# Prose and Poetry

“In an old book all the pages are the same.  
When writing the text, the writer followed only the sequential laws of language, which are not the sequential laws of books

In the new art every page is different; every page is an individualized element of a structure (the book) wherein it has a particular function to fulfill.”

* Ulises Carrión

Carrión claim that the pages of “old” books are all the same is critiquing their similar structure. Books with the intention of storing text generally follow a similar layout and set of rules including margins along each side with a block of text populating the center. This structure developed over time because of the laws of language and the use of the book as a storage device. Carrión identifies this and puts forth the concept of a new art of books that uses each element of a book to enhance the narrative rather than solely containing it.

We begin to see Carrión creating a distinction between prose[[1]](#footnote-1) and poetry[[2]](#footnote-2) through the inclusion of space and the book medium. Through his distinction, we must consider the nature of storytelling. To speak a story is to convey emotion through tone, pauses, and emphasis, but to translate that same story to a written and physical medium, like paper, challenges us to find other ways to convey that emotion without those audible queues. In Carrión’s definition of prose, that element of emotion was often added back in through description. In Carrión’s definition of poetry, the element of emotion is done through space on the page.

In *Arguments*, rather than writing prose detailing the contexts of these arguments, Carrión only includes the names of the participates and the space on the page to tell the story (see fig #). The spacing and treatment of the names as characters are the only indication of how the argument plays out. Given Carrión’s background as a playwright, it is almost as if the names of the participants of the argument are used as place markers and the page is the stage.

1. A literary medium closest to the patterns of everyday speech. In the context of Carrión’s old vs new art of making books, prose is used to distinguish a genre of descriptive writing used in the “old” art. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The writing style of Carrión’s proposed new art of making books that approaches storytelling through the impact words have on the physical plane of a page. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)