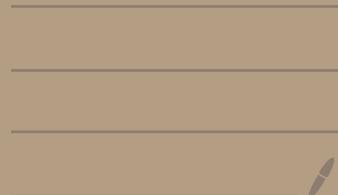


# Reading Literature : HS 305

Imagination & Expression

Part 1 : Prof. Sharmila

Part 2 : Prof. Sharmistha



Motivation : Risk certain opinions / ideas / what you already. literature offers an opportunity to interrupt the seamlessness of reality

Questions : what's contemporary literature ?

Under what conditions do we think we know ?  
(idea of literature)

Expression : Also not exclusive to literature !

(math is rendering of ideas in miniature)

Rethink enormous burden of usefulness

Course Logistics : refer moodle

Detective, social realism, poems, web graphics

Examinations won't test "what" the story is saying (hopefully)

## Lecture 2 {instructor's a strong feminist} (3/8/23)

Nazis love classical music {humanities ≠ humanitarian}  
while they were suffocating ... uhh...  
you know....)

### Lifted (pixar)

1. Incompetent alien (abducting a human)  
trying its best  
↳ note the pronoun

### Wordless story

Lone house - Picked cuz it was lonely  
- Country side farm

Alone - Some kind of "abduction" training  
- But no sign of being lonely

Why (?) in stories, you willing to suspend disbelief  
(why he didn't wake up is not the point!)

### Elements of the Story

Analogy

Reality

Rollercoaster

Laughter / flowers

Teacher

"Ending"  
Alien

# To do : read Sherlock Holmes by Tuesday

Irony : Title & story are not "fitting"  
→ we need a conscious effort to fit them

Exposition : 1. Moon    Mood (dark, intense)  
(start)            2. Swing

Setting : When ?

No sense of calendar, but clear that it's night  
where ?

Aloneness for abductee, forest of choices for student

Mood

Genre Contract with the text (expectation)

Form fiction, poetry, play

## Analytical treatment of stories

Amateur < Amor (french) < love for stories

Analytical treatment is different, some formal analyses of literature.

Exposition: dark, techno music, beam, (horror theme)  
Stops when his head banged against the wall.

How does a story move?  
Exposition.  
Rising action (then what?  
↓ made up of hook)  
Conflicts

What happens?

## PLOT

## Conflicts

## External Conflict

- character vs character
- character vs society
  - (e.g. 1984, handmaiden's tale, authoritarian, govt prying in life, racism, etc.)
- Character vs Nature
  - (e.g. jaws, old man in the sea)
- character vs Fate
  - (greek stories where fate comes back to haunt, fault in our stars)
- character vs technology (sci fi)
- character vs Unknown/unnatural
  - (ghost, vampire stories)

## Internal Conflict

- character vs Self
  - (dr. jekyll & mr. hyde : good dude dark person)
- 2 personalities, decision to make, madness takes hold)

## Effect of a conflict

- changes the tone of the film
- You see what kind of conflicts happen and what it does for the story
- External conflict get internalised (harry & voldemort, but he has to wrestle with inner voldemort)

## Climax

The most suspenseful moment

Conflicts make up the rising action, characters get built

lifted : when the sleeping human body rises up in the spaceship

## Falling Action

lifted : the teacher fixes what the student had messed up

How do they fix the conflict (start)

## Resolution

How do they resolve the conflict

lifted : The story ends but not in the way we expect  
( "Scorpion's tail" : stings you before it leaves  
works when you are sucked into rising and falling actions )

# Points of View

(Why are we rooting for the young alien in Lifted?)

Author ≠ Narrator  
real character

## Types of PoV

- First Person : I/me/we
- Second Person : You
- Third person : He/He/They

### First Person

- The reader's knowledge is restricted to that of narrator.
- You come to trust the narrator
- Plays with a small lens (sometimes a first person narrator **lies** : unreliable narrator)

(Narrator can be **mad** : tries to convince reader that he's sane)

(Narrator can be racist, killer, etc -)

### Second Person

- The action is driven by a character known as "You" (rare in lit, more in gaming)

## Third Person

The narrator is someone (or entity) who is not in the story (more of a narrative)

Third Person Omniscient s/he knows all and is free to tell us anything, including what the characters are thinking or feeling.

Third person Limited omniscient Limits to complete knowledge of limited ppl  
• Makes you attached to certain characters

Third person Objective (Dramatic) (camera)  
Can go anywhere, but can record only what is seen or heard. Cannot comment, interpret or enter character's mind.

## Characterization

### Round and flat characters

Flat: doesn't change, no conflict, single overachieving trait (e.g. sleeping man, sidekick in films)

Round: Complex, realistic, unique  
(e.g. teacher)

- Direct and Indirect characterization
- Direct : described in story
- Indirect : infer character's qualities from
  - \* thoughts, actions, choice of words, how talk, appearance, movements .

## Analysing Stories : A tool kit

(07/08/2023)

### lecture 4

Detective Fiction ; Relate its history & growth to the growth of magazines, medicine & London city ?

↓  
det. stories started to be serialized & suspense being an integral part, proved useful to put in magazines

as much the tool of the detective as the criminal

as London grew, crime started and the need for detectives came about Det fiction brought some imagination to the public.

Introduce ideas that make their way to literature

- French rev.
- Colonization

many stories set with villains & exotic treasures from the colonies

Also, many stories set in Africa etc.

to think about and ruminate their opinion of colonies etc.

Also, the 'war' is spoken of often, and there are many ex-soldiers (including Watson !)

## About A. C. Doyle :

A medical man. Modelled Holmes on his teacher @ medical school [diagnosis is much like detection using clues. On top of that, this particular teacher used to detect other things about patient from appearance, speech etc - much like Holmes]

## 19<sup>th</sup> century London :

Before the industrial revolution in London, it was uncommon for a stranger to be living next to you. When the rev. started, and tons of people started coming in, this became a regular aspect of society.

- Newspapers, telegrams became an essential part of people's lives
  - Essential part of literature
- The establishment of the police department (1829, London) to address increasing crime because of low income and high crowd
- One thinks, now (after reading stories), of London, as a storied world.
- Edgar Allan Poe : first detective (Dupac) and that was before this time, when there was no need of a police force. Not even the word "detective" was there at the time.
- Jeremy Brett : first Sherlock Holmes Movies-

## Exposition:

1. Baker Street
2. London of past, quick scenes (late 19th/early 20th century)
3. Idea of speed: horse, things on sale, newspapers,  
crime becomes a sensation (every sense is bothered by it),  
economic divided world, something exotic was being sold
4. Police: Children were doing nothing criminal, but the  
police shoved everything away. (Crime = aggression on private property,  
so, police defends. Invariably, criminal is in lower class, or foreigner)
5. last thing we saw: entire sequence we saw was from up  
above, finally centers on point of view of Sherlock Holmes.  
(not quite ordinary, emergent middle class)

- Need a feel for the time the story is written
- Definitionary from the inception, genre is a description of status quo,  
how law and order interacts with public.

## The Adventure of the Dancing Men

- Published as "The Return of Sherlock Holmes" (1905)
- First published in The Strand Magazine, UK (1903) & in  
Collier's USA (1903)
- The "close reading" of story (no summary, no "appreciation" of the story)  
The "typical Holmes Story"
  - Someone comes to visit the famous Sherlock Holmes (a moment:  
where do they come from, how, is it expected / surprise?)
  - In the story, a "cable" comes and visitor
  - Visitor has a garbled account (not a good account, factoids)
  - The detective is asked to "make sense" of it. To read the signs,  
unravel the puzzle, solve the mystery
- In other words, to create a relationship b/w "facts" and "meaning"
- No connective links yet, that is the mystery (detective makes event into  
a narrative).

- Story (some fact), Plot (what happened because of what?), detective makes story out of thin air.

**"Literary Recipe"** a) the victim, b) the criminal, c) the detective and d) those threatened by the crime but incapable of solving it.

- We try to play the "detective", skewer the reader to be active.

## Reading begins

SHERLOCK HOLMES HAD been seated for some hours in silence with his long, thin back curved over a chemical vessel in which he was brewing a particularly malodorous product. His head was sunk upon his breast, and he looked from my point of view like a strange, lank bird, with dull grey plumage and a black top-knot.

"So, Watson," said he, suddenly, "you do not propose to invest in South African securities?"

## Reading "clues" & Meaning Making

Sign : Signifier - Signified  
 (object, (the signal,  
 foreign language) meaning of the sign)

e.g. Big paw mark (inference : cat).  
 We survive as a species because we read things even if author didn't intentionally put it there!

## Characterization

Holmes : • Immune to the world, but, he seems to know everything  
 • Direct : Long, thin back, etc.

Isn't this subjective? Shouldn't we be objective (certainty)

Moving from "clues" to inference  
 (e.g. art detectives checking forgeries, medicine using symptoms to diagnose diseases, weather prediction using the conditions as of now)

Adventures of the Dancing Men, Sherlock gets sign, but no idea what it means (core of detective fiction)

## Lecture 6

(10/08/2023)

- Reading is literally making meaning.
- Absurd hieroglyphics (Watson: Child's drawing, Holmes: there's meaning)

### Rising Action

Visitor: Mr. Hilton Cubitt, of Riding Thorpe Manor, Norfolk

- Characterization starts (all direct) i.e. Watson is making inferences
- Mystery unfolds - the "plot-less" details (no story to tell, just some events)

Every sign has two kinds of meaning (direct characterization)

#### Denotation

(Literal meaning)

Sign (Signifier - Signified)

e.g.	cheap, skinny, plump, bright,	inexpensive gaunt, slender buxom, heavy-set clever, cunning
------	--	--

#### Connotation

(Emotional, Socio-cultural,  
Associational weight of a word)

"Mr. Hilton Cubitt's Story"

- Comes from a noble family. Detective: Victims are usually such noble people, because we should have sympathy for him (can't have the same for a pickpocket for e.g.)

- Holmes, Watson: Complex characters (3 rounded characters so far)  
Two eccentric individuals are still social, comes with skills that police lacks.
- Hilton thinks Holmes will be judging him: indirect char. of Hilton
- The Jubilee celebration (~1880) & quick marriage
- The bride's opaque past
- A happy marriage (about a year)
- A letter from America, Dancing men appear
- Cannot take this to the police: no crime yet! (detective arc starts)

Colonies are an integral theme of Victorian era fiction.

Notice connotation of Hilton, we are made to be sympathetic to Mr. Hilton

Masculinity is established via

- Heritage, noble lineage
- Chivalry to protect his wife (Protector role), one who's protected is made a bit "weaker"
- All these conflicts are through the "lens" of Dr. Watson, Holmes might have said many things, but Watson picked up on only certain things

## Rising Action (Conflicts so far)

1. Man & man (over reading of text)
2. Wife wouldn't share details of past (wife & past)
3. Hilton wants to ask past (Hilton & promise)
4. Ridiculous, simple, serious? (social conflict about who to go to)
5. The middle class has been the protagonist of stories of our time, but in story, hilton's going through a tragedy of nobility, often due to an emergent middle class. (social conflict in the story)

## Many kinds of readers

Watson : absurdly simple, a child's drawing (is there anything to it?)

Hilton : queer mystery, absurd tricks (first instinct: the stable boy did it)

Elie : terrifying incident

Holmes : (best reader) curious production (must be explored)  
too deep a case (knows the depth of story)

We move back and forth from reader to reader

## Reasoning (way to move from reading to meaning)

Subjective ≠ opinion, subjective = proposition that opinion arises by some logic & invitation to knowledge making.

Deductive Reasoning 'top down' logic, begins with accepted premise, seeks to prove another statement. Is objectively true only if the premise is correct.

Inductive Reasoning 'below up'. To extrapolate from information observed in order to arrive at conclusions about events that have not been observed

• Laws are deductive, but experiments are inductive. If truth is not already visible, deductive reasoning is impossible, we have to peddle many reasonings

(14/08/2023)

## Lecture 7

### The suspense, "climax" & the Falling Action

↓  
cubitt has come 2 times,  
multiple letters,  
plot is thickening (for Holmes)

Absolute peak  
of conflicts

After Hilton's 2nd visit Holmes is nearly done with conclusions (way ahead of Watson, us).

climax: Time when it takes 2 days for reply cable, holmes does not share details of cable with watson, next train, sense of urgency for Holmes.

Watson	: denotative description of scenery.
• How perfectly it "fits", at midpoint (6 or 7 pages) is the climax.	
How the suspense builds up	
Mr. Hilton Cubitt	Reading signs
Dr. Watson	Coded signs
S. Holmes	Emotions Elsie's past
Reading characters	
Mr. Hilton, Elsie, } quite similar Holmes	
The Villain "a dark creeping figure"	Cubitt : knows it has a connotation of the serpent Watson : no attempt Holmes : most dangerous criminal in Chicago (gang lord)

Coded msg is nothing, reacts only to his wife's emotions, wife's past is also null  
child's drawing, denotative

Thinks as node in linked text, doesn't know yet but knows it had a role to play

"I suppose that you are the detectives from London?"

Look of annoyance : Station master can do the same thing as Holmes, but is normalised when they were expected. (Holmes is annoyed there might be someone like him).

Some lives are expendable, this death is considerable as Hilton was Norfolk nobility.

The falling action : Detective displays his acumen, every strand of the story is tied up.

Patterns, causations have been neatly aligned in the falling action.  
Holmes reads the room (purse which is on the table ← not noticed by anyone except Holmes)  
and then the garden, all the clues are "signs". (e.g. why did the dog not bark?  
The absence can be a sign too!).

The narration of the puzzled victim



The narration of a puzzled Dr. Watson  
(includes other story-tellers/readers)



The revelation by clever Mr. Holmes

- Some details from eye of Dr. Watson (e.g. scenery) ← character eye
- Details from Watson, focalized by what Holmes / Hilton / Inspector is saying

↑ narrative eye

Reading - Reasoning :

Deductive works best when we already know the law!

Deductive  
Begin with a law / general rules, and deduce (e.g. syllogisms).

Inductive

Bottom-up, observations based and building up.

Abductive

Inufficient information, build up most likely scenario, i.e., risk meaning making, risk conclusions.

Function of deductive : Works with combination of these reasonings, e.g. serial killer on loose, deaths ⇒ death caused by serial killer, if this premise is wrong, clues will lead to falsification.

Holmes usually works with induction e.g. dead body, causes = A, B, C? then rule out using clues, e.g. stain mark, bullet hole, interprets clues to reach conclusion Readers have to do this inductive reasoning as well, as long as steps are there wrong conclusions are ok.

Holmes made assumption that code translates to english, i.e. abductive reasoning, "Abe": deduction, induction, abduction at work. Supposition with other model of reading  
↳ contraction "American". (assumption).  
levels of meaning changes in the falling action. This is a nesting of story.

Resolution:  
one word of epilogue. The American Abe Slaney was condemned to death.  
Can ask, what is characterization of villain? Abe might be a crime landlord,  
what is the crime? Stalker, comes back to claim his love. Not even a  
murder, at best manslaughter (Hilton fired first!). America at that time  
was a little country built by migrants from Europe. Connotative predisposition  
as a criminal for Abe. → it's just a PoV!

Watson: "...these are chronicles of fact". Be suspicious of facts! Facts are  
a world of no analysis, investigation of (mis)cues, signs, connotations, associations,  
patterns, and all that is (in)visible.

Foreshadowing: sense of something that is going to happen.  
"Red-herring": Misleading cues.

## Poem (Emily Dickinson)

## Notions of Poetry (Intuitively)

- conjure feelings using words
- Rhyming scheme, musicality
- Short lines, incomplete sentences
- We are looking at connotative meaning not just denotative
- Figures of speech like alliteration (showcases or plays with figures of speech)

On the other hand...

## I (a leaf falls) oneliness

I  
a  
l e  
a f  
f a  
l l  
s)  
one  
l  
iness

loneliness is akin to a leaf falling  
every word enacts falling of a leaf  
every letter is lonely  
more about visuality!

- e.e.cummings

- silence can only be heard if it's framed by noise (silencio)
- Visual poetry, not meant to be recited (concrete poetry)
- Effect of time (elimination - incarnation)
- Breaking every definition of poetry, enacting the noise of war (futurist poetry)
- Folk performance, composed in verses rather than prose. All epics are written in verse!  
Musicality allows to remember verse, mnemonic device. (performance poetry)
- Kinetic words, almost a rap (kinetic poetry)
- No line breaks, verse almost (prose)
- Tweets
- Haiku: 3 line poems.

Emily Dickinson  
 • lived long enough, 19<sup>th</sup> century U.S.A. (Pale versions of European literature in US)  
 • lived an absolutely secluded life, wrote 360 poems a year.  
 • wasn't published at all, apart from a few.

- Random nouns are capitalized
- very dark, horror poem, deep melancholy
- sounds like a migraine
- Almost a Hallucination
- Sensory elements: audio/visual
- Process of a funeral is being chronicled, relating to her thoughts

"Metaphor" (& Simile)

Deletes the  
link in the  
simile

An analogy, two unlike things are  
likened together.

• Seems to be describing depth,  
what is compared to depth?  
(trauma, depression, death)

("I felt a funeral  
in my brain")

• Much more common in daily speech (the's an open book.)

- In serious, brings common sense
- Ideology: what we silently think ("time is money"). So, when we use time wisely, why guilt? waste of time, resource, "spend" properly -
- Military metaphors: urgency of action e.g. war on disease

The truth of metaphors

- On face value, it is not a fact (factually untrue), but has a paradoxical truth to it
- Creates strong feelings, reflects a gap between what we want to tell but cannot signify using language. Invokes a "distance".
- E. dickinson is very good at showcasing metaphors (refer slides)
- Can be carried in verbs, nouns, adjectives!

(heavens were)  
(twitched)

• Allows to think outside the verse.

On a branch  
floating down river  
a cricket, singing

- sense of wading through life
- Danger doesn't stop from singing through life.

## Lecture 9

(lynching black bodies)

(21/08/23)

Southern trees bear strange fruit

Blood on the leaves and blood at the root

Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze

Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees

- Abel Meeropol (sung by Billie Holiday)

(20<sup>th</sup> century harlem)

black renaissance

threat by

white america

(start of black poetry)

Fog (carl sandburg) ← extended metaphor.

fog = cat with paws

Mother to son (black mother to son)

ruined building ≡ difficulties of life

## Lecture 10 Cosmomics (italo calvino)

speculative fiction: range of genres which challenges mimetica (realism)

realism = only fiction with any social values → speculative fiction is

purely escapist (detamiliarize world)

Epigraph: Read it & forget it (moot), a fact taken from somewhere or some excerpt.

what if...? Distance b/w Earth & Moon is far less.

. A time in imagined past when moon and earth were so close  
that at high tide (earth → moon)

Q: primordial creature (pre-human) (narrator)  
name is a palindrome

Qf wf Q

$Q = w = Q$  (1<sup>st</sup> law of thermodynamics)

Kafka (20<sup>th</sup> century vienna writer)