able to leave personal judgments aside

33. optimistic-hopeful, cheerful

34. obsequious-polite and obedient in order to gain something

35. patronizing-air of condescension

36. pessimistic-seeing the worst side of things; no hope

37. quizzical-odd, eccentric, amusing

38. ribald-offensive in speech or gesture

39. reverent-treating a subject with honor and respect

40. ridiculing-slightly contemptuous banter; making fun of

41. reflective-illustrating innermost thoughts and emotions

42. sarcastic-sneering, caustic

43. sardonic-scornfully and bitterly sarcastic

44. satiric-ridiculing to show weakness in order to make a point, teach

45. sincere-without deceit or pretense; genuine

46. solemn-deeply earnest, tending toward sad reflection

47. Sanguineous -optimistic, cheerful

48. whimsical-odd, strange, fantastic; fun

**Brown Penny  
William Butler Yeats**  
I whispered, *'I am too young,'*  
And then, *'I am old enough'*;  
Wherefore I threw a penny  
To find out if I might love.  
*'Go and love, go and love, young man,  
If the lady be young and fair.'*  
Ah, penny, brown penny, brown penny,  
I am looped in the loops of her hair.  
  
O love is the crooked thing,  
There is nobody wise enough  
To find out all that is in it,  
For he would be thinking of love  
Till the stars had run away  
And the shadows eaten the moon.  
  
....Ah, penny, brown penny, brown penny,  
One cannot begin it too soon.

In the above example, the diction tells us clearly that the tone of the speaker is sad and bitter because she/he says “O love is the crooked thing...” because it cannot be understood by anyone. His attitude is contemptuous by trying to show that love has no value but simply to disturb the one thinking about it.

**MOOD:** It can be defined as the temporary state of feeling or the prevailing psychological state. In other words, the way someone feels at a particular moment.

When you wake up one morning and you don’t want to talk to anyone because you are angry sometimes for a reason and sometimes for no reason, then that is the mood you are in.

Unlike attitude and tone, mood can be identified through facial expressions such as sadness, happiness, and sorrow. Mood is therefore the atmosphere that is prevailing at the moment (a unique but indescribable quality surrounding a person or thing.)

For example the atmosphere of defeat surrounded the soldiers as they returned to their home country after the war. From this example their mood is a defeated mood which may result into a gloomy one as well as defeat creates sadness. Therefore this means that the same mood can be described using different adjectives which are synonyms.

**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

This refers to Language used to describe things in a non-literal way but through inference, association and comparison. Figurative language describes one thing in terms of something else;

It is very common in everyday conversation as well as in the written word to create vivid impression and beauty (Aesthetic component of literature). It includes as simile, metaphor, personification, and symbol etc.

**To understand figurative language, ask yourself…?**

What kinds of comparisons are made that add layers to the meaning of the poem or story?

***Figures of speech include:***

**Similes**

A simile is a more direct comparison of two things and a metaphor is an indirect comparison

**Well-known similes are:**

“Cute **as** a kitten,” comparing the way someone looks to the way a kitten looks

“**As** busy **as** a bee” comparing someone’s level of energy to a fast-flying bee

"**As** comfortable **as** a bug in a rug" comparing someone who is very comfortable to how comfortable a bug can be in a rug

"As happy as a clam" comparing someone's happiness to the contentment of a clam

"Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get." comparing the uncertainty of life to the uncertainty of choosing a chocolate from a box

"as active as a monkey" implying someone can move as well as a monkey does

"as black as coal" comparing the color of something dark to the very-dark coal color

"as blind as a bat" indicating that the person cannot see any better than a bat can

My love is like a red, red rose.

You were as brave as a lion.

They fought like cats and dogs.

He is as funny as a barrel of monkeys.

This house is as clean as a whistle.

He is as strong as an ox.

Your explanation is as clear as mud.

Watching the show was like watching grass grow.

That is as easy as shooting fish in a barrel.

This contract is as solid as the ground we stand on.

That guy is as nutty as a fruitcake.

Don’t just sit there like a bump on a log.

That went over like a lead balloon.

They are as different as night and day.

She is as thin as a toothpick.

Last night, I slept like a log.

This dress is perfect because it fits like a glove.

They wore jeans, which made me stand out like a sore thumb.

My love for you is a deep as the ocean.

I am so thirsty, that my throat is as dry as a bone.

As bold as brass

**Hockey --by Rachel**

Hockey is like reading

You get into it and then you never

want to stop

You feel like you're in a different world.

Hockey is like school

You have to do your work and

you have to practice or you will get an "F"

Hockey is like math

Simile: Your eyes are like sunshine.

Simile: He eats like a pig.

Simile: You are like a rock.

Simile: You are as happy as a clown.

Simile: He is as stubborn as a mule.

Simile: The world is like a stage.

Simile: The noise is like music to my ears.

Simile: Her heart is like gold. Metaphor:

**If We Must Die**   
**by Claude McKay**  
  
If we must die--let it not be *like hogs*  
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,  
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,  
Making their mock at our accursed lot.  
If we must die--oh, let us nobly die,  
So that our precious blood may not be shed  
In vain; then even the monsters we defy  
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!  
Oh, Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;  
Though far outnumbered, let us show us brave,  
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!  
What though before us lies the open grave?  
*Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,*  
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

**Metaphor** also compares two things, but it does so more directly **WITHOUT** using as or like. Eg. The shop was a little gold-mine.

Metaphor: You are my sunshine.

Metaphor: He is a pig.

Metaphor: You are a rock.

Metaphor: You are a clown.

Metaphor: He is a mule.

Metaphor: The world is a stage.

Metaphor: The noise is music to my ears

Her heart is gold.

He’s a diamond in the rough. *This means he is better than he appears and maybe needs more experiences or training to show his true nature.*

She is such an airhead. *Airhead implies she is not smart or doesn’t think well.*

Time is a thief. *There is not enough time to do what you want.*

The world is my oyster. *This can mean the speaker is positive about his experiences and is going to do well in life.*

You are a couch potato. *This refers to someone who sits and does nothing.*

Example:

I LOVE YOU MY GENTLE ONE

I love you, my gentle one;

My love is the fresh milk in the rubindi

Which you drank on the wedding day;

My love is the butter we were smeared with

To seal fedility into our hearts.

You are the cattle-bird’s egg

For those who saw you are wealthy;

You are the papyrus reed of the lake,

Which they pull out with both hands.

And I sing for you with tears

Because you possess my heart:

I love you my gentle one

By Raphael Bitamazire.

The above poem is a very good example of how metaphors are employed in a poem to create the desired effect; most often to emphasize through comparison. Raphael Bitamazire has used several metaphors to show how much the speaker loves the one being praised in this poem. He/she compares his/her love with fresh milk in the ***rubindi*** (always used during traditional marriages) to emphasize her beauty. He/she compares him/her with a catle-bird’s egg which is believed to bring luck in form of wealth by the one who sees it because it is very rare and beautiful as well. Compares him/her with the papyrus reed of the lake belived to be very firm in the ground to uproot meaning this lover is not easy to get. Etc.

**EXTENDED METAPHOR** is a metaphor that is extended throughout a majority of the poem or throughout the entire poem. For instance the whole poem’s meaning is similar to a historical period, and idea like love is compared to a flower which is beautiful when still fresh and later fades, dies and rots. In this case all the ideas about love are the same as the stages of a flower.

Metaphors are effective because they often help to put *a specific picture/image in our minds.* They often *arouse strong emotional feelings*, for the reader can then relate to the author’s/speaker’s words. A metaphor has a similar effect as that of a simile because *the all create mental pictures* (imagery) and also make the *work more beautiful*.

**AM A SWORD --by Alex**

I am a sword,

Sharper than a tongue

Nobody can defeat me,

Because I am a sword,

I cannot be hurt by what people say

About me,

I will not show my anger

Against

Someone else.

**IMAGERY:** Language that appeals to the senses. Most images are visual, but they can also appeal to the senses of sound, touch, taste, or smell. It is the use of vivid language to generate ideas and/or evoke mental images, not only of the visual sense, but of sensation and emotion as well. Imagery is important because it helps us to concretely create pictures of imaginary things and feel close connection with the poem and its meaning.

Examples:

* Then with cracked hands that achedfrom labor in the weekday weather . . . ***from “Those Winter Sundays”***

In the above example, ***cracked hands*** create a visual imagery showing how much the hand has experienced physical damage.

***Ached from labour*** creates a tactile imagery emphasizing the pain resulting from touch.

• Sight: Smoke mysteriously puffed out from the clown’s ears.

• Sound: Tom placed his ear tightly against the wall; he could hear a faint but distinct thump, thump, thump…

• Touch: The hand touched in the bag and suddenly something cold and smoth ran across it.

• Taste: A salty tear ran across onto her lips.

• Smell: The aroma of fried rice and chicken hit her nostril after two days of starvation.

* Synesthesia: An attempt to fuse different senses by describing one kind of sense impression in words normally used to describe another.

Example: The sound of her voice was sweet.

Example: a loud aroma, a velvety smile

**Auguries of Innocence**  
William Blake  
  
TO see a world in a grain of sand,   
And a heaven in a wild flower,   
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,   
And eternity in an hour.

**By…Louis Simpson (full poem)**

The time is after dinner. Cigarettes

Glow on the lawn:

Glasses begin to tinkle; TV sets

Have been turned on.

The moon is brimming like a glass of beer

Above the town.

And love keeps her appointments – “Harry’s here!”

“I’ll be right down.”

But the pale stranger in the furnished room

Lies on his back

Looking at paper roses, how they bloom.

And ceilings crack.

**Question:** Explain the imagery in this poem

From the above poem, many images have been created to apeal to the reader’s senses. The very first line creates an imagery connected with taste by using the words “***after dinner***.” This is followed by a visual imagery of the burning Cigarettes on the grass, and then the auditory imagery of the TV sets sound and people conversing.

**I MET A THIEF**

On the beach on the coast,

Under the idle whispering coconut towers,

Before he growling, foaming, waves,

I met a thief, who guessed I had

An innocent heart for her to steal.

She took my hand and led me under

The intimate cashew boughs which shaded

The downy grass and peeping weeds

I gazed: her hair was like wool of a mountain sheep,

Her eyes a pair of brown black beans floating in milk,

Juicy and round as plantain shoots

Her legs, arms and neck;

And like wine gourds her pillowy breasts;

Her throat uttered fresh banana juice:

Matching her face –smooth and banana-ripe.

I touched – but long before I even tasted,

My heart had flown from me into her breast;

And then she went – High and South-

And left my carcass roasting in the fire she’d lit.

**By A. S. Bukenya**

In “I Met a Thief”, A.S.Bukenya has created a vivid image in the first stanza by describing the scene on the beach which makes the reader who has ever been on the beach remember such romantic moments or imagine such a scene for the one who has not been there. In the second stanza the description of the action creates a tactile imagery; the feelings created by her holding the hand of the speaker and the visual appearance of the lady he is describing.

**PERSONIFICATION:** A figure of speech in which something nonhuman or inanimate (a creature, idea, or object) is given human characteristics or feelings. Ex: “The moon smiled at me.”

When discussing poetry and identifying personification, try to identify **what** is being personified, as well as **how** the poem personifies it.

***Examples***:

“The trees moaned the death of the old man.”

In this example, human attributes/characteristics are given to an object (tree) because we know trees don’t moan bu human beings do.

“The days crept by slowly, sorrowfully.”

In this example days are given human qualities of slow movement and human emotions of sorrow to emphasize how bad the day was.

“The wind stood up and whistled on his finger…”

Here the wind is performing human action of whistling and more particularly on his fingers. It is obvious that wind has no fingers but by personifying it this way one imagines the sound of wind from all conners.

From “Ninki” By Shirley Jackson

“Ninki was by this time irritated beyond belief by the general air of incompetence exhibited in the kitchen, and she went into the living room and got Shax, ***who is extraordinarily lazy and never catches his own chipmunks, but who is, at least, a cat, and preferable***, Ninki saw clearly, to a man with a gun.

In the above example, the words which are bold show a cat given human qualities of laziness and using the pronoun “**who**” and “**his**” most commonly used with humans clearly shows this cat is given human qualities.

**LETTER FROM A CONTRACT WORKER BY ANTONIO JACINTO**

I wanted to write you a letter

my love,

a letter that would tell

of this desire

to see you

of this fear

of losing you

of this more than benevolence that I feel

of this indefinable ill that pursues me

of this yearning to which I live in total surrender …

I wanted to write you a letter

my love,

a letter of intimate secrets,

a letter of memories of you,

of you

of your lips red as henna

of your hair black as mud

of your eyes sweet as honey

of your breasts hard as wild orange

of your lynx gait

and of your caresses

such that I can find no better here …

I wanted to write you a letter

my love,

that would recall the days in our haunts

our nights lost in the long grass

that would recall the shade falling on us from the plum

trees

the moon filtering through the endless palm trees

that would recall the madness

of our passion

and the bitterness

of our separation …

I wanted to write you a letter

my love,

that you would not read without sighing

that you would hide from papa Bombo

that you would withhold from mama Kieza

that you would reread without the coldness

of forgetting

a letter to which in all Kilombo

no other would stand comparison …

I wanted to write you a letter

my love

a letter that would be brought to you by the passing wind

a letter that the cashews and coffee trees

the hyenas and buffaloes

the alligators and grayling

could understand

so that if the wind should lose it on the way

the beasts and plants

with pity for our sharp suffering

from song to song

lament to lament

gabble to gabble

would bring you pure and hot

the burning words

the sorrowful words of the letter

I wanted to write to you …

I wanted to write you a letter …

But oh my love, I cannot understand

why it is, why, why, why it is, my dear

that you cannot read

and I – Oh the hopelessness! – cannot write!

**QUESTIONS:**

* What is the subject matter of this poem?
* Identify and explain the similes in the poem.
* Explain the imagery used by the poet in “letter to a contract worker”
* What is the importance of personification used in this poem?
* With examples discuss the themes in this poem.

The above poem is very rich in language containing most of the figures of speech. To be specific to personification, the second last stanza directly illustrates this technique where creatures are given human feelings.

“…so that if the wind should lose it on the way

the beasts and plants

with pity for our sharp suffering

from song to song…”

In this excerpt, wind has taken the job of a post man who has to deliver the letter to the recipient. The beasts and plants are given feelings of pity all intended to exaggerate the urgency of the message in the letter.

**THE WIND by James Stephens**

The wind stood up and gave a shout.

He whistled on his fingers and

Kicked the weathered leaves about

And thumped the branches with his hands

And said that he’d kill and kill,

And so he will and so he will.

In “The Wind”, Stephens has used an extended metaphor to tell about the destructive effects of wind. He has also used personification to drive the point home. By giving the wind human qualities like standing up, shouting, whistling on his fingers, kicking, thumping, hands and speaking, we can easily tell that this poem is not just having a surface meaning but there is a deeper and hidden meaning of destruction and rage.

**Metonymy:** A figure of speech in which a person, place, or thing is referred to by something closely associated with it.

Example: The White House stated today that... Example: The Crown reported today that...

**Synecdoche**: Indicating a person, object, etc. by letting only a certain part represent the whole.

*Example:* All hands on deck.

**Pathetic falacy**

According to the wikipedia free encyclopedia, the phrase pathetic falacy is a literary term for the attributing of human emotions and conduct to all aspects within nature. It is a kind of personification that is found in poetic writing when , for example, clouds seem sullen, when leaves dance, when dogs laugh ore when rocks seem indefferent.

**IRONY**

Irony is a technique often used to mock and ridicule human follies/ mistakes such as greed, corruption, immorality etc. by using the opposites. Ask yourself; is the writer's meaning different (often the opposite) from what is actually stated, actually happening or actually known to be?

Irony itself is a very important element in fiction because it drives home *the truth that human life is unpredictable*. In fiction, just as in life, our words and our actions do not always have the meanings or results we expect them to have.

**Verbal**

What is spoken or said (the words) is different/ opposite from what is meant. For example when student has got poor marks and the teacher says “Keep it up, that is a wonderful mark”

**Dramatic**

This is when one or more of the characters are speaking and the audience realizes that they are more informed than the character(s) him/herself.

Do the audience/some characters know more than another character?

Is one or more character(s) speaking/acting without knowledge others have, thus creating a double meaning?

**Situational**

This is the kind of irony in which the writer shows a difference between expected result of some action or situation and its actual result. For example in “The Devil’s Disciple” by … Richard whose head is in the noose, comes out free at the end of the play.

Another example of situational irony would occur if a professional pickpocket had his own pocket picked just as he was in the act of picking someone else's pocket. The irony is generated by the surprise recognition by the audience of a reality in contrast with expectation or appearance, while another audience, victim, or character puts confidence in the appearance as reality (in this case, the pickpocket doesn't expect his own pocket to be picked). The surprise recognition by the audience often produces a comic effect, making irony often funny (Harris).

Do the events have a double meaning...the meaning of the situation as it actually happened versus the situation that we expected to happen or would normally happen?

Does a set of circumstances turn out differently from what is anticipated or considered appropriate?

Is the action/situation surprising or unexpected? Is there unexplained coincidence in the story?

Is there a surprise ending?

**Cosmic/irony of fate**

A form of situational irony) is the universe itself, the cosmos, ironic?

Is the situation unjust to a person or group of people in a manner beyond their control?

Is a good person in a bad situation due to circumstances beyond his/her control in such a way unfair/inappropriate that this person must suffer?

Is this person a victim of fate?

Cosmic or irony of fate is a mode of expression, through words or events, conveying a reality different from and usually opposite to appearance or expectation. Writers may say the opposite of what they mean, create a reversal between expectation and its fulfillment, or give the audience knowledge that a character lacks, making the character's words have meaning to the audience not perceived by the character. Irony is the most common and most efficient technique of the satirist, because it is an instrument of truth, provides wit and humor, and is usually a least obliquely critical, in that it deflates, scorns, or attacks (Harris).

The importance of irony in modern art and literature and, more latterly in the intelectural sciences and in culture generally, can hardly be overestimated. For some writers the cultivation of irony is the most essential qualification for any thought, any art or literature or social or political theory to be truly modern. Charles Lemert refers to irony as discursive form of post modern social theory. He claims that irony is the only and necessary attitude for theroy today, and that postmodernism is an ironic general theory. But, other writers have noted the cancerous growth in the use of irony in art and literature. We have associated irony easily with humour, but we have to recognize irony can be bitter and even tragic. It corrodes and undermines pretensions, unmasks appearances, and deconstructs

**ONCE UPON A TIME BY GABRIEL OKARA**

Once upon a time, son,

they used to laugh with their hearts

and laugh with their eyes:

but now they only laugh with their teeth,

while their ice-block-cold eyes

search behind my shadow.

There was a time indeed

they used to shake hands with their hearts:

but that’s gone, son.

Now they shake hands without hearts

while their left hands search

my empty pockets.

‘Feel at home!’ ‘Come again’:

they say, and when I come

again and feel

at home, once, twice,

there will be no thrice-

for then I find doors shut on me.

So I have learned many things, son.

I have learned to wear many faces

like dresses – homeface,

officeface, streetface, hostface,

cocktailface, with all their conforming smiles

like a fixed portrait smile.

And I have learned too

to laugh with only my teeth

and shake hands without my heart.

I have also learned to say,’Goodbye’,

when I mean ‘Good-riddance’:

to say ‘Glad to meet you’,

without being glad; and to say ‘It’s been

nice talking to you’, after being bored.

But believe me, son.

I want to be what I used to be

when I was like you. I want

to unlearn all these muting things.

Most of all, I want to relearn

how to laugh, for my laugh in the mirror

shows only my teeth like a snake’s bare fangs!

So show me, son,

how to laugh; show me how

I used to laugh and smile

once upon a time when I was like you.

By Gabriel Okara.

In Once Upon a time Son, there are a lot of ironies demonstrated by the way people just pretend before others to feel socially accepted while inside them they are not who they seem to be on the surface. Rather than leaughing with their hearts, they now simply laugh with their teeth, they nolonger shake hands with their hearts but as they do, their left hands are pick pocketing the victim and they now wear many faces meaning they are not real, instead they are “men in masks”.

**Building The Nation**   
  
Today I did my share  
In building the nation.  
I drove a Permanent Secretary  
To an important, urgent function  
In fact, to a luncheon at the Vic.  
  
The menu reflected its importance  
Cold bell beer with small talk,  
Then fried chicken with niceties  
Wine to fill the hollowness of the laughs  
Ice-cream to cover the stereotype jokes  
Coffee to keep the PS awake on the return journey.  
  
I drove the Permanent Secretary back.  
He yawned many times in the back of the car  
Then to keep awake, he suddenly asked,  
Did you have any lunch friend?  
  
I replied looking straight ahead  
And secretly smiling at his belated concern  
That I had not, but was slimming!  
Upon which he said with a seriousness  
That amused more than annoyed me,  
Mwananchi, I too had none!  
I attended to matters of state.  
Highly delicate diplomatic duties you know,  
And friend, it goes against my grain,  
Causes me stomach ulcers and wind.  
Ah, he continued, yawning again,  
The pains we suffer in building the nation!  
  
So the PS had ulcers too!  
My ulcers I think are equally painful  
Only they are caused by hunger,  
Not sumptuous lunches!  
  
So two nation builders  
Arrived home this evening  
With terrible stomach pains  
The result of building the nation -  
- Different ways.

By Henry Muwanga Barlow

In the above poem if you can answer the question; who really built the nation? You will exactly find the irony. The P.S ulcers are a result of eating much which is dramatic irony because the reader knows very well that the P.S is just pretending when he yawns and complains of ulcers.

**Paradox:** A statement in which a seeming contradiction may reveal an unexpected truth orit’s a statement that seems to be self-contradicting but, in fact, is true. Paradox is a form of irony.

Example: The hurrier I go the behinder I get.

The shorter the man the higher he jumps.

Parting is such a sweet sorrow (William Shakespeare)

Standing is more tiring than walking.

**“…**Water,water, every where,

And all the boards did shrink;

Water, water, everywhere,

Nor any drop to drink.

From “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

In the above extract, it is paradoxical that there is water everywhere and yet the people are dying of thirst believed to have been caused by the killing of the albatros. It sounds impossible that there can be water and people die of thirst.

**The Fool**  
  
Since the wise men have not spoken, I speak that am only a fool;  
A fool that hath loved his folly,  
Yea, more than the wise men their books or their counting houses or their quiet homes,  
Or their fame in men's mouths;  
A fool that in all his days hath done never a prudent thing,  
Never hath counted the cost, nor recked if another reaped

By PadraicPearse

In “The Fool” considering his/her ideas and words, he/she must be the most wise because he/she is able to identify his follies and of those who consider themselves wise.

**Oxymoron:** A combination of two words that appear to contradict each other.

Example: a pointless point of view; bittersweet, cold-fire, Fiend-angelic, sweet-sorrow from Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare.

**Contrast**: Closely arranged things with strikingly different characteristics.

*Example:* He was dark, sinister, and cruel; she was radiant, pleasant, and kind.

**The Road Not Taken**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,   
And sorry I could not travel both   
And be one traveler, long I stood   
And looked down one as far as I could   
To where it bent in the undergrowth; 5   
  
Then took the other, as just as fair,   
And having perhaps the better claim   
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;   
Though as for that, the passing there   
Had worn them really about the same, 10   
  
And both that morning equally lay   
In leaves no step had trodden black.   
Oh, I marked the first for another day!   
Yet knowing how way leads on to way   
I doubted if I should ever come back. 15   
  
I shall be telling this with a sigh   
somewhere ages and ages hence:   
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,   
I took the one less traveled by,   
And that has made all the difference.

**Robert Frost. 1875**

This poem compares two roads and the traveller has to choose which one to take. The two roads are somehow alike that is why the traveller found it hard to choose. This is directly related to life in which you have several choices which all seem good hence creating a dilema for one to choose and most often those who think hard end up choosing the wrong side going agains the instinct. The traveller in this poem however decided to choose the one less travelled to divert from common knowledge. One can say this poem presents the choice between heaven and hell as the bible says the road to hell is very wide and the one to heaven is narrow and thorny making people to choose the wide one leading them to hell.

**Rhetorical Question:** A question solely for effect, which does not require an answer. By the implication the answer is obvious. No reply is expected because the question takes for granted only one possible answer; it is a means of achieving an emphasis stronger than a direct statement. Example: Could I but guess the reason for that look?

**Example**: O, Wind,

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

"Shall I wasting in despair / Die because a lady's fair?" The lover of Suckling's

This question has already decided the answer is no.

**Still I Rise**   
  
You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.  
  
Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.  
  
Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.  
  
Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.  
Weakened by my soulful cries.  
  
Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own back yard.  
  
You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.  
  
Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?  
  
Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.  
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.

Maya Angelou

In “Still I rise”, Maya Angelou asks many rhetoric questions simply to emphasize her pride and determination, not to get an answer.

“...Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?....”

In relation to emphasizing, she also uses repetition at the end of the poem to drive make it clear that she is serious about the subject she is discussing.

**SYMBOLISM:** This refers to something, such as an object, person, situation, or action, in a literary work which stands for or represents another thing and yet maintaining its own meanings. It is When a person, place, thing, or event that has meaning in itself also represents, or stands for, something else.

Symbols are not only objects but characters in a work of literature can also be symbols or represent an idea, belief, object etc. For example Tumbo a character in “Betrayal in the City” by Francis Imbuga is a symbol of corruption. Desdemona in “Othello” by William Shakespeare is a symbol of innocence.

Symbols can be ***universal/ conventional***where by it is understood generally such as the Cross for Christianity, the Crescent for Islam as used by the Red cross and Red crescent, the flag which every country should have is a symbol of patriotism, the red rose as a symbol of love etc.

Symbols that are not universal are sometimes hard to interpret because some of them are culturally attached that some cultures may not have them. For example back cloth among the Baganda in Uganda may not be understood in Europe and Asia as they may have never even seen how it looks and what it is used for.

**Ask yourself…**

What concrete, specific objects have been used to represent abstract ideas?

What colors, names, settings, recurring objects have been referred to?

What ideas do these represent?

The rose love

Seasons human “seasons” of birth (such as youth, maturity, and old age)

Spring rebirth

Dove peace

Flag patriotism

**EXAMPLE:**

**Piano and Drums**

When at break of day at a riverside  
I hear the jungle drums telegraphing  
the mystic rhythm, urgent, raw  
like bleeding flesh, speaking of  
primal youth and the beginning  
I see the panther ready to pounce  
the leopard snarling about to leap  
and the hunters crouch with spears poised;  
  
And my blood ripples, turns torrent,  
topples the years and at once I’m  
in my mother’s laps a suckling;  
at once I’m walking simple  
paths with no innovations,  
rugged, fashioned with the naked  
warmth of hurrying feet and groping hearts  
in green leaves and wild flowers pulsing.  
  
Then I hear a wailing piano  
solo speaking of complex ways in  
tear-furrowed concerto;  
of faraway lands  
and new horizons with  
coaxing diminuendo, counterpoint,  
crescendo. But lost in the labyrinth  
of its complexities, it ends in the middle  
of a phrase at a daggerpoint.  
  
And I lost in the morning mist  
of an age at a riverside keep  
wandering in the mystic rhythm  
of jungle drums and the concerto.

In this poem, “Piano and Drums” there are two major symbols which stand for communication and differences in culture. The piano is said to be wailing and solo speaking of complex ways meaning its message is hard to understand while the drums communicate in a mystic rhythm showing its connection with the spirit world hence revered. It is alos not just wailing but telegraphing. Its message is also urgent and raw like fresh bleeding which calls the attention of the one hearing it to act immediately. The piano must be foreign to the speaker and the drums are familia and easy to interprete.

***Allusion*** is a reference to another literary or artistic work or cultural icon/event. The purpose of an allusion is to recognize and respond to something which we know well because allusion gives us a fuller understanding of one thing by helping us to see it in comparison with something else we may know better.

An allusion can call to the reader’s remembrance of events, feelings and actions of what they know and relate to the poem.There fore allusion requires a wide knowledge of the world so that it is easy to relate. Students should be careful not to bring their own associations not in the poem because it will make them lose the meaning.

Frequent, allusions are made to the Bible, Shakespeare, and historical events such as the world war, presidents of countries like Napoleone of France, Abraham lincoln of the US, and great speeches like Maritin Luther Jr. “I Have a Dream” etc.

It is important to differentiate between allusion and quoting a person. In quoting we use the exact words of the speaker or writer while in allusion we may indirectly mention or use or own words directly relating to the historical event, famous person or literary work. E.g ‘’Pilgrim’s Progress” by Bunyan which alludes to a Christian journey.

Authors use allusions to borrow authority, emotion or reputation for their work. An author, who references Shakespeare, is utilizing Shakespeare’s established reputation to give credence to their work. If an author needs to portray betrayal in a literary work, they can do this quite economically with a reference to Caesar and Brutus.

**Example of allusion**

**ITHACA**When you set out on your journey to Ithaca,  
pray that the road is long,  
full of adventure, full of knowledge.  
The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,  
the angry Poseidon -- do not fear them:  
You will never find such as these on your path,  
if your thoughts remain lofty, if a fine  
emotion touches your spirit and your body.  
The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,  
the fierce Poseidon you will never encounter,  
if you do not carry them within your soul,  
if your soul does not set them up before you.  
  
Pray that the road is long.  
That the summer mornings are many, when,  
with such pleasure, with such joy  
you will enter ports seen for the first time;  
stop at Phoenician markets,  
and purchase fine merchandise,  
mother-of-pearl and coral, amber, and ebony,  
and sensual perfumes of all kinds,  
as many sensual perfumes as you can;  
visit many Egyptian cities,  
to learn and learn from scholars.  
  
Always keep Ithaca on your mind.  
To arrive there is your ultimate goal.  
But do not hurry the voyage at all.  
It is better to let it last for many years;  
and to anchor at the island when you are old,  
rich with all you have gained on the way,  
not expecting that Ithaca will offer you riches.  
  
Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage.  
Without her you would have never set out on the road.  
She has nothing more to give you.  
  
And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not deceived you.  
Wise as you have become, with so much experience,  
you must already have understood what these Ithaca’s mean.

**C.P. Cavafy**

This poem alludes to the story in an epic poem told by Homer called“Odysseus” in which a king by the name Odyseus is believed to have defeated the gods. He sets out on a journey from his home land Ithaca to a Trojan war by sea and encounters a dangerous tide, gets losts several times due to the annoyed psydone- god of the sea but finally arrive home after the war which has taken more than a decade only to finds people have betrayed him and want to marry his wife and become kings hoping he had died long ago.

**Allegory**: A representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning. Sometimes it can be a single word or phrase, such as the name of a character or place. Often, it is a symbolic narrative that has not only a literal meaning, but a larger one understood only after reading the entire story or poem

**EXAMPLES**: “Animal farm” by George Orwell which is an allegory of the Russian revolution in which dictatorship, mudder and betrayal were the order of the day.

Pilgrim’s progress is a story by John Bunyan an English writer whose story is about a Chritian’s journey to heaven leaving behind his wife and children and meeting a lot of trials. He is so much burdened by his sins which he believes have been made aware to him by a book he was reading (Bible). On his way, his is accompanied by a fellow who quits when Chritian meets a maddy place and all his sins remain there and is now confidenct he will reach heaven.

***The presentation of an abstract idea through more concrete means;***

**Traditional allegory** is a narrative with at least two levels of meaning; the first is a surface story line, a complete, coherent, but basic plot. Underlying this plot is a second, deeper level of meaning, which may be religious, moral, political, personal, or satiric.

Allegory attempts to create interest both in the primary story with its characters, events, and setting, and in the ideas and significance the story conveys. To this end, **personification is a common device in allegory;** characters and places are often named after qualities or ideas the author wishes to represent.

**The characters, settings, and events can be fictitious or historical,** but they are used to represent meanings independent of the action in the primary or “surface” story. Allegories do not need to be entire narratives, and non-allegorical narratives can contain allegorical characters or elements. **Some critics consider allegory to be extended metaphor**, which says one thing but means another

It is important to note the **difference between allegory and symbolism**. Both attempt to suggest other levels of meaning by presenting abstract ideas through concrete images, but allegory makes a structure of ideas the controlling influence in the work. A **symbol**is an object, person or event which stands for another notldirecty; in **allegory**, the surface story is often the representation of the real event, situation or period of the hidden meaning.

**THE SECOND COMING**  
  
Turning and turning in the widening gyre   
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;   
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;   
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,   
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere   
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;   
The best lack all conviction, while the worst   
Are full of passionate intensity.  
  
Surely some revelation is at hand;   
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.   
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out   
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi   
Troubles my sight: a waste of desert sand;   
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,   
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,   
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it   
Wind shadows of the indignant desert birds.   
The darkness drops again but now I know   
That twenty centuries of stony sleep   
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,   
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,   
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

William Butler Yeats

**MEANING OF THE POEM**

**Denotation**: The dictionary definition of a word; its literal meaning apart from any associations or connotations. Students must exercise caution when beginning to use a thesaurus, since often the words that are clustered together may share a *denotative meaning*, but not a *connotative* one, and the substitution of a word can sometimes destroy the mood, and even the meaning, of a poem.

**Connotation**: The emotional, psychological or social overtones of a word; its implications and associations apart from its literal meaning. E.g

**THE WIND by James Stephens.**

The wind stood up and gave a shout.

He whistled on his fingers and

Kicked the weathered leaves about

And thumped the branches with his hands

And said that he’d kill and kill,

And so he will and so he will.

**Subject matter**

The subject matter of a poem is the skeleton of the poem; a summary of what the poem is generally about including your personal interpretation. The subject matter of a poem is its plot when compared to drama and fiction.

In order to understand subject matter, you should ask yourself what is the poem about?

Is the meaning at surface level or hidden?

Is there one meaning or two (the surface and hidden)?

Does each stanza talk about a different situation or it is a continous flow?

**Theme**

Theme is a central message, concern, or insight into life expressed through a literary work. It can be expressed by one or two sentence statement about human beings or about life. A story’s “theme” is the overall meaning the reader derives from it. There’s no one “correct” theme, but some are more likely than others. In the same work there can be more than one theme, sometimes in poetry each stanza can have its own theme.

A theme may be stated directly or implied (got through close connection and association of what is not directly said in a poem). If it is indirect, its interpretation uncovers as one reads and analyses the work of literature.

While a writer may state the theme directly, more often theme is only suggested and requires analysis and thought to be brought out. The theme of a work sometimes is a statement about life, but it often simply is the raising of an important question for which the writer gives no ready answers**.**

To understand theme, ask yourself the question below:

What are the story’s ideas?

What is Author’s attitude towards those ideas?

What is Author's "statement" about those ideas?

What is the story’s message or main point?

What is your attitude?

**Example in a poem**

**IF**  
Ruyard Kipling  
  
If you can keep your head when all about you   
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;   
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,   
But make allowance for their doubting too;   
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,   
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,   
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,   
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;  
  
If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;   
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;   
If you can meet with triumph and disaster   
And treat those two imposters just the same;   
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken   
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,   
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,   
And stoop and build 'em up with wornout tools;  
  
If you can make one heap of all your winnings   
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,   
And lose, and start again at your beginnings   
And never breath a word about your loss;   
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew   
To serve your turn long after they are gone,   
And so hold on when there is nothing in you   
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on";  
  
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,   
Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch;   
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;   
If all men count with you, but none too much;   
If you can fill the unforgiving minute   
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run - a  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,   
And - which is more - you'll be a Man my son

**THE COLD WITHIN**

In black and bitter cold.

Each one possessed a stick of wood,

Or so the story's told.

Their dying fire in need of logs,

The first woman held hers back

For on the faces around the fire,

She noticed one was black.

The next man looking cross the way

Saw one not of his church,

And couldn't bring himself to give

The fire his stick of birch.

The third man sat in tattered clothes;

He gave his coat a hitch.

Why should his log be put to use

To warm the idle rich?

The rich man just sat back and thought

Of the wealth he had in store.

And how to keep what he had earned

From the lazy poor.

The black man's face bespoke revenge

As the fire passed from his sight,

For all he saw in his stick of wood

Was a chance to spite the white.

And the last man of this forlorn group

Didnaught except for gain.

Giving only to those who gave

Was how he played the game.

The logs held tight in death's still hands

Was proof of human sin.

They didn't die from the cold without,

They died from the cold within.

**DRAMA**

**INTRODUCTION:**Drama refers to the imitation of human action through characters/ actors who impersonate through dialogue, costume etc.

**PLOT STRUCTURE**

The plot must be “a whole,” with a beginning, middle, and end. The beginning, called by modern critics the incentive moment, must start the cause-and-effect chain but not be dependent on anything outside the compass of the play (i.e., its causes are downplayed but its effects are stressed). The middle, or climax, must be caused by earlier incidents and itself cause the incidents that follow it (i.e., its causes and effects are stressed). The end, or resolution, must be caused by the preceding events but not lead to other incidents outside the compass of the play (i.e., its causes are stressed but its effects downplayed); the end should therefore solve or resolve the problem created during the incentive moment (context). Aristotle calls the cause-and-effect chain leading from the incentive moment to the climax the “tying up” (desis), in modern terminology the complication. He therefore terms the more rapid cause-and-effect chain from the climax to the resolution the “unravelling” (lusis), in modern terminology the dénouement (context).

The plot must be “complete,” having “unity of action.” By this Aristotle means that the plot must be structurally self-contained, with the incidents bound together by internal necessity, each action leading inevitably to the next with no outside intervention, no deus ex machina (context). According to Aristotle, the worst kinds of plots are “‘episodic,’ in which the episodes or acts succeed one another without probable or necessary sequence”; the only thing that ties together the events in such a plot is the fact that they happen to the same person. Playwrights should exclude coincidences from their plots; if some coincidence is required, it should “have an air of design,” i.e., seem to have a fated connection to the events of the play (context). Similarly, the poet should exclude the irrational or at least keep it “outside the scope of the tragedy,” i.e., reported rather than dramatized (context). While the poet cannot change the myths that are the basis of his plots, he “ought to show invention of his own and skillfully handle the traditional materials” to create unity of action in his plot (context). Application to Oedipus the King.

The plot must be “of a certain magnitude,” both quantitatively (length, complexity) and qualitatively (“seriousness” and universal significance). Aristotle argues that plots should not be too brief; the more incidents and themes that the playwright can bring together in an organic unity, the greater the artistic value and richness of the play. Also, the more universal and significant the meaning of the play, the more the playwright can catch and hold the emotions of the audience, the better the play will be (context).

The plot may be either simple or complex, although complex is better. Simple plots have only a “change of fortune” (catastrophe). Complex plots have both “reversal of intention” (peripeteia) and “recognition” (anagnorisis) connected with the catastrophe. Both peripeteia and anagnorisis turn upon surprise. Aristotle explains that a peripeteia occurs when a character produces an effect opposite to that which he intended to produce, while an anagnorisis “is a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined for good or bad fortune.” He argues that the best plots combine these two as part of their cause-and-effect chain (i.e., the peripeteia leads directly to the anagnorisis); this in turns creates the catastrophe, leading to the final “scene of suffering” (context). Application to Oedipus the King.

**Exposition/inciting incident**

This is where you introduce the characters, the setting, and the conflict. This is where you set the stage, so to speak—that proverbial stage where your characters are going to act and where all the action is going to take place.

The exposition is the part of the novel of least action, but that does not mean it is not important. It is in fact the most important part of your plot. This is because it is where you set the ground work; the foundation of your whole book. A poor foundation will render your whole weak useless. Is it not true that most of us put books away because the first few pages are down right boring?

**Complication/ development**

When does the first conflict/problem arise and develop?

What other problems start to arise and continue to develop?

**Crisis/ rising conflict**

This is where the novel starts getting interesting. The characters start acting. They get caught up in problems and/ or move to solve these problems. The reader is gripped by the action. The transition from exposition to rising action should happy early on so as to engage the reader and keep her reading. If this transition does not happen early enough, your reader will get bored and won’t see the point of reading on.

What is the moment of decision (internal dilemma resolved) for the main character?

When the character is faced with his/her internal conflict and realizes she/he must make a decision?

**Climax**

This is where the action reaches its peak. The conflict is highest. At this point, the reader cannot simply put the book down

This is the highest point of the conflict when we are waiting for the final moment. E.g the main character has died or the protagonist has defeated all the bad people and we are waiting for whether they are going to prison or asked to apologize.

Ask yourself…

When does the character MAKE his decision and ACT on it?

What actions results from this decision?

What is the highest point of interest (in terms of action) in the story?

When is the suspense (regarding what the character will do to solve the problem) over?

**Falling action:**

After the graph of activity reaches its maximum, it rapidly starts dropping. During this period, the truth is brought out, and all the mysteries are solved.

**Resolution**

This is the conclusion of loose ends when the conflict has found a solution which may be negative or positive.

How is the problem resolved?

Is the resolution positive or negative?

Does the resolution create purgation (relief) of your emotions?

**TYPES OF PLOT**

This is a dramatic scene that is presented out of chronological plot sequence. It takes the reader back to an earlier time.

**CONFLICT**

Conflict is a struggle between opposing forces. Stories can have more than one conflict and conflicts can be external or internal

**External conflict-** outside force may be person, group, animal, nature, or a nonhuman obstacle

**Internal conflict**- takes place in a character’s mind

1. Conflict may occur within one character, which is called internal conflict.
2. Another type of conflict is a struggle between man and man, like a hero and a villain. This is called social conflict. Most fiction is social conflict.
3. A third kind of conflict is a struggle between man and nature. This is called physical conflict. A dramatic conflict is the struggle which grows out of the interplay of opposing forces (ideas, interests, wills, etc.) in a plot.

What people/forces/ideas/interests/values/institutions oppose each other?

What decisions must the characters make? Between what two things is he/she deciding?

What do these things represent?

**Characterization**

A writer reveals what a character is like and how the character changes throughout the story.

Two primary methods of characterization:

***Direct-*** writer tells what the character is like

***Indirect*-** writer shows what a character is like by describing what the character looks like, by telling what the character says and does, and by what other characters say about and do in response to the character

**These questions will help you understand characterization.**

What kinds of person/people are the character(s)?

What are their beliefs/hopes/dreams/ideals/

What are their values/morals/fears/strengths/weaknesses/vices/virtues/talents?

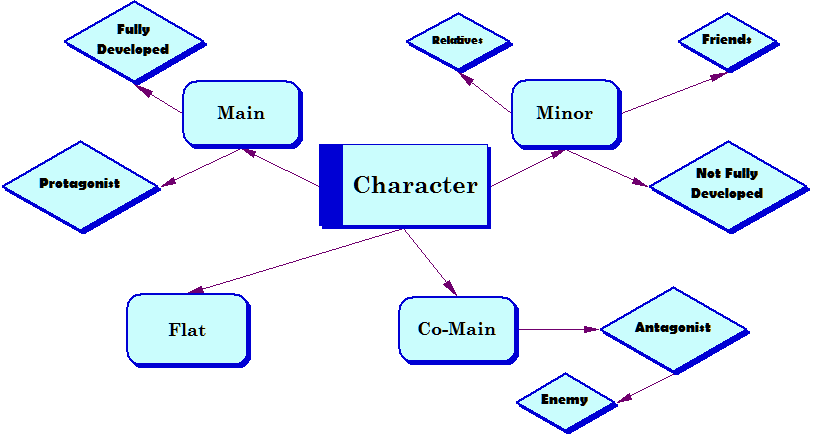
How do they conduct themselves?

What do they say and do to reveal themselves?

What do others say and do about them?

What are your opinions or feelings about them?

**Classifications of types of characters include:**



**Protagonist,** The protagonist is the “good guy”

**Antagonist,** The antagonist is the “bad guy” or force

**Foil:** a foil is any character (usually but not always the antagonist who or an important supporting character whose personal traits are the opposite of another character mainly the protagonist. This is intended to help us know the true nature of the protagonist and his errors in personality,

**Stereotype/stock characters:** These characters are not real but just imaginary in their actions and personality. These characters are presented in types rather than individuals similar to symbolic characters. For instance in “The Miser” by Morel Hapagon stands for stinginess of business men and in ‘The Merchant of Venice” Shylock (the Jew) stands for segregation and mercilessness of business men still.

**Flat:** These are characters that have few but recognizable traits that make them represent real people in life. There is always not much said about them and they can come and leave at any time in the work of literature. They are not psychologically complex characters and

Therefore are readily accessible to readers. For example Doga and Nina are flat characters in “Betrayal in the City’’ by Francis Imbuga.

**Round:** This is the opposite of a flat character. Round characters develop through the work of literature. Their personalities keep changing and involve themselves in several actions that it isn’t easy to just state their personality in a few words. These characters are like real humans in life because human being in their course of life involve in a lot of activities and change a lot and often display the inconsistencies and internal conflicts found in most real people. In modern way this character is called a three dimensional character. Most major characters are also round characters.

**Static:** This is the kind of character who remains the same throughout the work of literature and in most cases there isn’t much to learn about such a character. These are usually the minor characters who demonstrate only one side of their personality traits i.e they are good or bad, weak or strong and not both depending on circumstances as is with the round characters.

**Dynamic:** This is a character that changes through the work of literature from one form of personality to various others. He/she may change from a weak character to a strong one, from lazy to hardworking, from childishness to maturity in reasoning, from a happy to a sad one etc.

**Symbolic character:** A symbolic character is one, whose presence in the work of literature stands for or represents an idea (political, social, economic etc such as corruption, dictatorship, greed…) in society. For example in Lord of the Flies, Piggy symbolizes rationality and physical weakness of modern civilization; Jack symbolizes violence (excessive demand of the ID part of the human which keeps asking man to do evil) which dominates the human beings.

**Setting**

Setting refers to the time and place where and when events take place in a work of literature. The setting can be historical, physical, and time of the action. You always have to ask yourself where?

* In which country, village, town, city, planet t, locale?
* Is it outside, inside?
* Is it Rich and opulent or poor and simple?
* Is it stark and barren landscape?
* Is it rainy or sunny?
* Is it beautiful or adversarial?
* Is it dark or light?
* Is it dangerous or safe?
* How is the weather?
* What feelings (atmosphere) are evoked just by the setting?

When?

* What period in history does the action take place? Is it colonial, post-colonial,
* How does all this affect meaning?

**soliloquy** A speech in which a character who is alone speaks his or her thoughts aloud. A monologue also has a single speaker, but the monologuist speaks to others who do not interrupt. Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" and "O! what a rogue and peasant slave am I" are soliloquies. Browning's "My Last Duchess" and "Fra Lippo Lippi" are monologues, but the hypocritical monk of his "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" cannot reveal his thoughts to others.

ORAL LITERATURE

**What is a myth?**  
  
A myth is a story that usually explains something about the world and involves gods and other superhuman beings.

Examples of Myths

Baucis and Philemon

Medusa’s Head

Quetzalcoatl

Daedalus and Icarus

**What is a Folk Tale?**

A folk tale is a story with no known author. Folk tales are passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth.

**Examples of Folk Tales**

The Nightingale

The Seventh Sister

How the Snake Got Poison

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

He Lion, Bruh Bear, and Bruh Rabbit

**What is a fable?**

A fable is a very brief story in prose or in verse that teaches a moral or a practical lesson about how to succeed in life.

For example the hare stories, Animal farm e.t.c

Examples of Fables

The Crow and the Jar

The Wolf and the House Dog

The Fox and the Crow

The Country Mouse and the City Mouse

The Maid and the Milk pail

**What is a fairy tale?**

A fairy tale is a type of imaginative writing that carries the reader into an invented world where the laws of nature, as we know them, do not operate.

For example animals talk, stones play and people fly

**Examples of Fairy Tales**

Cinderella

Snow White and the Seven Dwarves

Ella Enchanted

Cinder Edna