

*Introduction to Literatures in English.*  
A course in 28 sessions



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# An *Introduction to Literatures in English* course in 28 sessions

This introductory course to literatures in English aims to provide first-year L2 undergraduate students majoring/minoring in English with critical tools to approach the study of Prose fiction (Unit 1), Drama (Unit 2) and Poetry (Unit 3), as well as to train them in actual criticism of texts pertaining to the three. There are six two-hour sessions per Unit, and for each of them students are required to read a text or a series of short texts in advance from different literary traditions in English, also in historical and geographical terms. Classes are thus devoted to actual critical practice through group discussions. The course is furthermore envisioned as an introduction to academic writing, as two essays are to be produced, as well as training for subsequent and more advanced and specialized literature courses that demand longer readings and more complex textual analyses. The course provides critical tools for the analysis of literary texts, which are discussed in sessions that heavily rely on active student participation.

## **Week 1**

### **Day 1**

#### **General introduction to the course**

Discussion of the class structure and syllabus, readings, methodology and class dynamics, assignments and assessment (percentages, essay writing, exam). Special emphasis is placed on the importance of actively participating in class, on the relevance of essays, and on the fact that classes discuss the 'Readings of the day'.

## Day 2

### Unit 1: Prose fiction

#### 1.1. The narrator (I)

Group discussion on the Readings of the Day with a view to discerning the different types of narrators in each of the extracts given, and the effects and implications of each of them. Within the categories of first-person and third-person narrators, the notions of “hero narrators” (Extract 1) and “witness narrators” (Extract 3) are explained as subtypes of the former, and those of omniscient (Extract 2) and non-omniscient (or limited) narrators (Extract 4), in the case of the latter. In this regard, the notion of focalization is also explained (Jahn). In addition, the idea of “privileged access” and “non-human narrators” is explored, as well as the choice of tense in narrations. Special emphasis is placed on the importance of distinguishing between author and narrator.

Along the discussion of the extracts, the works to which they pertain are commented on (*Great Expectations*, *Middlemarch*, *The Great Gatsby*, and “Ming’s Biggest Prey”) and their authors (Charles Dickens, George Eliot, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Patricia Highsmith, respectively) briefly introduced and historically contextualized.

#### *READINGS OF THE DAY*

##### Extract 1. From *Great Expectations* (1861), Chapter I. Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

“My father’s family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

I give Pirrip as my father’s family name, on the authority of his tombstone and my sister,—Mrs. Joe Gargery, who married the blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father’s, gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, “*Also Georgiana Wife of the Above,*” I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. To five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine,—who gave up trying to get a living, exceedingly early in that universal struggle,—I am indebted for

a belief I religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs with their hands in their trousers-pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence.

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dikes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.”

Extract 2. From *Middlemarch* (1871), Chapter I. George Eliot (1819-1880)

Miss Brooke had that kind of beauty which seems to be thrown into relief by poor dress. Her hand and wrist were so finely formed that she could wear sleeves not less bare of style than those in which the Blessed Virgin appeared to Italian painters; and her profile as well as her stature and bearing seemed to gain the more dignity from her plain garments, which by the side of provincial fashion gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible,—or from one of our elder poets,—in a paragraph of to-day’s newspaper. She was usually spoken of as being remarkably clever, but with the addition that her sister Celia had more common-sense. Nevertheless, Celia wore scarcely more trimmings; and it was only to close observers that her dress differed from her sister’s, and had a shade of coquetry in its arrangements; for Miss Brooke’s plain dressing was due to mixed conditions, in most of which her sister shared. The pride of being ladies had something to do with it: the Brooke connections, though not exactly aristocratic, were unquestionably “good:” if you inquired backward for a generation or two, you would not find any yard-measuring or parcel-tying forefathers—anything lower than an admiral or a clergyman; and there was even an ancestor discernible as a Puritan gentleman who served under Cromwell, but afterwards conformed, and managed to come out of all political troubles as the proprietor of a respectable family estate. Young women of such birth, living in a quiet country-house, and attending a village church hardly larger than a parlor, naturally regarded frippery as the ambition of a huckster’s daughter. Then there was well-bred economy, which in those days made show in dress the first item to be deducted from, when any margin was required for expenses more distinctive of rank. Such reasons would have been enough to account for plain dress, quite apart from religious feeling; but in Miss Brooke’s case, religion alone would have determined it; and Celia mildly acquiesced in all her sister’s sentiments, only infusing them with that common-sense which is able to accept momentous doctrines without any eccentric agitation.

Extract 3. From *The Great Gatsby* (1925), Chapter I. F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896 -1940)

The younger of the two was a stranger to me. She was extended full length at her end of the divan, completely motionless and with her chin raised a little as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall. If she saw me out of the corner of her eyes she gave no hint of it--indeed, I was almost surprised into murmuring an apology for having disturbed her by coming in.

The other girl, Daisy, made an attempt to rise--she leaned slightly forward with a conscientious expression--then she laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh, and I laughed too and came forward into the room.

“I’m p-paralyzed with happiness.”

She laughed again, as if she said something very witty, and held my hand for a moment, looking up into my face, promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see. That was a way she had. She hinted in a murmur that the surname of the balancing girl was Baker. (I’ve heard it said that Daisy’s murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming.)

At any rate Miss Baker’s lips fluttered, she nodded at me almost imperceptibly and then quickly tipped her head back again--the object she was balancing had obviously tottered a little and given her something of a fright. Again a sort of apology arose to my lips. Almost any exhibition of complete self sufficiency draws a stunned tribute from me.

I looked back at my cousin who began to ask me questions in her low, thrilling voice. It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth--but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered “Listen,” a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour.

Extract 4. From “Ming’s Biggest Prey” (1975), Patricia Highsmith (1921-1995)

Ming was resting comfortably on the foot of his mistress’ bunk, when the man picked him up by the back of the neck, stuck him out on the deck and closed the cabin door. Ming’s blue eyes widened in shock and brief anger, then nearly closed again because of the brilliant sunlight. It was not the first time Ming had been thrust out of the cabin rudely, and Ming realised that the man did it when his mistress, Elaine, was not looking. The sailboat now offered no shelter from the sun, but Ming was not yet too warm. He leapt easily to the cabin roof and stepped onto the coil of rope just behind the mast. Ming liked the rope coil as a couch, because he could see everything from the height, the cup shape of the rope protected him from strong breezes, and also minimised the swaying and sudden changes of angle of the White Lark, since it was more or less the centre point. But just now the sail had been taken down, because Elaine and the man

had eaten lunch, and often they had a siesta afterward, during which time, Ming knew, the man didn't like him in the cabin. Lunchtime was all right. In fact, Ming had just lunched on delicious grilled fish and a bit of lobster. Now, lying in a relaxed curve on the tail of rope, Ming opened his mouth in a great yawn, then with his slant eyes almost closed against the strong sunlight, gazed at the beige hills and the white and pink houses and hotels that circled the bay of Acapulco. Between the White Lark and the shore where people plashed inaudibly, the sun twinkled on the water's surface like thousands of tiny electric lights going on and off. A water-skier went by, skimming up white spray behind him. Such activity! Ming half dozed, feeling the heat of the sun sink into his fur. Ming was from New York, and he considered Acapulco a great improvement over his environment in the first weeks of his life. He remembered a sunless box with straw on the bottom, three or four of her kittens in with him, and a window behind which giant forms paused for a few moments, tried to catch his attention by tapping, then passed on. He did not remember his mother at all.

***Questions to be discussed in class***

1. Consider the narrator in each of these extracts. Do you find any similarities and differences between the four?
2. What does each of these narrators know and not seem to know? Which is the narrator that seems to know the most and which one the least? Why?
3. Are any of these narrators also a character in the story? What difference do you think that makes?
4. Do you find anything peculiar about Extract 4? Who is Ming?
5. In which tense are these stories written? Why do you think that is relevant?
6. What do you think makes a narrator reliable or unreliable judging from these extracts?

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## Day 3

### Unit 1: Prose fiction

#### 1.2. The narrator (II)

Group discussion on the Readings of the Day to survey the notions of direct free style (Extract 1), reliable and unreliable narrators (Extract 2), and metafiction (Extract 3). Further discussion not drawing from the Readings of the Day revolves around two other extracts to illustrate the notions of multiple narrations (William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*) and epistolary narratives (Jane Austen's *Lady Susan*).

The works to which all the extracts pertain are commented on (*The Spire*, *The Sound and the Fury* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*) and their authors (William Golding, William Faulkner and John Fowles, respectively) briefly introduced and historically contextualized. Benedict Cumberbatch's reading of the extract from Golding's *The Spire* (audiobook, Faber Audio, 2014) is played in class to emphasize the shift from third-person to first-person sentences.

#### *READINGS OF THE DAY*

##### Extract 1. From *The Spire* (1964), Chapter One. William Golding (1911-1993)

He was laughing, chin up, and shaking his head. God the Father was exploding in his face with a glory of sunlight through painted glass, a glory that moved with his movements to consume and exalt Abraham and Isaac and then God again. The tears of laughter in his eyes made additional spokes and wheels and rainbows.

Chin up, hands holding the model spire before him, eyes half closed; joy —

“I’ve waited half my life for this day!”

Opposite him, the other side of the model of the cathedral on its trestle table stood the chancellor, his face dark with shadow, over ancient pallor.

“I don’t know, my Lord Dean. I don’t know.”

He peered across at the model of the spire, where Jocelin held it so firmly in both hands. His voice was bat-thin, and wandered vaguely into the large, high air of the chapter house.



“But if you consider that this small piece of wood—how long is it?”

“Eighteen inches, my Lord Chancellor.”

“Eighteen inches. Yes. Well. It represents, does it not, a construction of wood and stone and metal?”

“Four hundred feet high.”

The chancellor moved out into sunlight, hands up to his chest, and peered round him. He looked up at the roof. Jocelin looked sideways at him, loving him.

“The foundations. I know. But God will provide.”

The chancellor had found what he was looking for, a memory.

“Ah yes.”

Then, in ancient busyness, he crept away over the pavement to the door and through it. He left a message, in the air behind him.

“Mattins. Of course.”

Jocelin stood still, and shot an arrow of love after him. My place, my house, my people. He will come out of the vestry at the tail of the procession and turn left as he has always done; then he will remember and turn right to the Lady Chapel! So Jocelin laughed again, chin lifted, in holy mirth. I know them all, know what they are doing and will do, know what they have done. All these years I have gone on, put the place on me like a coat.

He stopped laughing and wiped his eyes. He took the white spire and jammed it firmly in the square hole cut in the old model of the cathedral.

“There!”

The model was like a man lying on his back. The nave was his legs placed together, the transepts on either side were his arms outspread. The choir was his body; and the Lady Chapel where now the services would be held, was his head. And now also, springing, projecting, bursting, erupting from the heart of the building, there was its crown and majesty, the new spire. They don't know, he thought, they can't know until I tell them of my vision! And laughing again for joy, he went out of the chapter house to where the sun piled into the open square of the cloisters. And I must remember that the spire isn't everything! I must do, as far as possible, exactly what I have always done.

So he went round the cloisters, lifting curtain after curtain, until he came to the side door into the West End of the cathedral. He lifted the latch carefully so as not to make a noise. He bowed his head as he passed through, and said as he always did interiorly, “Lift up your heads, o ye Gates!” But even as he stepped inside, he knew that his caution was unnecessary, since there was a whole confusion of noise in the cathedral

already. Mattins, diminished, its sounds so small they might be held in one hand, was nonetheless audible from the Lady Chapel at the other end of the cathedral, beyond the wood and canvas screen. There was a nearer sound that told—though the components were so mixed by echo as to be part of each other—that men were digging in earth and stone. They were talking, ordering, shouting sometimes, dragging wood across pavement, wheeling and dropping loads, then throwing them roughly into place, so that the total noise would have been formless as the noises of the market place, had not the echoing spaces made it chase round and round so that it caught up with itself and the shrill choir, and sang endlessly on one note. The noises were so new, that he hurried to the center line of the cathedral in the shadow of the great west door, genuflected to the hidden High Altar; and then stood, looking.

Extract 2. From *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), Ch. 1. William Faulkner (1897-1962)

April 7, 1928

Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree. They took the flag out, and they were hitting. Then they put the flag back and they went to the table, and he hit and the other hit. Then they went on, and I went along the fence. Luster came away from the flower tree and we went along the fence and they stopped and we stopped and I looked through the fence while Luster was hunting in the grass.

“Here, caddie.” He hit. They went away across the pasture. I held to the fence and watched them going away.

“Listen at you, now.” Luster said. “Aint you something, thirty three years old, going on that way. After I done went all the way to town to buy you that cake. Hush up that moaning. Aint you going to help me find that quarter so I can go to the show tonight.”

They were hitting little, across the pasture. I went back along the fence to where the flag was. It flapped on the bright grass and the trees.

“Come on.” Luster said. “We done looked there. They aint no more coming right now. Les go down to the branch and find that quarter before them niggers finds it.”

It was red, flapping on the pasture. Then there was a bird slanting and tilting on it. Luster threw. The flag flapped on the bright grass and the trees. I held to the fence.

“Shut up that moaning.” Luster said. “I cant make them come if they aint coming, can I. If you dont hush up, mammy aint going to have no birthday for you. If you dont hush, you know what I going to do. I going to eat that cake all up. Eat them candles, too. Eat all them thirty three candles. Come on, les go down to the branch. I got to find my quarter. Maybe we can find one of they balls. Here. Here they is. Way over yonder.

See.” He came to the fence and pointed his arm. “See them. They aint coming back here no more. Come on.”

We went along the fence and came to the garden fence, where our shadows were. My shadow was higher than Luster’s on the fence. We came to the broken place and went through it.

Extract 3. From *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* (1969), Ch. 13.

John Fowles (1926-2005)

I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind. If I have pretended until now to know my characters’ minds and innermost thoughts, it is because I am writing in (just as I have assumed some of the vocabulary and “voice” of) a convention universally accepted at the time of my story: that the novelist stands next to God. He may not know all, yet he tries to pretend that he does. But I live in the age of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes; if this is a novel, it cannot be a novel in the modern sense of the word.

So perhaps I am writing a transposed autobiography; perhaps I now live in one of the houses I have brought into the fiction; perhaps Charles is myself disguised. Perhaps it is only a game. Modern women like Sarah exist, and I have never understood them. Or perhaps I am trying to pass off a concealed book of essays on you. Instead of chapter headings, perhaps I should have written “On the Horizontality of Existence,” “The Illusions of Progress,” “The History of the Novel Form,” “The Aetiology of Freedom,” “Some Forgotten Aspects of the Victorian Age” ... what you will.

Perhaps you suppose that a novelist has only to pull the right strings and his puppets will behave in a lifelike manner; and produce on request a thorough analysis of their motives and intentions. Certainly I intended at this stage (Chap. Thirteen—unfolding of Sarah’s true state of mind) to tell all—or all that matters. But I find myself suddenly like a man in the sharp spring night, watching from the lawn beneath that dim upper window in Marlborough House; I know in the context of my book’s reality that Sarah would never have brushed away her tears and leaned down and delivered a chapter of revelation. She would instantly have turned, had she seen me there just as the old moon rose, and disappeared into the interior shadows. But I am a novelist, not a man in a garden—I can follow her where I like? But possibility is not permissibility. Husbands could often murder their wives—and the reverse—and get away with it. But they don’t.

***Questions to be discussed in class***

1. In Golding’s *The Spire* we read “Jocelin stood still, and shot an arrow of love after him. My place, my house, my people.” Whose place, house and people are they?

2. Where do the events of April 7, 1928 described in the extract from *The Sound and the Fury* take place? What are the hints in the text that suggest that it is so?
3. Who is the narrator of the extract from *The Sound and the Fury*? Which kind of narrator would you say it is?
4. What is it peculiar about the extract from Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*? Who is the narrator? Who is the 'you' that appears in the text?
5. What does the narrator of Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* mean by the following sentences? "*But I am a novelist, not a man in a garden—I can follow her where I like? But possibility is not permissibility. Husbands could often murder their wives—and the reverse—and get away with it. But they don't.*"
6. What is different from the first-person narrator in the extracts from *The Sound and the Fury* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*? What is the effect of their narration upon readers?

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## Day 4

### Unit 1: Prose fiction

#### 1.3. Characters and characterization

Group discussion on the Readings of the Day for a survey on the notions of direct and indirect characterization (Extracts 1 and 2, respectively), followed by a discussion around the construction of characters through their language. In this regard, mannerisms of speech, the use of dialect (to suggest geographical, economic, cultural, and social backgrounds) and the functions of dialogue are explored (Toolan, Thomas, Norrick).

The works to which the extracts pertain are commented on (*Emma*, “Delights of France or Horrors of the Road”, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Oliver Twist*) and their authors (Jane Austen, Fay Weldon, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Charles Dickens, respectively) briefly introduced and historically contextualized.

#### *READINGS OF THE DAY*

##### Extract 1. From *Emma* (1815), Chapter One. Jane Austen (1775-1817)

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

She was the youngest of the two daughters of a most affectionate, indulgent father; and had, in consequence of her sister’s marriage, been mistress of his house from a very early period. Her mother had died too long ago for her to have more than an indistinct remembrance of her caresses; and her place had been supplied by an excellent woman as governess, who had fallen little short of a mother in affection.

Sixteen years had Miss Taylor been in Mr. Woodhouse’s family, less as a governess than a friend, very fond of both daughters, but particularly of Emma. Between *them* it was more the intimacy of sisters. Even before Miss Taylor had ceased to hold the nominal office of governess, the mildness of her temper had hardly allowed her to impose any restraint; and the shadow of authority being now long passed away, they had been living together as friend and friend very mutually attached, and Emma doing just what she liked; highly esteeming Miss Taylor’s judgment, but directed chiefly by her own.

The real evils, indeed, of Emma’s situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself; these were the

disadvantages which threatened alloy to her many enjoyments. The danger, however, was at present so unperceived, that they did not by any means rank as misfortunes with her.

Extract 2. From “Delights of France or Horrors of the Road” (1985). Fay Weldon (1931)

Miss Jacobs, I don't believe in psychotherapy. I really do think it's a lot of nonsense. Now it's taken me considerable nerve to say that— I'm a rather mild person and hate to be thought rude. I just wouldn't want to be here under false pretences: it wouldn't be fair to you, would it? But Piers wants me to come and see you, so of course I will. [...] I'm a great mystery to the doctors. Piers has taken me everywhere—Paris, New York, Tokyo—but the verdict seems to be the same: it's all in my head. It is a hysterical paralysis. I find this humiliating: as if I'd done it on purpose just to be a nuisance. I'm the last person in the world to be a nuisance! Did you see Piers? Isn't he handsome? He's in his mid—fifties, you know, but so good—looking. Of course he has an amazing brain—well, the whole world knows that—and I think that helps to keep people looking young. I have a degree in Economics myself—unusual for a housewife of my age—but of course I stayed home to devote myself to Piers and the children. I think, on the whole, women should do that. Don't you? Why don't you answer my questions? Isn't that what you're supposed to do? Explain me to myself? No? I must explain myself to myself. Oh.

Behind every great man stands a woman. I believe that. Piers is a Nobel Prize winner. Would he have done it without me? I expect so. He just wouldn't have had me, would he, or the four children? They're all doing very well. Piers was away quite a lot when the children were young — he's a particle physicist, as I'm sure you know. [...] But we all always had these holidays together, in France. [...] Piers would drive; I'd navigate; the four children piled in the back! [...]

How did the paralysis start? It was completely unexpected. There were no warning signs—no numbness, no dizziness, nothing like that. It was our thirtieth wedding anniversary. To celebrate we were going to do a tour of France in Piers' new MG. It can do 110 mph, you know, but Piers doesn't often go at more than fifty—five—that's the speed limit in the States, you know, and he says they know what they're doing—it's the best speed for maximum safety—but he likes to have cars that can go fast. To get out of trouble in an emergency, Piers says. We were going on the Weymouth/ Cherbourg route — I'm usually happier with Dover/Calais — the sea journey's shorter for one thing, and somehow the longer the journey through England the more likely Piers is to forget to drive on the right once we're in France. I've noticed it. But I don't argue about things like that. [...]

So we were setting out for Weymouth, the bags were packed, the individual route maps from the AA in the glove compartment— they'd arrived on time, for once. (I'd taken a Valium in good time—my heart tends to beat rather fast, almost to the point of palpitations, when I'm navigating.) [...] Piers loves melons and likes me to feed him

wedges as we drive along [...]. Piers will spend hours choosing one from a market stall. He'll test every single one on display [...] until he's found one that's absolutely perfect. Sometimes, before he's satisfied, he'll go through the fruit boxes at the back of the stall as well. [...] Anyway, as I was saying, I was about to step into the car when my legs just kind of folded and I sank down on to the pavement, and that was six months ago, and I haven't walked since.

[...]

When the children were small we camped, but every year the sites got more formal and more crowded and more full of *frites* and Piers didn't like that. He enjoyed what he called 'wilderness camping'. In the camping guides which describe the sites there's always an area section—that is, the area allowed for each tent. Point five of a hectare is crowded: two hectares perfectly possible. Piers liked ten hectares, which meant a hillside somewhere and no television room for the children or *frites* stall—and that meant more work for me, not that I grudged it: a change of venue for cooking [...] is as good as a rest from cooking. It was just that the children preferred the crowded sites, and I did sometimes think they were better for the children's French. An English sparrow and a French sparrow sing pretty much the same song. But there you are, Piers loved the wilderness.

Extract 3. From *Oliver Twist* (1837-1839), Chapter 5. Charles Dickens (1812 -1870)

Oliver was awakened in the morning, by a loud kicking at the outside of the shop-door: which, before he could huddle on his clothes, was repeated, in an angry and impetuous manner, about twenty-five times. When he began to undo the chain, the legs desisted, and a voice began.

'Open the door, will yer?' cried the voice which belonged to the legs which had kicked at the door.

'I will, directly, sir,' replied Oliver: undoing the chain, and turning the key.

'I suppose yer the new boy, ain't yer?' said the voice through the key-hole.

'Yes, sir,' replied Oliver.

'How old are yer?' inquired the voice.

'Ten, sir,' replied Oliver.

'Then I'll whop yer when I get in,' said the voice; 'you just see if I don't, that's all, my work'us brat!' and having made this obliging promise, the voice began to whistle.

Oliver had been too often subjected to the process to which the very expressive monosyllable just recorded bears reference, to entertain the smallest doubt that the owner of the voice, whoever he might be, would redeem his pledge, most honourably. He drew back the bolts with a trembling hand, and opened the door.

For a second or two, Oliver glanced up the street, and down the street, and over the way: impressed with the belief that the unknown, who had addressed him through the key-hole, had walked a few paces off, to warm himself; for nobody did he see but a big charity-boy, sitting on a post in front of the house, eating a slice of bread and butter: which he cut into wedges, the size of his mouth, with a clasp-knife, and then consumed with great dexterity.

‘I beg your pardon, sir,’ said Oliver at length: seeing that no other visitor made his appearance; ‘did you knock?’

‘I kicked,’ replied the charity-boy.

‘Did you want a coffin, sir?’ inquired Oliver, innocently.

At this, the charity-boy looked monstrous fierce; and said that Oliver would want one before long, if he cut jokes with his superiors in that way.

Extract 4. From *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), Ch. 4. Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)

A table, somewhat rheumatic in its limbs, was drawn out in front of the fire, and covered with a cloth, displaying cups and saucers of a decidedly brilliant pattern, with other symptoms of an approaching meal. At this table was seated Uncle Tom, Mr. Shelby’s best hand, who, as he is to be the hero of our story, we must daguerreotype for our readers. He was a large, broad-chested, powerfully-made man, of a full glossy black, and a face whose truly African features were characterized by an expression of grave and steady good sense, united with much kindness and benevolence. There was something about his whole air self-respecting and dignified, yet united with a confiding and humble simplicity.

He was very busily intent at this moment on a slate lying before him, on which he was carefully and slowly endeavoring to accomplish a copy of some letters, in which operation he was overlooked by young Mas’r George, a smart, bright boy of thirteen, who appeared fully to realize the dignity of his position as instructor.

“Not that way, Uncle Tom,—not that way,” said he, briskly, as Uncle Tom laboriously brought up the tail of his *g* the wrong side out; “that makes a *q*, you see.”

“La sakes, now, does it?” said Uncle Tom, looking with a respectful, admiring air, as his young teacher flourishingly scrawled *q*’s and *g*’s innumerable for his edification; and then, taking the pencil in his big, heavy fingers, he patiently recommenced.

“How easy white folks al’us does things!” said Aunt Chloe, pausing while she was greasing a griddle with a scrap of bacon on her fork, and regarding young Master George with pride. “The way he can write, now! and read, too! and then to come out here evenings and read his lessons to us,—it’s mighty interestin’!”

“But, Aunt Chloe, I’m getting mighty hungry,” said George. “Isn’t that cake in the skillet almost done?”



“Mose done, Mas’r George,” said Aunt Chloe, lifting the lid and peeping in,—”browning beautiful—a real lovely brown. Ah! let me alone for dat. Missis let Sally try to make some cake, t’ other day, jes to *larn* her, she said. ‘O, go way, Missis,’ said I; ‘it really hurts my feelin’s, now, to see good vittles spilt dat ar way! Cake ris all to one side—no shape at all; no more than my shoe; go way!’”

***Questions to be discussed in class***

1. Put together all the information about all the characters that appear in Extracts 1 to 4. Mark the information provided by the narrator with an N (for narrator), and the information you can infer about the characters based on the text and on your own thoughts with an R (for reader). What can you conclude from your lists?
2. Which kind of narrator do these extracts have? Do you think the difference in narrator is accountable for the differences in regard to your conclusions to question 1)? Why / Why not?
3. What is the role of exposition (i.e. expository descriptions) and dialogue (among characters) with regard to characterization?
4. In Extract 3, Oliver Twist “meets” through a closed door a new character. He creates his own idea about whom this person is based on the short conversation they have through the closed door. How does the use of dialect help the reader form an idea of the new character?
5. Do you find any differences between the use of dialect in extracts 3 and 4? Why / Why not? What is the dialect that each of the extracts portray? In which ways does it diverge from standard (non-dialect) English?
6. How does the language used in the dialogues in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* differ from the narrator’s? Why do you think this is so? What is the effect of such a contrast?

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## Week 3

### Day 5

#### Unit 1: Prose fiction

##### 1.4. Plot

Group discussion on the Readings of the Day for a survey on the notions of *Bildungsroman* and coming of age stories (Extract 1), framed narrative (Extract 2), epiphany (Extract 3), and climax (Extract 4). Emphasis is placed on the distinction between plot and story (Abbott), and further analysis is given to the beginnings (Extracts 1 and 2) and endings or closure of prose fiction, with regard to which the notion of climax (Extract 4) is explored.

The works to which the extracts pertain are commented on (“The Man Who Was Almost a Man”, *Heart of Darkness*, *The House of Mirth*, and *Adam Bede*) and their authors (Richard Wright, Joseph Conrad, Edith Wharton and George Eliot, respectively) briefly introduced and historically contextualized.

#### *READINGS OF THE DAY*

Extract 1. From “The Man Who Was Almost a Man” (1961).

Richard Wright (1908 -1960)

Dave struck out across the fields, looking homeward through parting light. Whut’s the use talkin wid em niggers in the field? Anyhow, his mother was putting supper on the table. Them niggers; can’t understan nothing. One of these days he was going to get a gun and practice shooting, then they couldn’t talk to him as though he were a little boy. He slowed, looking at the ground. Shucks, Ah ain scareda them even ef they are biggem me! Aw, Ah know whut Ahma do. Ahm going by ol Joe’s sto n git that Sears Roebuck catlog n look at them guns. Mebbe Ma will lemme buy one when she gits mah pay from ol man Hawkins. Ahma beg her t gimme some money. Ahm ol ernough to hava gun. Ahm seventeen. Almost a man. He strode, feeling his long loose-jointed limbs. Shucks, a man oughta hava little gun aftah he done worked hard all day.

He came in sight of Joe’s store. A yellow lantern glowed on the front porch. He mounted steps and went through the screen door, hearing it bang behind him. There was

a strong smell of coal oil and mackerel fish. He felt very confident until he saw fat Joe walk in through the rear door, then his courage began to ooze.

“Howdy, Dave! Whutcha want?”

“How yuh, Mistah Joe? Aw, Ah don wanna buy nothing. Ah jus wanted t see ef yuhd lemme look at tha catlog erwhile.”

“Sure! You wanna see it here?”

“Nawsuh. Ah wans t take it home wid me. Ah’ll bring it back termorrow when Ah come in from the fiels. “

“You plannin on buying something?”

“Yessuh.”

“Your ma lettin you have your own money now?”

“Shucks. Mistah Joe, Ahm gittin t be a man like anybody else!”

Joe laughed and wiped his greasy white face with a red bandanna.

“Whut you plannin on buyin?”

Dave looked at the floor, scratched his head, scratched his thigh, and smiled. Then he looked up shyly.

“Ah’ll tell yuh, Mistah Joe, ef yuh promise yuh won’t tell.”

“I promise.”

“Waal, Ahma buy a gun.”

“A gun? Whut you want with a gun?”

“Ah wanna keep it.”

“You ain’t nothing but a boy. You don’t need a gun.”

“Aw, lemme have the catlog, Mistah Joe. Ah’ll bring it back.”

Joe walked through the rear door. Dave was elated. He looked around at barrels of sugar and flour. He heard Joe coming back. He craned his neck to see if he were bringing the book. Yeah, he’s got it. Gawddog, he’s got it!

Extract 2. From *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Joseph Conrad (1857-1924)

The Nellie, a cruising yawl, swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails, and was at rest. The flood had made, the wind was nearly calm, and being bound down the river, the only thing for it was to come to and wait for the turn of the tide.

The sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway. [...] The Director of Companies was our captain and our host. We four affectionately watched his back as he stood in the bows looking to seaward. On the whole river there was nothing that looked half so nautical. He resembled a pilot, which to a seaman is trustworthiness personified.

[...]

“I suppose you fellows remember I did once turn fresh-water sailor for a bit”. [...] “I don’t want to bother you much with what happened to me personally,” he began, showing in this remark the weakness of many tellers of tales who seem so often unaware of what their audience would like best to hear; “yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap. It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me—and into my thoughts. It was sombre enough, too—and pitiful—not extraordinary in any way—not very clear either. No, not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light.

“Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, ‘When I grow up I will go there.’ [...]. But there was one yet—the biggest, the most blank, so to speak—that I had a hankering after.

“True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery—a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. But there was in it one river especially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird—a silly little bird. Then I remembered there was a big concern, a Company for trade on that river. Dash it all! I thought to myself, they can’t trade without using some kind of craft on that lot of fresh water—steamboats! Why shouldn’t I try to get charge of one? I went on along Fleet Street, but could not shake off the idea. The snake had charmed me.

Extract 3. From *The House of Mirth* (1905). Edith Wharton (1862-1937)

She opened her cheque-book, and plunged into such anxious calculations as had prolonged her vigil at Bellomont on the night when she had decided to marry Percy Gryce. Poverty simplifies book-keeping, and her financial situation was easier to ascertain than it had been then; but she had not yet learned the control of money, and during her transient phase of luxury at the Emporium she had slipped back into habits of extravagance which still impaired her slender balance. A careful examination of her

cheque-book, and of the unpaid bills in her desk, showed that, when the latter had been settled, she would have barely enough to live on for the next three or four months; and even after that, if she were to continue her present way of living, without earning any additional money, all incidental expenses must be reduced to the vanishing point. She hid her eyes with a shudder, beholding herself at the entrance of that ever-narrowing perspective down which she had seen Miss Silverton's dowdy figure take its despondent way.

It was no longer, however, from the vision of material poverty that she turned with the greatest shrinking. She had a sense of deeper impoverishment—of an inner destitution compared to which outward conditions dwindled into insignificance. It was indeed miserable to be poor—to look forward to a shabby, anxious middle-age, leading by dreary degrees of economy and self-denial to gradual absorption in the dingy communal existence of the boarding-house. But there was something more miserable still—it was the clutch of solitude at her heart, the sense of being swept like a stray uprooted growth down the heedless current of the years. That was the feeling which possessed her now—the feeling of being something rootless and ephemeral, mere spin-drift of the whirling surface of existence, without anything to which the poor little tentacles of self could cling before the awful flood submerged them. And as she looked back she saw that there had never been a time when she had had any real relation to life. Her parents too had been rootless, blown hither and thither on every wind of fashion, without any personal existence to shelter them from its shifting gusts. She herself had grown up without any one spot of earth being dearer to her than another: there was no centre of early pieties, of grave endearing traditions, to which her heart could revert and from which it could draw strength for itself and tenderness for others. In whatever form a slowly-accumulated past lives in the blood—whether in the concrete image of the old house stored with visual memories, or in the conception of the house not built with hands, but made up of inherited passions and loyalties—it has the same power of broadening and deepening the individual existence, of attaching it by mysterious links of kinship to all the mighty sum of human striving.

Such a vision of the solidarity of life had never before come to Lily. She had had a premonition of it in the blind motions of her mating-instinct; but they had been checked by the disintegrating influences of the life about her. All the men and women she knew were like atoms whirling away from each other in some wild centrifugal dance: her first glimpse of the continuity of life had come to her that evening in Nettie Struther's kitchen.

The poor little working-girl who had found strength to gather up the fragments of her life, and build herself a shelter with them, seemed to Lily to have reached the central truth of existence. It was a meagre enough life, on the grim edge of poverty, with scant margin for possibilities of sickness or mischance, but it had the frail audacious permanence of a bird's nest built on the edge of a cliff—a mere wisp of leaves and straw, yet so put together that the lives entrusted to it may hang safely over the abyss.

Extract 4. From *Adam Bede* (1859). George Eliot (1819-1880)

At these words a thrill ran through the court. Hetty was visibly trembling; now, for the first time, she seemed to be listening to what a witness said.

“There was a lot of timber-choppings put together just where the ground went hollow, like, under the bush, and the hand came out from among them. But there was a hole left in one place and I could see down it and see the child’s head; and I made haste and did away the turf and the choppings, and took out the child. It had got comfortable clothes on, but its body was cold, and I thought it must be dead. I made haste back with it out of the wood, and took it home to my wife. She said it was dead, and I’d better take it to the parish and tell the constable. And I said, ‘I’ll lay my life it’s that young woman’s child as I met going to the coppice.’ But she seemed to be gone clean out of sight. And I took the child on to Hetton parish and told the constable, and we went on to Justice Hardy. And then we went looking after the young woman till dark at night, and we went and gave information at Stoniton, as they might stop her. And the next morning, another constable came to me, to go with him to the spot where I found the child. And when we got there, there was the prisoner a-sitting against the bush where I found the child; and she cried out when she saw us, but she never offered to move. She’d got a big piece of bread on her lap.”

Adam had given a faint groan of despair while this witness was speaking. He had hidden his face on his arm, which rested on the boarding in front of him. It was the supreme moment of his suffering: Hetty was guilty; and he was silently calling to God for help. He heard no more of the evidence, and was unconscious when the case for the prosecution had closed—unconscious that Mr. Irwine was in the witness-box, telling of Hetty’s unblemished character in her own parish and of the virtuous habits in which she had been brought up. This testimony could have no influence on the verdict, but it was given as part of that plea for mercy which her own counsel would have made if he had been allowed to speak for her—a favour not granted to criminals in those stern times.

At last Adam lifted up his head, for there was a general movement round him. The judge had addressed the jury, and they were retiring. The decisive moment was not far off. Adam felt a shuddering horror that would not let him look at Hetty, but she had long relapsed into her blank hard indifference. All eyes were strained to look at her, but she stood like a statue of dull despair. [...]

It was not very long, hardly more than a quarter of an hour, before the knock which told that the jury had come to their decision fell as a signal for silence on every ear. It is sublime—that sudden pause of a great multitude which tells that one soul moves in them all. Deeper and deeper the silence seemed to become, like the deepening night, while the jurymen’s names were called over, and the prisoner was made to hold up her hand, and the jury were asked for their verdict.

“Guilty.”

**Questions to be discussed in class**

1. What is the difference between plot and story? Can the same story be plotted in different ways?
2. Extracts 1 and 2 are the beginnings of, respectively, Richard Wright's "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In which ways do these beginnings differ?
3. Why do you think the title of Wright's "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" is relevant for the understanding of the story? Which kinds of expectations in terms of the development of the story do you have as a reader after reading the title and the extract? Who is the narrator of the story and who is its protagonist?
4. Who is the narrator of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*? Where is the beginning of the story set?
5. How would you describe what happens to the 'She' in the extract from Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*?
6. Extract 4 is a fragment from George Eliot's novel *Adam Bede*. Which kind of scene does it describe? Where do you think such a scene may be placed within a novel? Why? What would be the effect of placing the same scene towards the beginning or towards the end of the novel?

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## Day 6

### Unit 1: Prose fiction

#### 1.5. Plot movement: time management

Group discussion on the Readings of the Day to focus particularly on non-linear narratives (Extract 4 as an epitome of these) and the different types and uses of flash-forwards (Extract 1) and flashbacks (Extracts 2 and 3), as well as on their effects (in terms of narrative pace, characterization, the creation of specific effects such as suspense, etc.). The research on these matters by Genette (1980, 1989) serves as the major theoretical framework for this discussion. It is also noted how the management of time in, for instance, many nineteenth-century narratives favors a linear drive, whereas modernist and postmodernist narratives usually perturb it (Bridgeman).

The works to which the extracts pertain are commented on (“Pygmalion”, *Sleeping Murder*, “Paul’s Case”, and *Slaughterhouse Five*) and their authors (John Updike, Agatha Christie, Willa Cather, and Kurt Vonnegut, respectively) briefly introduced and historically contextualized.

#### *READINGS OF THE DAY*

##### Extract 1. From “Pygmalion” (1981). John Updike (1932-2009)

What he liked about his first wife was her gift of mimicry; after a party, theirs or another couple’s, she would vivify for him what they had seen, the faces, the voices, twisting her pretty mouth into small contortions that brought back, for a dazzling instant, the presence of an absent acquaintance. “Well, if I reawwy—how does Gwen talk?—if I re-awwy cared about conservation—” And he, the husband, would laugh and laugh, even though Gwen was secretly his mistress and would become his second wife. What he liked about *her* was her liveliness in bed, and what he disliked about his first wife was the way she would ask to have her back rubbed and then, under his laboring hands, night after night, fall asleep.

For the first years of the new marriage, after he and Gwen had returned from a party he would wait, unconsciously, for the imitations, the recapitulation, to begin. He would even prompt: “What did you make of our hostess’s brother?”

“Oh,” Gwen would simply say, “he seemed very pleasant.” Sensing with feminine intuition that he expected more, she might add, “Harmless. Maybe a little stuffy.” Her eyes flashed as she heard in his expectant silence an unvoiced demand, and with that touching, childlike impediment of hers she blurted out, “What are you reawry after?”

“Oh, nothing. Nothing. It’s just—Marguerite met him once a few years ago and she was struck by what a pompous nitwit he was. That way he has of sucking his pipestem and ending every statement with ‘Do you follow me?’”

“I thought he was perfectly pleasant,” Gwen said frostily, and turned her back to remove her silvery, snug party dress. As she wriggled it down over her hips she turned her head and defiantly added, “He had a *lot* to say about tax shelters.”

Extract 2. From *Sleeping Murder* (1976). Agatha Christie (1890-1976)

Wenda leaned her elbows on the table and cupped her chin in her hands while her eyes roamed dispassionately over the remains of a hasty lunch. Presently she must deal with them, carry them out to the scullery, wash up, put things away, see what there would be, later, for supper. But there was no wild hurry. She felt she needed a little time to take things in. Everything had been happening too fast.

The events of the morning, when she reviewed them, seemed to be chaotic and impossible. Everything had happened too quickly and too improbably. Inspector Last had appeared early -- at half past nine. With him had come Detective Inspector Primer from headquarters and the Chief Constable of the County. The latter had not stayed long. It was Inspector Primer who was now in charge of the case of Lily Kimble deceased and all the ramifications arising therefrom. It was Inspector Primer, a man with a deceptively mild manner and a gentle apologetic voice, who had asked her if it would inconvenience her very much if his men did some digging in the garden. From the tone of his voice, it might have been a case of giving his men some healthful exercise, rather than of seeking for a dead body which had been buried for eighteen years.

Giles had spoken up then. He had said: “I think, perhaps, we could help you with a suggestion or two. And he told the Inspector about the shifting of the steps leading down to the lawn, and took the Inspector out on to the terrace.

The ‘Inspector had looked up at the barred window on the first floor at the corner of the house and had said: “That would be the nursery, I presume.” And Giles said that it would. Then the Inspector and Giles had come back into the house, and two men with spades had gone out into the garden, and Giles, before the Inspector could get down to questions, had said: “I think, Inspector, you had better hear something that my wife has so far not mentioned to anyone except myself-- and -- er -- one other person. ‘ The gentle, rather compelling gaze of Inspector Primer came to rest on Gwenda. It was faintly speculative. He was asking himself, Gwenda thought: “Is this a woman who can

be depended upon, or is she the kind who imagines things?" So strongly did she feel this, that she started in a defensive way: "I may have imagined it. Perhaps I did. But it seems awfully real." Inspector Primer said softly and soothingly: "Well, Mrs. Reed, let's hear about it.' And Gwenda had explained.

Extract 3. From "Paul's Case: A Study in Temperament" (1905).

Willa Cather (1873-1947)

IT was Paul's afternoon to appear before the faculty of the Pittsburg High School to account for his various misdemeanors. He had been suspended a week ago, and his father had called at the principal's office and confessed his perplexity about his son. Paul entered the faculty room, suave and smiling. His clothes were a trifle outgrown, and the tan velvet on the collar of his open overcoat was frayed and worn; but, for all that, there was something of the dandy about him, and he wore an opal pin in his neatly knotted black four-in-hand, and a red carnation in his buttonhole. This latter adornment the faculty somehow felt was not properly significant of the contrite spirit befitting a boy under the ban of suspension.

Paul was tall for his age and very thin, with high, cramped shoulders and a narrow chest. His eyes were remarkable for a certain hysterical brilliancy, and he continually used them in a conscious, theatrical sort of way, peculiarly offensive in a boy. The pupils were abnormally large, as though he were addicted to belladonna, but there was a glassy glitter about them which that drug does not produce.

When questioned by the principal as to why he was there, Paul stated, politely enough, that he wanted to come back to school. This was a lie, but Paul was quite accustomed to lying—found it, indeed, indispensable for overcoming friction. His teachers were asked to state their respective charges, which they did with such a rancour and aggrievedness as evinced that this was not a usual case. Disorder and impertinence were among the offences named, yet each of his instructors felt that it was scarcely possible to put into words the real cause of the trouble, which lay in a sort of hysterically defiant manner of the boy's; in the contempt which they all knew he felt for them, and which he seemingly made not the least effort to conceal. Once, when he had been making a synopsis of a paragraph at the blackboard, his English teacher had stepped to his side and attempted to guide his hand. Paul had started back with a shudder, and thrust his hands violently behind him. The astonished woman could scarcely have been more hurt and embarrassed had he struck at her. The insult was so involuntary and definitely personal as to be unforgettable. In one way and another he had made all his teachers, men and women alike, conscious of the same feeling of physical aversion.

His teachers felt, this afternoon, that his whole attitude was symbolized by his shrug and his flippantly red carnation flower, and they fell upon him without mercy. He stood through it, smiling, his pale lips parted over his white teeth. (His lips were continually

twitching, and he had a habit of raising his eyebrows that was contemptuous and irritating to the last degree.) Older boys than Paul had broken down and shed tears under that baptism of fire, but his set smile did not once desert him, and his only sign of discomfort was the nervous trembling of the fingers that toyed with the buttons of his overcoat, and an occasional jerking of the other hand that held his hat. Paul was always smiling, always glancing about him, seeming to feel that people might be watching him and trying to detect something.

Extract 4. From *Slaughterhouse Five* (1969). Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007)

It is so short and jumbled and jangled, Sam, because there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre. Everybody is supposed to be dead, to never say anything or want anything ever again. Everything is supposed to be very quiet after a massacre, and it always is, except for the birds.

And what do the birds say? All there is to say about a massacre, things like Too-tee-weet?

I have told my sons that they are not under any circumstances to take part in massacres, and that the news of massacres of enemies is not to fill them with satisfaction or glee. I have also told them not to work for companies which make massacre machinery, and to express contempt for people who think we need machinery like that.

As I've said I recently went back to Dresden with my friend O'Hare. We had a million laughs in Hamburg and West Berlin and East Berlin and Vienna and Salzburg and Helsinki, and in Leningrad, too. It was very good for me, because I saw a lot of authentic backgrounds for made-up stories which I will write later on. One of them will be Russian Baroque and another will be No Kissing and another will be Dollar Bar and another will be If the Accident Will, and so on.

And so on.

There was a Lufthansa plane that was supposed to fly from Philadelphia to Boston to Frankfurt. O'Hare was supposed to get on in Philadelphia and I was supposed to get on in Boston, and off we'd go. But Boston was socked in, so the plane flew straight to Frankfurt from Philadelphia. And I became a non-person in the Boston Fog, and Lufthansa put me in a limousine with some other non-persons and sent us to a motel for a non-night.

The time would not pass. Somebody was playing with the clocks, and not only with the electric clocks, but the wind-up kind, too. The second hand on my watch would twitch once, and a year would pass, and then it would twitch again.

There was nothing I could do about it. As an Earthling, I had to believe whatever clocks said-and calendars.

**Questions to be discussed in class**

1. Extract 1 is the opening of the short story “Pygmalion” by John Updike. Who are the main characters in the story and how are they introduced in the first paragraph?
2. Both Extracts 2 and 3 incorporate scenes from the past. Do you think they do so differently and for different purposes? Consider, in this regard, that the extract from Agatha Christie’s novel is part of the last chapter of the book, and that the extract from Willa Cather’s short story is its opening.
3. How do you think narrative flashbacks can work as a characterization technique? How can their use affect readers’ interpretation of certain characters?
4. How is the narrative structured in *Slaughterhouse Five*, judging from Extract 4? Why do you think that is the case? What may the author want to convey by such a temporal arrangement of the story?
5. These four extracts are part of works published in the twentieth century. Judging from extracts of novels/short stories previously discussed in class and published prior to the twentieth century, what can you conclude regarding their management of the chronological order of the narrative?

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## Week 4

### Day 7

#### Unit 1: Prose fiction

##### 1.6. Setting

Group discussion on the Readings of the Day focusing on the constructions and purposes of setting in terms of the creation of a specific mood and atmosphere (Extract 1), with the object of contributing to characterization and placing characters in particular geographical and socio-economic coordinates (Extract 2), or as a means to express their psychological and emotional states (Extract 3). Further discussion explores the relevance of setting in the creation of fictional worlds and, particularly, in the shaping of utopias and dystopias (Extract 4).

The works to which the extracts pertain are commented on (*The Shining*, *Hard Times*, “The Yellow Wallpaper”, and *The Road*) and their authors (Stephen King, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Cormac McCarthy, respectively) briefly introduced and historically contextualized.

#### ***READINGS OF THE DAY***

##### Extract 1. From *The Shining* (1977), Chapter 19. Stephen King (1947)

Danny was remembering the words of someone else who had worked at the Overlook during the season: Her saying she'd seen something in one of the rooms where ... a bad thing happened. That was in Room 217 and I want you to promise me you won't go in there, Danny ... steer right clear ... It was a perfectly ordinary door, no different from any other door on the first two floors of the hotel. It was dark gray, halfway down a corridor that ran at right angles to the main second-floor hallway. The numbers on the door looked no different from the house numbers on the Boulder apartment building they had lived in. A 2, a 1, and a 7. Big deal. Just below them was a tiny glass circle, a peephole. Danny had tried several of them. From the inside you got a wide, fish-eye view of the corridor. From outside you could screw up your eye seven ways to Sunday and still not see a thing. A dirty gyp.

(Why are you here?)

After the walk behind the Overlook, he and Mommy had come back and she had fixed him his favorite lunch, a cheese and bologna sandwich plus Campbell's Bean Soup. They ate in Dick's kitchen and talked. The radio was on, getting thin and crackly music from the Estes Park station. The kitchen was his favorite place in the hotel, and he guessed that Mommy and Daddy must feel the same way, because after trying their meals in the dining room for three days or so, they had begun eating in the kitchen by mutual consent, setting up chairs around Dick Hallorann's butcher block, which was almost as big as their dining room table back in Stovington, anyway. The dining room had been too depressing, even with the lights on and the music playing from the tape cassette system in the office. You were still just one of three people sitting at a table surrounded by dozens of other tables, all empty, all covered with those transparent plastic dustcloths. Mommy said it was like having dinner in the middle of a Horace Walpole novel, and Daddy had laughed and agreed. Danny had no idea who Horace Walpole was, but he did know that Mommy's cooking had begun to taste better as soon as they began to eat it in the kitchen.

Extract 2. From *Hard Times* (1854), Chapter 5. Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

Coketown, to which Messrs. Bounderby and Gradgrind now walked, was a triumph of fact; it had no greater taint of fancy in it than Mrs. Gradgrind herself. Let us strike the key-note, Coketown, before pursuing our tune.

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and to-morrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

These attributes of Coketown were in the main inseparable from the work by which it was sustained; against them were to be set off, comforts of life which found their way all over the world, and elegancies of life which made, we will not ask how much of the fine lady, who could scarcely bear to hear the place mentioned. The rest of its features were voluntary, and they were these.

You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful. If the members of a religious persuasion built a chapel there—as the members of eighteen religious persuasions had done—they made it a pious warehouse of red brick, with sometimes (but this is only in highly ornamental examples) a bell in a birdcage on the top of it.

The solitary exception was the New Church; a stuccoed edifice with a square steeple over the door, terminating in four short pinnacles like florid wooden legs. All the public inscriptions in the town were painted alike, in severe characters of black and white. The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial. The M'Choakumchild school was all fact, and the school of design was all fact, and the relations between master and man were all fact, and everything was fact between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchaseable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen.

Extract 3. From "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892).

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935)

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition. But John says if I feel so, I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains to control myself-before him, at least, and that makes me very tired.

I don't like our room a bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings! but John would not hear of it. He said there was only one window and not room for two beds, and no near room for him if he took another.

[...] So we took the nursery at the top of the house. It is a big, airy room, the whole floor nearly, with windows that look all ways, and air and sunshine galore. It was nursery first and then playroom and gymnasium, I should judge; for the windows are barred for little children, and there are rings and things in the walls. The paint and paper look as if a boys' school had used it. It is stripped off the paper--in great patches all around the head of my bed, about as far as I can reach, and in a great place on the other side of the room low down. I never saw a worse paper in my life. One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin. It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate and provoke study, and when you follow the lame uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide--plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions.

The color is repellant, almost revolting; a smouldering unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight. It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others. No wonder the children hated it! I should hate it myself if I had to live in this room long. There comes John, and I must put this away,--he hates to have me write a word.

[...]



It is the strangest yellow, that wallpaper! It makes me think of all the yellow things I ever saw - not beautiful ones like buttercups, but old foul, bad yellow things. But there is something else about that paper--the smell! I noticed it the moment we came into the room, but with so much air and sun it was not bad. Now we have had a week of fog and rain, and whether the windows are open or not, the smell is here. It creeps all over the house. I find it hovering in the dining-room, skulking in the parlor, hiding in the hall, lying in wait for me on the stairs. It gets into my hair. Even when I go to ride, if I turn my head suddenly and surprise it--there is that smell! Such a peculiar odor, too! I have spent hours in trying to analyze it, to find what it smelled like. It is not bad--at first, and very gentle, but quite the subtlest, most enduring odor I ever met. In this damp weather it is awful, I wake up in the night and find it hanging over me. It used to disturb me at first. I thought seriously of burning the house--to reach the smell.

Extract 4. From *The Road* (2006). Cormac McCarthy (1933)

When he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night he'd reach out to touch the child sleeping beside him. Nights dark beyond darkness and the days more gray each one than what had gone before. Like the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world. His hand rose and fell softly with each precious breath. He pushed away the plastic tarpaulin and raised himself in the stinking robes and blankets and looked toward the east for any light but there was none. [...] With the first gray light he rose and left the boy sleeping and walked out to the road and squatted and studied the country to the south. Barren, silent, godless. He thought the month was October but he wasn't sure. He hadn't kept a calendar for years. They were moving south. There'd be no surviving another winter here.

When it was light enough to use the binoculars he glassed the valley below. Everything paling away into the murk. The soft ash blowing in loose swirls over the blacktop. He studied what he could see. The segments of road down there among the dead trees. Looking for anything of color. Any movement. Any trace of standing smoke. He lowered the glasses and pulled down the cotton mask from his face and wiped his nose on the back of his wrist and then glassed the country again. Then he just sat there holding the binoculars and watching the ashen daylight congeal over the land. [...] This was not a safe place. They could be seen from the road now it was day. The boy turned in the blankets. Then he opened his eyes. Hi, Papa, he said.

[...]

An hour later they were on the road. [...] The road was empty. Below in the little valley the still gray serpentine of a river. Motionless and precise.

Along the shore a burden of dead reeds. Are you okay? he said. The boy nodded. Then they set out along the blacktop in the gun-metal light, shuffling through the ash, each the other's world entire.

**Questions to be discussed in class**

1. What does 'setting' refer to exactly in each of these extracts?
2. Would you say that in each of these extracts settings function in a different way? Why / Why not?
3. Does setting contribute towards characterization? If so, in which ways?
4. Would you describe any of the settings of the extracts above 'not real'? Why? Why is that important for readers to detect?
5. How can setting create 'an emotional experience' for readers?
6. Which kind of language or techniques does each of the extracts use to create their setting?

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## **Week 5**

### **Day 8**

#### **Introduction session to essay writing**

### **Day 9**

#### **Training session for Essay 1**

All the essay questions for Essay 1 revolve around a selection of short stories, some of which have been partly discussed in class (a); others have not (b):

(a) Patricia Highsmith's "Ming's Biggest Prey", Fay Weldon's "Delights of France or Horrors of the Road", Richard Wright's "The Man Who Was Almost a Man", Willa Cather's "Paul's Case: A Study in Temperament", and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper".

(b) Graham Greene's "The Destroyers", V. S. Naipaul's "George and the Pink House", Alice Munro's "The Bear Came Over the Mountain", and Sandra Cisneros's "Eleven".

Since all the essays have in common that they deal with short stories, this session opens with a review of some of the distinctive features of the short story, including its economy, and the use of epiphanies and climax-building strategies. A typology of short stories is also provided (Gill, Thaler).

This is followed by a group discussion on the short story by Margaret Atwood "Happy Endings" (1983), which is taken as a case study for students to practice towards individual analyses of the essay question of their choice. The reason why Atwood's short story has been chosen for this purpose is that, by providing six versions of the same (i.e. the meeting of John and Mary, and six different potential outcomes of it), it encourages reflection on the process of how a short story is constructed in its middle and its ending.

**READINGS OF THE DAY**

Margaret Atwood's "Happy Endings" (1983). As an introduction to her writings, check the following radio interview with Atwood in the BBC radio show "Woman's Hour" (Running time: 12 mins), where Atwood explains her creative process as an author: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p01lfs9s>

***Questions to be discussed in class***

1. How are John and Mary described? Does their characterization change in the six endings of the story?
2. How would you describe, judging from the short story, gender roles in Canada at the time when the story was written (early 80s)?
3. What does each of the endings suggest?
4. How does the short story work as a piece of metafiction?
5. Would you say the short story puts forward a statement about fiction writing? And about plots?
6. Why is punctuation relevant in the way the short story is written? What does it convey?

**Choose one of the following six essay topics to write your first essay:**

***ESSAY TOPICS FOR ESSAY I***

1. Discuss the different uses and functions of a first-person narrative by drawing on Fay Weldon's "Delights of France or Horrors of the Road", Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper", and Sandra Cisneros's "Eleven".
2. How does the element of the house in V. S. Naipaul's "George and the Pink House" and Graham Greene's "The Destroyers" play a central role in the two short stories? Would you say it also has an effect upon characterization?
3. In Fay Weldon's "Delights of France or Horrors of the Road" and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper", the protagonists are two women who suffer from

mental afflictions. On which elements does characterization rely in the two short stories?

4. Richard Wright's "The Man Who Was Almost a Man", Graham Greene's "The Destructors" and Willa Cather's "Paul's Case: A Study in Temperament" have in common that they portray the fascination towards violence / violent attitudes on the part of young boys. Explore how violence pervades the three short stories and how it becomes a structural element of their respective plots.

5. In both Richard Wright's "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" and V. S Naipaul's "George and the Pink House" different dialects of English are used to convey information about the geographical and social backgrounds of some of the characters. How does language work towards their characterization? Which are the different English-es used in each of the short stories and which kind of information do they provide about each of the characters?

6. In which ways and for which reasons are flashbacks used in Patricia Highsmith's "Ming's Biggest Prey" and Alice Munro's "The Bear Came Over the Mountain"?

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## Day 10

### Unit 2: Drama

Unit 2 revolves around two plays: Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Wilde's play is to be discussed in full to illustrate different dramatic strategies and conventions (Act I, 'Dramatic texts: Conventions'; Act II, 'Dialogues and wordplay'; Act III, 'Drama and society: from text to context'), whereas only Acts I, II and V of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are to be analysed in class in the sessions devoted to, respectively, 'Prose, verse and dramatic form', 'Monologues: the chorus, soliloquies and asides', and 'Plays within plays'. Screenings of two stage performances complement the study of the two plays, namely, a production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* performed at the Vaudeville Theatre, London, in 2018, and Shakespeare's Globe 2013 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* filmed on the Globe stage. The greater linguistic challenge that Shakespeare's play poses accounts for the fact that while the screening of the performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest* follows the reading and class discussion of the text, that of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* precedes it. This helps students understand the story, get acquainted with the different characters involved, and with Shakespeare's language and style; the Shakespeare's Globe 2013 production functions, thus, as the gateway to the text. The Act Summaries by Janyce Marson ("Summary of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*") included in her introduction to her edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (New York, NY: Bloom's Literary Criticism, 2008), are here recommended readings.

#### 2.1. Dramatic texts: conventions

An introductory lecture to the language of drama and its conventions is provided to contextualize and train students for the analysis of the two plays from which all the readings for this unit are extracted, namely, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, by Oscar Wilde. Students are first presented with a glossary of key terms of the language of drama (Pavis, Shantz, and Carlson), which includes notions that range from paratext, act and scene, to indicators of space and time and forms of stage directions, to the notions of monologue, soliloquy and aside, to prosody. This is followed by an introduction to some of the most popular

theatrical forms in Victorian England, including farce, melodrama and the music hall (Mitchell, Powell), and a brief presentation of specifically Wilde as a playwright. All the ideas introduced in the lecture part of the session are then connected in a group discussion with the Reading of the Day, Act I of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

**READINGS OF THE DAY**

*The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act I.

Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *A Trivial Comedy for Serious People* was first performed on 14 February 1895 at St James's Theatre in London. It is often described as "a farcical comedy". As Russell Jackson explains:

"Wilde announced in an interview before the opening that the play was 'exquisitely trivial, a delicate bubble of fancy', but that it had a philosophy, that 'we should treat all the trivial things of life very seriously, and all the serious things of life with sincere and studied triviality'. It is this quality which makes Wilde's play less than tractable to attempts to attach to it various kinds of biographical meaning (that is, being construed as showing an intentional element of self-discovery) while it remains hospitable to all kinds of significance commentators may identify in it."

Jackson, Russell. "The Importance of Being Earnest", in *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Peter Raby. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp.161-178 (p. 173).

In 1997 a film on the life of Oscar Wilde was released, *Wilde*, directed by Brian Gilbert and starring Stephen Fry, who then gave a series of interviews discussing the life, personality and work of Oscar Wilde:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Av9F\\_zdMR8w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Av9F_zdMR8w) (Part I; running time, 8 mins.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvWROI8OulI&t=144s> (Part II; running time, 8 mins.)

***Questions to be discussed in class***

1. After reading Act I of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, why do you think the play was described as "a farcical comedy"? What is comic in it and what is more specifically farcical?
2. What kind of information is provided in square brackets? How is this information not only important for actors and stage directors but also for readers?

3. A considerable part of Act I is a conversation between the characters of Algernon and Jack. How would you describe both? What kind of information about them can you extract from their conversation and what kind of information about them can you infer from the information provided in square brackets?
4. Who are Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen? What is their connection to Algernon and Jack?
5. Wilde originally subtitled the play “A Serious Comedy for Trivial People” but then changed it to “A Trivial Comedy for Serious People”. What is the difference between the two subtitles? Judging by Act I, why do you think the current subtitle was thought more appropriate?
6. How would you describe the pace of the dialogue? What does it transmit and what kind of effect does it have on readers?

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## Week 6

### Day 11

#### Unit 2: Drama

##### 2.2. Dialogues and wordplay

This session explores, on the one hand, the various functions dialogues serve in plays in regard to characterization and plot building (Culpeper), and, on the other, considering that the two plays analysed in this unit are comedies, how the ambiguities of language in dialogues can be used for the purposes of (humorous) wordplay. Wordplay is thus presented not only as an end in itself (to construct misunderstandings and puns), but also as a means toward character-building. The use and purposes of satire in Wilde are approached (Reinert). The session revolves around a group discussion on the Reading of the Day, Act II of *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Ruddick).

#### **READING OF THE DAY**

##### *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act II.

Oscar Wilde mastered the writing of dialogue. In his essay “The Critic as Artist” (1891), he referred to dialogue and its uses specifically for artistic criticism (not for playwriting), in the following terms:

“Dialogue, certainly, that wonderful literary form which, from Plato to Lucian, and from Lucian to Giordano Bruno, and from Bruno to that grand old Pagan in whom Carlyle took such delight, the creative critics of the world have always employed, can never lose for the thinker its attraction as a mode of expression. By its means he can both reveal and conceal himself, and give form to every fancy, and reality to every mood. By its means he can exhibit the object from each point of view, and show it to us in the round, as a sculptor shows us things, gaining in this manner all the richness and reality of effect that comes from those side issues that are suddenly suggested by the central idea in its progress, and really illumine the idea more completely, or from those felicitous after-thoughts that give a fuller completeness to the central scheme, and yet convey something of the delicate charm of chance.” (Wilde, Oscar. “The Critic as Artist”, in *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Richard Ellmann. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969, p. 364)

0. Do you think that the ends to which the critic can put dialogue can be shared by the playwright as well?

***Questions to be discussed in class***

1. In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act II, there are several conversations in which different combinations of characters participate. Identify how many conversations there are, which characters participate in each of them, and the nature of the dialogues they have. Do you find any differences among them in terms of topics of conversation, the pace of the dialogues, and the presence of different comic elements?
2. How do male characters interact with each other when no female characters participate in the conversation? And when they do? What changes? Are there any differences depending on the status, age, and other defining features of the female characters involved?
3. Do any of the characters that appear in Act II have any exaggerated personality traits? If so, which one/s?
4. Do you find any traces of satire in Act II? If so, which ones? To which ends do you think it is employed?
5. How would you say humour is constructed in Act II? Can you identify any puns or other instances of wordplay in the text? How do they work? Are any of the characters more prone to wordplay than others? Who, if so?
6. How do the different characters respond to wordplay? What does their response say about them?

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## Day 12

### Unit 2: Drama

#### 2.3. Drama and society: from text to context

This session underlines that a play is not only a public spectacle but also a political experience, and that the political dimension of dramatic texts means that they reflect and respond in various ways to the historical contexts in which they are produced. *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act III, this session's Reading of the Day, is used as a case study to explore the values of Victorian England regarding matters such as class and gender, and the country's morality and institutions (Booth, Sloan). Wilde's critical stance towards them is examined (Gagnier); an overview of the years Wilde spent in jail after having been sentenced for his homosexuality, and the final years of his life, spent in poverty and exile in Europe, conclude the day's discussion (Bristow, Frankel).

#### **READING OF THE DAY**

#### *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act III

#### **Questions to be discussed in class**

1. The scholar Peter Raby, in his study "Wilde's Comedies of Society", describes *The Importance of Being Earnest* as a "study of England". Would you agree with such a statement? Which social classes of nineteenth-century England does Wilde's play focus on? Are there glimpses of the situation of other social classes?
2. What does *The Importance of Being Earnest* say about gender roles in Victorian England? What would you say is expected from men and women? What are they allowed / not allowed to do?
3. Marriage is one of the driving forces of the plot of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and a topic of many conversations and debates among characters in the play. What can you infer from these about the institution of marriage in Victorian England? And regarding ideas on romantic love?

4. How is the city of London described in the play? In which ways does it contrast with the English countryside? Why are both London and the countryside crucial for the development of the plot?

5. Earnestness is at the heart of the play. How is it portrayed and in which terms (and by whom) is it discussed? What does that suggest about moral values in Victorian England?

6. The satire in *The Importance of Being Earnest* is often remarked on. At whom or what is it aimed? Which is/are the target/s of Wilde's satire in the play? Why?

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## Week 7

### Day 13

#### Unit 2: Drama

##### Screening of the play *The Importance of Being Earnest*, by Oscar Wilde

Screening of the production performed at the Vaudeville Theatre, London, on 9 October 2018 (filmed live), staged by the Classic Spring Theatre Company led by Dominic Dromgoole, former Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe (Running time: 118 mins). Its casting includes Sophie Thompson as Lady Bracknell, Jeremy Swift as Reverend Chasuble, and Pippa Nixon as Gwendolyn Fairfax. Since its running time is 118 minutes, the screening takes up the full session. The questions on the production are discussed at the beginning of the following session, on Day 14.

##### ***Screening of the production...***

*The Importance of Being Earnest*, by Oscar Wilde, performed at the Vaudeville Theatre, London, on 9 October 2018 (filmed live). Staged by the Classic Spring Theatre Company, and directed by Dominic Dromgoole.

Running time: 118 mins.

##### ***Questions to be discussed in class in the next session***

1. How are the characters of Jack Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff portrayed in the play? Had you imagined them differently? Why?
2. Which moments of the play do you find the funniest when staged? Why do you think that is?
3. How are the text's stage directions implemented in the performance? Which elements of the humour of the play do not rely directly on what it is said but rather on what it is done?
4. How do gestures, the tone of voice, posture and costume contribute to characterization? Do you find that all these strengthen the image of each character suggested by the play, or that they add extra elements and features? For example?

5. What would you say is the climax of the play now that you have seen it performed? Do you think you would have given a different answer had you only read the text of the play?

6. How are the satirical and farcical aspects of the play conveyed in the performance?

## Day 14

### Unit 2: Drama

#### Screening of the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, by William Shakespeare

The first 30 minutes of this session discuss the questions on the screening of *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Screening of Shakespeare's Globe 2013 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* filmed on the Globe stage (Running time: 172 minutes). Starring Olivier Award winner Michelle Terry as Titania/Hippolyta and Pearce Quigley as Bottom; this is a production by the Globe's Artistic Director Dominic Dromgoole. Since its running time is 172 minutes, the screening takes up the remainder of the session and continues on Day 15. The questions on the production are also discussed then.

#### **Screening of the production...**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, by William Shakespeare at the Globe theatre in 2013; starring Michelle Terry as Titania/Hippolyta and Pearce Quigley as Bottom, and directed by Dominic Dromgoole.

Running time: 172 minutes.

#### **Introduction**

The Shakespeare's Globe 2013 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was filmed on the Globe stage, the present-day Globe theatre being a reconstruction of the Elizabethan playhouse of the same name that stood on the south bank of River Thames. It was there where Shakespeare's plays were performed: the original playhouse was built in 1599 and in 1613 it was destroyed by fire. The modern Globe is a quite realistic reconstruction of the original building, although it now accommodates 1,400 spectators, in contrast with the original theatre, which accommodated 3,000. Since the performance screened in class was staged there, learn more about the theatre itself with Professor Stephen Greenblatt, one of the leading scholars on Shakespeare, who explores how Shakespeare's plays would have been performed in his own time in this 9-minute documentary filmed at the Globe:

"Globe Theatre: Performance during Shakespeare's time":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95ec5xtt6Hs> (Running time: 9 mins.)

Prior to the in-class screening, read in advance the introductory section "Reading Shakespeare's Language: *Midsummer Night's Dream*" (pp. xv-xxviii) by Barbara A.



Mowat and Paul Werstine, published in their edition of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (New York: Folger Shakespeare Library, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2016). This section comprises subsections 'Shakespeare's Words' (pp. xvi-xviii), 'Shakespeare's Sentences' (pp. xviii-xxi), 'Shakespearean Wordplay' (pp. xxii-xxvi), and 'Implied Stage Action' (pp. xxvi-xxviii).

***Questions to be discussed in class in the next session***

1. How are characters of different social status portrayed in the performance by means of non-textual elements? Consider, for instance, the portrayal of royalty and of servants and actors.
2. Who is Puck? How is he portrayed in the performance?
3. How do dreams and magic appear in the performance? How are they presented onstage? Which kinds of confusions do they create and how are these exploited for humorous purposes?
4. Do you find any similarities and differences in the performance of the various soliloquies that appear in the text? Do you think that depending on their function, and depending on the character, they are performed differently and have different effects in the audience? Provide examples.
5. How is the "The play of Pyramus and Thisbe" performed? Which non-textual elements are used by actors to exploit all its humorous potential?
6. How would you describe the pace of the performance? Does it change throughout the play?

## **Week 8**

### **Day 15**

#### **Unit 2: Drama**

#### **Screening of the play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, by William Shakespeare (continued)**

The session begins with the screening of the remainder of Shakespeare's Globe 2013 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is followed by a group discussion generally about matters of language and performance, and specifically around the questions provided to students on the previous session.

### **Day 16**

#### **Feedback and discussion: Essay 1**

## Week 9

### Day 17

#### Training session for Essay 2

All the essay questions for Essay 2 revolve around the two plays examined in Unit 2 (Drama), that is, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, by Oscar Wilde, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, by William Shakespeare. This session is devoted to questions on how to approach the writing of Essay 2.

**Choose one of the following six essay topics to write your second essay:**

#### ***ESSAY TOPICS FOR ESSAY 2***

1. How do soliloquies, asides and stage directions function in *The Importance of Being Earnest*? How do they contribute to the humorousness of the play?
2. The subtitle of *The Importance of Being Earnest* is 'A Trivial Comedy for Serious People'. Would you argue that there is some seriousness in the play?
3. What is the relevance of fictitious identities and double lives in *The Importance of Being Earnest*? Why do they seem necessary for the characters that invent them? What does that say about the society of Wilde's time?
4. Even if Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* extensively uses magical and fantastical elements and characters, how do you think it nonetheless might reveal the social structure and dynamics of Elizabethan England?
5. What makes *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a comedy? How does its humour work?
6. Discuss the following three soliloquies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: (1) Helena's "O weary night, O long and tedious night" (Act III, Scene 2); (2) Bottom's "When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer" (Act IV, Scene 1), and (3) Pyramus's "Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams" (Act V, Scene 1).

## Day 18

### Unit 2: Drama

#### 2.4. Prose, verse and dramatic form

This session is devoted to exploring the use of verse and prose and the conventions of both in, particularly, English Renaissance drama. The session opens with an introductory lecture to Renaissance verse in dramatic texts and its rhythmical patterns. Notions such as blank verse and iambic pentameter are defined and illustrated by drawing not only on the recommended secondary literature of the bibliography (most importantly, Hartman), but also on resources such as the ones provided by the “Teaching Shakespeare” initiative (<https://www.tes.com/teaching-shakespeare/>) and by those of the Royal Shakespeare Company (<https://www.rsc.org.uk/education/>), as well as the teaching resources of the Folger Shakespeare Library’s programme “Forsooth! The Folger Teacher Community” (<https://teachingshakespeare.folger.edu/home>).

The Readings of the Day, namely, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* Act I, allow for an illustration of Shakespeare’s use of blank verse as well as for an analysis of social distinctions at work, and the use of verse and prose in the same play. As Gill puts it: “The rule of thumb (though there are plenty of significant exceptions) is that verse and prose depend on social rank: kings and queens, princes and princesses, lords and ladies, leading citizens and generals use verse, whereas servants, workmen, soldiers and members of the crowd speak in prose” (p. 88). Other uses of verse / prose depending on matters related to emotional emphasis and mental states are also commented on, and an explanation of certain linguistic features of the drama of the English Renaissance (most notably, pronouns) are explained to facilitate further reading.

Students are encouraged to check out at home, after reading Act I, the BBC Radio 3 performance of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (“The Shakespeare Sessions” series), directed by Celia de Wolff, and first broadcast in June 2018: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06btvrw>, as this allows them to re-read the text of Act I while they listen to its performance.

**READINGS OF THE DAY**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act I*

**Questions to be discussed in class**

1. Identify all characters in Act I, Scene 1. Who are they? How do they speak? Which kind of language reveals their social status? How do they address each other?
2. Do the same with all characters in Act I, Scene 2. Who are they? How do they speak? Which kind of language indicates their rank? How do they address each other?
3. What are some of the differences between the way characters in Scene 1 and 2 speak?
4. Which of the two scenes do you find easier to read? What do you think makes it so?
5. Identify some of the formulae and fixed expressions that characters use in the two scenes. What do they mean? What is their purpose?
6. Do you find any differences between the use of stage directions by Wilde and Shakespeare? Why do you think this might be so?

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## Week 10

### Day 19

#### Unit 2: Drama

##### 2.5. Monologues: the chorus, soliloquies and asides

A group discussion on the Readings of the Day, namely, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II, is followed by explanations of the three different forms of monologues that can appear integrated into dramatic texts: the speech of the Chorus, soliloquies, and asides. After an introduction to the function of the Chorus in Greek drama, the use of a Chorus figure (an individual) in Renaissance drama is explained in more detail; the Prologue to *Henry V* is used to illustrate its role in Shakespearean drama. To this end, not only is the Prologue to *Henry V* read in class, but also the corresponding scene from the 1944 Laurence Olivier film is played. The effects of public (audience-addressed) and private (self-addressed) soliloquies, as well as asides and instances of interior monologue (words passing through the mind of the character) are moreover discussed. Two soliloquies from *Othello* are used to illustrate their functions and effects in tragedies: Iago's "And what's he then that says I play the villain" (Act II, Scene 3), and Othello's "It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul" (Act V, Scene 2).

To mark the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death, in 2016 the British journal *The Guardian* filmed a selection of leading actors performing some of Shakespeare's greatest speeches in *The Guardian's* "Shakespeare Solos" series. Students are encouraged to check them at home:

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/series/shakespeare-solos>

**READINGS OF THE DAY**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II

**Questions to be discussed in class**

1. At the end of Act I, Scene 1, the character of Helena has a soliloquy (“How happy some o’er other some can be!”). What is the reason for her soliloquy? What is its tone and Helena’s emotional state? Why do you think it is placed precisely there?
2. Helena has another soliloquy in Act II, Scene 2 (“O, I am out of breath in this fond chase”). Why do you think precisely the character of Helena has been given another one? Would you say that the two share certain similarities?
3. Does Helena address the audience in any of her soliloquies? Why do you think she does/does not?
4. In Act II, Scene 2, Hermia has a soliloquy (“Help me, Lysander, help me! Do thy best”). Does Hermia address the audience in it?
5. In *Shakespeare’s Theatre: A Dictionary of His Stage Context*, Hugh Macrae Richmond affirms that asides are “one of the classic conventions of Elizabethan drama”. In an aside, “an actor on-stage with others reflects privately on the play’s action by making his character speak aloud in a manner supposedly fully audible only to a limited number of the other persons on-stage, or even only to the audience, and which is therefore not overtly recognized by at least some other actors” (p. 44). Which characters have asides in Act I and Act II of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*? What do they say in them? What are the purposes and effects of those asides?
6. For which other purposes do you think asides can be used? Do you think asides can be used differently in comedy and in tragedy? Are any of the asides in Acts I and II of a humorous nature?

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## Day 20

### Unit 2: Drama

#### 2.6. Plays within plays

This session is devoted to analysing the play-within-play theatrical device. It opens with a group discussion on the “The play of Pyramus and Thisbe” included in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act V, which is the session’s Reading of the Day. The functions and uses of the duplication of the theatrical reality by means of this device, as well as its effects upon readers/spectators, are discussed (Berry, Calderwood, Fischer, Klemm). *Hamlet*’s “The Mousetrap” (Act III, Scene 2) is moreover used to illustrate how the play-within-play resource can serve entirely different purposes and have highly dissimilar effects in the context of a tragedy (Guilfoyle). The session concludes with the screening of “The Mousetrap” scene from Laurence Olivier 1948 film *Hamlet* to show how it can look onstage.

#### **READING OF THE DAY**

*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act V

#### **Questions to be discussed in class**

1. What is the “The play of Pyramus and Thisbe” about? Which are its main characters?
2. How does Philostrate describe the play? Why? What is his attitude towards it? And about the company performing it?
3. What do Theseus and Hippolyta think of the play and the performance of the actors? In which terms do they talk about it?
4. How does “The play of Pyramus and Thisbe” reflect and comply with the conventions of Renaissance drama?
5. Why is “The play of Pyramus and Thisbe” such a humorous piece? What makes it funny? What role do you think it has in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*?

6. For which other purposes and effects do you think plays-within-plays can be used? Do you think they can work differently in comedy and in tragedy?

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## Week 11

### Day 21

#### Unit 3: Poetry

##### 3.1. An introduction to prosody (I)

Over the six sessions that explore the third unit on Poetry, formal, technical features, are examined and studied through a selection of poems from various poetic traditions and composed in different time periods, from early modernity to the twenty-first century. The technical aspects explored in class, beginning with matters of rhythm and meter and concluding with an overview of some of the major rhetorical figures or tropes, are the ones described in these introductory summaries that precede the list of the Readings of the Day. I would like to insist that this technical approach to the analysis of poetry, as suggested by these introductory pieces to every session, is complemented by class discussion, where poems are approached from diverse angles, and, as the sessions progress, analyses become richer because of their accumulative nature, in that every session takes aboard in its discussions those aspects studied in the previous. My personal approach to teaching the technical aspects of the sounds of poetry coincides with Peter Robinson's, who, in *The Sound Sense of Poetry*, states the following:

The sound sense of a poem can never be caught by giving an account of its meter, because a poem is—not only, but at the very least—a pattern performed in an made of naturally pronounced words. As already noted, an individual poem will necessarily also customise its meter, and other formal devices; so, a description of the abstract pattern which it is playing a variation upon may provide a beginning but could by no means be an end of the poem's meaning. The formal devices that a poem deploys will be a necessary part of describing the poem, though they can never be sufficient. There are innumerable poems is the ballad stanza; then there is Wordsworth's use of that stanza; and then, most importantly, there is his use of the stanza twice, with variations, in 'A slumber did my spirit seal'.

Begin able to hear these forms and techniques offers useful guidelines to approaching it, but reading a poem involves the exercising of skills, not the

application of fixed formulas. Iambic tetrameters, in the abstract, don't signify anything—so you can't say what Wordsworth's poem has a certain meaning because its odd numbered lines are in that meter. You can draw useful conclusions from reading the techniques in a poem, but also—since each poem is a unique deployment of its techniques—it will be signalling to a reader ways in which to take this unique shaping of words. Such cueing will vary from poem to poem, as will the degree of emphasis given to the cues.

Peter Robinson, *The Sound Sense of Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 68-69)

This initial session explores basic poetic concepts and provides students with an introduction to the prosody of English verse. The Readings of the Day for this session are used to practice scansion; by reading the selected texts and answering the six related discussion questions in advance, students are meant to look for information on basic poetic concepts and to reflect on matters of rhythm and metre on their own. Thus, as indicated by one of the introductory exercises (#5), students are to look up a list of twenty-five terms in the Glossary included in Charles O. Hartman's *Verse: An Introduction to Prosody* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015, pp. 275-296); these are a selection of essential poetic notions pervasive in Unit 3 with which they should be familiar:

(1) prosody (2) scansion (3) feet (4) line (5) stanza (6) hemistich (7) caesura (8) refrain  
 (9) iamb (10) trochee (11) anapest (12) dactyl (13) triplet (14) hexameter  
 (15) pentameter (16) couplet (17) distich (18) tercet (19) quatrains (20) sonnet  
 (21) ballad (22) blank verse (23) free verse (24) enjambments (25) end-stopped lines

Exercise #6 also aims to make students reflect about syllable and stress patterns. This exercise adapts an example provided by G. S. Fraser in *Metre, Rhyme and Free Verse* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1985, pp. 3-4), which Fraser uses to remark on the difference between the rhythms of verse and prose. After going through the six introductory exercises in class and checking as a group the answers students have provided to each, an introduction to the process of scanning a line is provided following Hartman's section "Scansion" (*Verse: An Introduction to Prosody*, Chichester: Wiley

Blackwell, 2015, pp. 31-39). The lines used for practice are the two opening lines of W. B. Yeats "Adam's Curse" (1903), written in rhymed iambic pentameter couplets: "We sat together at one summer's end, / That beautiful mild woman, your close friend".

The effects that different metres create are also examined, as well as the importance and myriad uses of variation, including the singling out of words, ideas, or entire lines in a poem, the changing of its pace to either slow down or speed up the reading (for example to create a sense of urgency or danger), and to convey certain emotional states in agreement with the contents of the poem (Finch and Varnes).

The Readings of the Day for this session are six poems examined to illustrate different metrical patterns; they are presented to students unaccompanied by their titles and the names of their authors to encourage speculation about, among others, the historical period when they were written. The six poems are here arranged chronologically:

- 1) William Blake, "The Tyger", *Songs of Experience* (1794) → trochaic foot: x /
- 2) William Wordsworth, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud", *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807) → iambic foot: x /
- 3) Lord Byron, "The Destruction of Sennacherib", *Hebrew Melodies* (1815) → anapaestic foot: x x /
- 4) Walt Whitman, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking", *Leaves of Grass* (1860), → dactylic foot: / x x
- 5) Christina Rossetti, no title, from *Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book* (1872) → dactylic foot: / x x
- 6) Sylvia Plath, "Metaphors", *The Colossus* (1960) → syllabics (lines with the same number of syllables but without regular metrical patterns)

**READINGS OF THE DAY**

1)  
*Tyger Tyger, burning bright,  
In the forests of the night;  
What immortal hand or eye,*

Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand, dare seize the fire?  
And what shoulder, & what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? what dread grasp,  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears  
And water'd heaven with their tears:  
Did he smile his work to see?  
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,  
In the forests of the night:  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

2)

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,

They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

3)

*The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;  
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.*

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:  
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,  
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,  
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;  
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,  
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:  
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

4)

*Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,  
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,  
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,  
Over the sterile sands and the fields beyond, where the child leaving his bed wander'd  
alone, bareheaded, barefoot,  
Down from the shower'd halo,  
Up from the mystic play of shadows twining and twisting as if they were alive,  
Out from the patches of briars and blackberries,  
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,  
From your memories sad brother, from the fitful risings and fallings I heard,  
From under that yellow half-moon late-risen and swollen as if with tears,*



From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,  
From the thousand responses of my heart never to cease,  
From the myriad thence-arous'd words,  
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,  
From such as now they start the scene revisiting,  
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,  
Borne hither, ere all eludes me, hurriedly,  
A man, yet by these tears a little boy again,  
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,  
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,  
Taking all hints to use them, but swiftly leaping beyond them,  
A reminiscence sing.

5)

Dead in the cold, a song-singing thrush,  
*Dead at the foot of a snowberry bush,--*  
Weave him a coffin of rush,  
Dig him a grave where the soft mosses grow,  
Raise him a tombstone of snow.

6)

*I'm a riddle in nine syllables,*  
*An elephant, a ponderous house,*  
*A melon strolling on two tendrils.*  
O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!  
This loaf's big with its yeasty rising.  
Money's new-minted in this fat purse.  
I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf.  
I've eaten a bag of green apples,  
Boarded the train there's no getting off.

***Questions to be discussed in class***

1. Read each of these poems aloud. Do you find any regularities in terms of rhythm? Particularly consider the lines in italics.
2. How is the idea of 'symmetry' reflected in the form of the second poem? Where do you find symmetry in formal terms?
3. How would you describe the stanzas into which some of these poems are divided? What is the effect of repeating similar lines at the beginning or at the end of every stanza?

4. Do you find any differences between the last poem (“I’m a riddle in nine syllables”) and all the previous in formal terms?

5. Look for definitions of the following 25 terms in the “Glossary” section of Charles O. Hartman’s *Verse: An Introduction to Prosody* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015, pp. 275-296):

(1) prosody (2) scansion (3) feet (4) line (5) stanza (6) hemistich (7) caesura (8) refrain

(9) iamb (10) trochee (11) anapest (12) dactyl (13) triplet (14) hexameter

(15) pentameter (16) couplet (17) distich (18) tercet (19) quatrains (20) sonnet

(21) ballad (22) blank verse (23) free verse (24) enjambments (25) end-stopped lines

6. Compare and contrast a) and b) in terms of number of syllables and in terms of the placing of the stressed syllables. What is the difference between both? Only one of the two is Shakespeare’s original, can you guess which one?

a) Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.

b) To a summer’s day shall I compare thee?  
More lovely thou art and more temperate.

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## Day 22

### Unit 3: Poetry

#### 3.2. An introduction to prosody (II)

This session continues exploring basic poetic concepts and different kinds of lines and stanzas, with a focus on the notions of pentameter, couplet, tercet, quatrain, sonnet, blank verse and free verse. The selection of poems of this session's Readings of the Day are in effect intended to illustrate many of these notions and to make students understand how they operate in actual poetic practice. Special attention is given to blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter), for, as Anthony Hecht remarks, after it was invented in the sixteenth century in the process of translating Latin unrhymed heroic hexameters, "it was found infinitely serviceable, and by dint of its adaptability and versatility became the most familiar pattern for poetic discourse in the English language" (p. 46). For this reason, three instances of poems in blank verse produced in different historical periods and touching on highly dissimilar matters are presented to students for their analysis. The sonnet form and free verse receive special attention, and each are illustrated by three different instances, so that the Readings of the Day for this session put together a total of nine poems: three sonnets, three instances of blank verse, and three poems in free verse. Special attention is given to line endings (both end-stopped and run-on lines, or enjambments, particularly significant in the case of Mary Robinson's "London's Summer Morning"), and different understandings and structuring of sonnets are also explained; Emma Lazarus's "The New Colossus" is thus used to comment on the form of Petrarchan sonnets, discussed in contrast to the Shakespearean form, as illustrated by Sonnet 130. Margaret Walker's "Childhood" shows the various ends to which the sonnet form has been put in the twentieth century, including social and political protest. The sonnet moreover becomes a way to discuss different types of stanzas (couplets, quatrains, octaves, sestet), and provides a significant contrast to free verse, studied in connection with the notion of cadence and the use of punctuation. In general terms, the sonnet form is in this session explained only as far as stanzas are concerned, and in that sense the distinction is made between the Petrarchan or Italian form (an octave and a sestet) and the English sonnet (three quatrains and a final couplet).

The nine poems that constitute the Readings of the Day for this session are presented to students without their titles and the names of their authors to encourage speculation about, among others, the historical period when they were written. These are here arranged chronologically:

- 1) Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, *The Second Book of Virgil's Aeneid*, lines 1-17 (1557) → blank verse (I)
- 2) William Shakespeare's Sonnet 130, "My Mistress' Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun", *Sonnets* (1609) → sonnet (I)
- 3) Mary Robinson, "London's Summer Morning" (1800) → blank verse (II)
- 4) William Cullen Bryant, from "Thanatopsis" (1817) → blank verse (III)
- 5) Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus" (1883) → sonnet (II)
- 6) Amy Lowell, "The Taxi", *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914) → free verse (I)
- 7) Wallace Stevens, "Metaphors of a Magnifico" (1918) → free verse (III)
- 8) William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow", *Spring and All* (1923) → free verse (II)
- 9) Margaret Walker, "Childhood", *For My People* (1942) → sonnet (III)

**READINGS OF THE DAY**

1)  
They whisted all, with fixed face attent,  
When prince Æneas from the royal seat  
Thus gan to speak. O Queen! it is thy will  
I should renew a woe cannot be told:  
How that the Greeks did spoil, and overthrow  
The Phrygian wealth, and wailful realm of Troy:  
Those ruthful things that I myself beheld;  
And whereof no small part fell to my share.  
Which to express, who could refrain from tears?  
What Myrmidon? or yet what Dolopes?  
What stern Ulysses' waged soldier?  
And lo! moist night now from the welkin falls;  
And stars declining counsel us to rest.  
But since so great is thy delight to hear

Of our mishaps, and Troyè's last decay;  
Though to record the same my mind abhors,  
And plaint eschews, yet thus will I begin.

2)

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;  
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;  
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;  
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.  
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,  
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;  
And in some perfumes is there more delight  
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.  
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know  
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;  
I grant I never saw a goddess go;  
My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.  
    And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare  
    As any she belied with false compare.

3)

Who has not waked to list the busy sounds  
Of summer's morning, in the sultry smoke  
Of noisy London? On the pavement hot  
The sooty chimney-boy, with dingy face  
And tattered covering, shrilly bawls his trade,  
Rousing the sleepy housemaid. At the door  
The milk-pail rattles, and the tinkling bell  
Proclaims the dustman's office; while the street  
Is lost in clouds impervious. Now begins  
The din of hackney-coaches, waggons, carts;  
While tinmen's shops, and noisy trunk-makers,  
Knife-grinders, coopers, squeaking cork-cutters,  
Fruit-barrows, and the hunger-giving cries  
Of vegetable-vendors, fill the air.  
Now every shop displays its varied trade,  
And the fresh-sprinkled pavement cools the feet  
Of early walkers. At the private door  
The ruddy housemaid twirls the busy mop,  
Annoying the smart 'prentice, or neat girl,  
Tripping with band-box lightly. Now the sun  
Darts burning splendor on the glittering pane,  
Save where the canvas awning throws a shade  
On the gay merchandise. Now, spruce and trim,

In shops (where beauty smiles with industry)  
Sits the smart damsel; while the passenger  
Peeps through the window, watching every charm.  
Now pastry dainties catch the eye minute  
Of humming insects, while the limy snare  
Waits to enthrall them. Now the lamp-lighter  
Mounts the tall ladder, nimbly venturous,  
To trim the half-filled lamps, while at his feet  
The pot-boy yells discordant! All along  
The sultry pavement, the old-clothes-man cries  
In tone monotonous, while sidelong views  
The area for his traffic: now the bag  
Is slyly opened, and the half-worn suit  
(Sometimes the pilfered treasure of the base  
Domestic spoiler), for one half its worth,  
Sinks in the green abyss. The porter now  
Bears his huge load along the burning way;  
And the poor poet wakes from busy dreams,  
To paint the summer morning.

4)  
To him who in the love of Nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks  
A various language; for his gayer hours  
She has a voice of gladness, and a smile  
And eloquence of beauty, and she glides  
Into his darker musings, with a mild  
And healing sympathy, that steals away  
Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts  
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight  
Over thy spirit, and sad images  
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,  
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,  
Make thee to shudder, and grow sick at heart;—  
Go forth, under the open sky, and list  
To Nature's teachings, while from all around—  
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air—  
Comes a still voice—

5)  
Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame

Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she  
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

6)

When I go away from you  
The world beats dead  
Like a slackened drum.  
I call out for you against the jutted stars  
And shout into the ridges of the wind.  
Streets coming fast,  
One after the other,  
Wedge you away from me,  
And the lamps of the city prick my eyes  
So that I can no longer see your face.  
Why should I leave you,  
To wound myself upon the sharp edges of the night?

7)

Twenty men crossing a bridge,  
Into a village,  
Are twenty men crossing twenty bridges,  
Into twenty villages,  
Or one man  
Crossing a single bridge into a village.

This is old song  
That will not declare itself . . .

Twenty men crossing a bridge,  
Into a village,  
Are  
Twenty men crossing a bridge  
Into a village.



That will not declare itself  
Yet is certain as meaning . . .

The boots of the men clump  
On the boards of the bridge.  
The first white wall of the village  
Rises through fruit-trees.  
Of what was it I was thinking?  
So the meaning escapes.

The first white wall of the village . . .  
The fruit-trees . . .

8)  
so much depends  
upon

a red wheel  
barrow

glazed with rain  
water

beside the white  
chickens

9)

When I was a child I knew red miners  
dressed raggedly and wearing carbide lamps.  
I saw them come down red hills to their camps  
dyed with red dust from old Ishkooda mines.  
Night after night I met them on the roads,  
or on the streets in town I caught their glance;  
the swing of dinner buckets in their hands,  
and grumbling undermining all their words.

I also lived in low cotton country  
where moonlight hovered over ripe haystacks,  
or stumps of trees, and croppers' rotting shacks  
with famine, terror, flood, and plague near by;  
where sentiment and hatred still held sway

and only bitter land was washed away.

***Questions to be discussed in class***

1. How would you group the nine poems according to their meter and rhythm? Explain your decision.
2. Scan poems 3 and 4: count their syllables and the positioning of stresses. What is the name given to such a line?
3. Compare poems 3 and 6 in terms of their line endings. What difference do the different line endings convey when reading the poem?
4. Some of these poems are structured in stanzas. Comment on the different nature of the stanzas that make them up.
5. What do poems 2 and 5 have in common in formal terms? In which ways do they differ?
6. In which ways is punctuation, or lack thereof, relevant in the construction of poems 7 and 8?

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## Week 12

### Day 23

#### Unit 3: Poetry

##### 3.3. Rhyme

Rhyme is here studied both according to syllables and to sounds following the definition provided by Whitla (p. 198). In addition to discussing different kinds of rhyme and rhyme schemes (the different kinds of sonnets and their associated rhyme patterns receive here special attention), this session explores, by drawing on different poems as examples, the goals that Wainwright (p. 129) singles out for his own treatment of rhyme, including “the aesthetic purposes of rhyme and how rhyme can enhance meaning”, and the relationship between rhyme and word play (and generally the humorous uses of rhyme, in satire and mock-epics in particular). As in previous sessions, students are not given the names of authors and titles of the poems that make up the Readings of the Day to encourage speculation about the language used and the historical period when they were written. Here they are arranged chronologically:

- 1) Edmund Spenser, Sonnet LXXV, “One Day I Wrote her Name”, from *Amoretti* (1595)
- 2) William Shakespeare’s Sonnet 116, “Let Me not to the Marriage of True Minds”, *Sonnets* (1609) → the corresponding exercise in the “Questions...” section draws attention to the concept of ‘historical rhyme’.
- 3) Edgar Allan Poe, from “The Raven” (1845) → end rhymes and internal rhymes.
- 4) Emily Dickinson, “The Wind Didn’t Come from the Orchard — Today” (written, c. 1862)
- 5) Lewis Carroll, “Jabberwocky”, included in *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871) → rhyme and the creation of meaning
- 6) Stevie Smith, “A Father for a Fool”, *Tender Only to One* (1938) → To be read to the tune ‘Boys and Girls Come out to Play’, as it unsettles readers’ expectations of a form that suggests a nursery rhyme.

- 7) Gwendolyn Brooks, from "The Anniad", *Annie Allen* (1949) → 'mock heroic' poetry.

**READINGS OF THE DAY**

1)

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,  
But came the waves and washed it away:  
Again I wrote it with a second hand,  
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.  
"Vain man," said she, "that dost in vain assay,  
A mortal thing so to immortalize;  
For I myself shall like to this decay,  
And eke my name be wiped out likewise."  
"Not so," (quod I) "let baser things devise  
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:  
My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,  
And in the heavens write your glorious name:  
Where whenas death shall all the world subdue,  
Our love shall live, and later life renew."

2)

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove.  
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me prov'd,  
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

3)

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.

“‘Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—  
Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Nameless *here* for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating  
“‘Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—  
This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
That I scarce was sure I heard you”—here I opened wide the door;—  
Darkness there and nothing more.

4)

The Wind didn't come from the Orchard — today —  
Further than that —  
Nor stop to play with the Hay —  
Nor threaten a Hat —  
He's a transitive fellow — very —  
Rely on that —

If He leave a Bur at the door  
We know He has climbed a Fir —  
But the Fir is Where — Declare —  
Were you ever there?

If He brings Odors of Clovers —  
And that is His business — not Ours —  
Then He has been with the Mowers —  
Whetting away the Hours  
To sweet pauses of Hay —  
His Way — of a June Day —

If He fling Sand, and Pebble —  
Little Boys Hats — and Stubble —  
With an occasional Steeple —

And a hoarse "Get out of the way, I say,"  
Who'd be the fool to stay?  
Would you — Say —  
Would you be the fool to stay?

5)

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!  
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!  
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun  
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand;  
Long time the manxome foe he sought—  
So rested he by the Tumtum tree  
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,  
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,  
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,  
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through  
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!  
He left it dead, and with its head  
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?  
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!  
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"  
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:  
All mimsy were the borogoves,  
And the mome raths outgrabe.

6)

Little Master Home-from-School,  
This is the Parkland you must rule.  
What does it feel like to have a father for a fool?  
Your father mortgaged the estate,  
Lost his money, blamed fate  
And shot himself through the head too late.

There's a father for a fool,  
My little Master Home-from-School.

Why does Auntie wear such funny hats  
And invert her sentences? Now that's  
Positive proof she must bet bats.  
Why has Parker got all the horses out for me?  
Why doesn't Ma meet the train as usually?  
Here's hoping they give us shrimps for tea.

Little Master Home-from-School,  
Your Ma lies dead, she lies too cool,  
She's stone cold dead of a broken heart, the fool.  
Jingle-job the horses go,  
And Parker's thinking what I know:  
Here comes Master Home-from-School  
That had a father for a fool.

7)

Think of sweet chocolate,  
Left to folly or to fate,  
Whom the higher gods forgot,  
Whom the lower gods berate;  
Physical and underfed  
Fancying on the feather bed  
What was never and is not.

What is ever and is not.  
Pretty tatters blue and red,  
Buxom berries beyond rot,  
Western clouds and quarter-stars,  
Fairy-sweet of old guitars  
Littering the little head  
Light upon the featherbed.

Think of ripe and rompabout,  
All her harvest buttoned in,  
All her ornaments untried;  
Waiting for the paladin  
Prosperous and ocean-eyed  
Who shall rub her secrets out  
And behold the hinted bride.

Watching for the paladin  
Which no woman ever had,

Paradisaical and sad  
With dimple in his chin  
And the mountains in the mind;  
Ruralist and rather bad,  
Cosmopolitan and kind.

Think of thaumaturgic lass  
Looking in her looking-glass  
At the unembroidered brown;  
Printing bast\*rd roses there;  
Then emotionally aware  
Of the black and boisterous hair,  
Taming all that anger down.

***Questions to be discussed in class***

1. Listen to the BBC radio show “Word of Mouth: How Shakespeare Spoke”, where linguist David Crystal and actor Ben Crystal explain original pronunciation (OP) and the original rhymes of the second poem, William Shakespeare’s Sonnet 116, “Let Me not to the Marriage of True Minds”: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b06ycr4v>
2. Compare the rhyme schemes of poem 1 and 2. How are they different from each other? Compare their rhyme schemes with those of poems 5 and 9 of the Readings of the Day of the previous session.
3. In poems 3 and 4 there are words that rhyme within the same line. Can you identify them? What is their effect? How does end-rhyme work in those two poems?
4. Which kind of rhyme does poem 5 display? What is it about? What is the effect of rhyme?
5. Poem 5 is meant to be read to the tune of ‘Boys and Girls Come out to Play’, a traditional nursery rhyme that dates, from, at least, the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtNACIQXFLA>). Read the poem first and then re-read it with that tune in mind. What purposes would you say rhyme serves in this case?
6. Poem 6 is usually described as a mock epic. Do some research on this concept and its traditional uses. What would you say is poem 6 about? Why do you think, considering its subject, it would take the form of a mock epic?



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## Day 24

### Unit 3: Poetry

#### 3.4. Sounds

This session explores a variety of ways in which sounds shape poetic compositions structurally. Beyond the use of rhetorical figures such as alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia (particularly salient in poems 2 and 6), the presence of several voices in poems often structured as dialogues which also mimic conversational tones is studied (poems 4 and 7), together with the song production of certain poets (poem 1), often drawing on traditional forms and resources such as the use of refrains in their compositions. Poems shaped after certain musical genres are discussed (poem 3), as well as others where music and musical sounds are pervading (poem 5). Finally, performance poetry is explained (Pfeiler, Gräbner) and illustrated through the work of Kate Tempest (poem 8), which students are encouraged to watch performed while/after reading the text at home. Punctuation has a salient role in this session's discussion, which also approaches the poetic management of silences, and the more abstract notions of cadence and texture. Whenever recordings of the Readings of the Day are available, they are played in class. With the exception of Kate Tempest's poem, students are not provided with the names of authors and titles of poems to encourage speculation about the language used and the historical period when they were written.

1) Robert Burns, "It was upon a Lammas Night", *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786) → sang by Kenneth McKellar, "Corn Rigs",  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVPGd6vVXdo>

2) Wilfred Owen, "The Last Laugh" (earliest draft, 1918) → read by Sean Bean, from Channel 4 special: "Remembering World War I"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFMxZwyBidE>

3) Langston Hughes, "The Weary Blues" (1925) → read by the author to musical accompaniment (the Doug Parker Band) in 1958:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uM7HSOwJw20>

4) e e cummings, "may i feel said he", *No Thanks* (1935):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6Z11qFK0wQ>

5) Anne Sexton, "Music Swims Back to Me" (1959) → read by the author in 1959:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ht7DLXlyTH4>

6) Eve Merriam, "Onomatopoeia" (1964)

7) Raymond Carver, "Plus", (1982)

8) Kate Tempest, "Bubble Muzzle" (2012) → as performed in London in 2014

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwdQ\\_wHrRKQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwdQ_wHrRKQ)

*READINGS OF THE DAY*

1)

It was upon a Lammas night,  
When corn rigs are bonie,  
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,  
I held awa to Annie:  
The time flew by, wi' tentless heed,  
Till 'tween the late and early;  
Wi' sma' persuasion she agreed,  
To see me thro' the barley.

Chorus

*Corn rigs, an' barley rigs,  
An' corn rigs are bonie:  
I'll ne'er forget the happy night,  
Amang the rigs wi' Annie.*

The sky was blue, the wind was still,  
The moon was shinning clearly;  
I set her down, wi' right good will,  
Amang the rigs o' barley:  
I ken't her heart was a' my ain;  
I lov'd her most sincerely;  
I kiss'd her owre and owre again,  
Amang the rigs o' barley.

I lock'd her in my fond embrace;  
Her heart was beating rarely:  
My blessing on that happy place,

Amang the rigs o' barley!  
But by the moon and stars so bright,  
That shone that hour so clearly!  
She ay shall bless that happy night,  
Amang the rigs o' barley.

I hae been blythe wi' Comrades dear;  
I hae been merry drinking;  
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin gear;  
I hae been happy thinking:  
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,  
Tho' three times doubl'd fairly,  
That happy night was worth them a',  
Amang the rigs o' barley.

2)

'Oh! Jesus Christ! I'm hit,' he said; and died.  
Whether he vainly cursed or prayed indeed,  
The Bullets chirped—In vain, vain, vain!  
Machine-guns chuckled—Tut-tut! Tut-tut!  
And the Big Gun guffawed.

Another sighed—'O Mother,—Mother,—Dad!'  
Then smiled at nothing, childlike, being dead.  
And the lofty Shrapnel-cloud  
Leisurely gestured,—Fool!  
And the splinters spat, and tittered.

'My Love!' one moaned. Love-languid seemed his mood,  
Till slowly lowered, his whole face kissed the mud.  
And the Bayonets' long teeth grinned;  
Rabbles of Shells hooted and groaned;  
And the Gas hissed.

3)

Droning a drowsy syncopated tune,  
Rocking back and forth to a mellow croon,  
I heard a Negro play.  
Down on Lenox Avenue the other night  
By the pale dull pallor of an old gas light  
He did a lazy sway. . . .  
He did a lazy sway. . . .

To the tune o' those Weary Blues.  
With his ebony hands on each ivory key  
He made that poor piano moan with melody.  
O Blues!  
Swaying to and fro on his rickety stool  
He played that sad raggy tune like a musical fool.  
Sweet Blues!  
Coming from a black man's soul.  
O Blues!  
In a deep song voice with a melancholy tone  
I heard that Negro sing, that old piano moan—  
“Ain't got nobody in all this world,  
Ain't got nobody but ma self.  
I's gwine to quit ma frownin'  
And put ma troubles on the shelf.”

Thump, thump, thump, went his foot on the floor.  
He played a few chords then he sang some more—  
“I got the Weary Blues  
And I can't be satisfied.  
Got the Weary Blues  
And can't be satisfied—  
I ain't happy no mo'  
And I wish that I had died.”  
And far into the night he crooned that tune.  
The stars went out and so did the moon.  
The singer stopped playing and went to bed  
While the Weary Blues echoed through his head.  
He slept like a rock or a man that's dead.

4)

may i feel said he  
(i'll squeal said she  
just once said he)  
it's fun said she  
(may i touch said he  
how much said she  
a lot said he)  
why not said she  
(let's go said he  
not too far said she  
what's too far said he  
where you are said she)

may i stay said he  
(which way said she  
like this said he  
if you kiss said she  
may i move said he  
is it love said she)  
if you're willing said he  
(but you're killing said she  
but it's life said he  
but your wife said she  
now said he)  
ow said she  
(tiptop said he  
don't stop said she  
oh no said he)  
go slow said she  
(cccome?said he  
ummm said she)  
you're divine!said he  
(you are Mine said she)

5)

Wait Mister. Which way is home?  
They turned the light out  
and the dark is moving in the corner.  
There are no sign posts in this room,  
four ladies, over eighty,  
in diapers every one of them.  
La la la, Oh music swims back to me  
and I can feel the tune they played  
the night they left me  
in this private institution on a hill.

Imagine it. A radio playing  
and everyone here was crazy.  
I liked it and danced in a circle.  
Music pours over the sense  
and in a funny way  
music sees more than I.  
I mean it remembers better;  
remembers the first night here.  
It was the strangled cold of November;  
even the stars were strapped in the sky  
and that moon too bright  
forking through the bars to stick me  
with a singing in the head.  
I have forgotten all the rest.

They lock me in this chair at eight a.m.  
and there are no signs to tell the way,  
just the radio beating to itself  
and the song that remembers  
more than I. Oh, la la la,  
this music swims back to me.  
The night I came I danced a circle  
and was not afraid.  
Mister?

6)  
The rusty spigot  
sputters,  
utters  
a splutter,  
spatters a smattering of drops,  
gashes wider;  
slash  
splatters  
scatters  
spurts  
finally stops sputtering  
and splash!  
gushes rushes splashes  
clear water dashes.

7)  
"Lately I've been eating a lot of pork.  
Plus, I eat too many eggs and things,"  
this guy said to me in the doc's office.  
"I pour on the salt. I drink twenty cups  
of coffee every day. I smoke.  
I'm having trouble with my breathing."  
Then he lowered his eyes.  
"Plus, I don't always clear off the table  
when I'm through eating. I forget.  
I just get up; and walk away.  
Goodbye until the next time, brother.  
Mister, what do you think's happening to me?"  
He was describing my own symptoms to a T.  
I said, "What do you think's happening?  
You're losing your marbles. And then  
you're going to die. Or vice versa.  
What about sweets? Are you partial  
to cinnamon rolls and ice cream?"  
"Plus, I crave all that," he said.  
By this time we were at a place called Friendly's.

We looked at menus and went on talking.  
Dinner music played from a radio  
in the kitchen. It was our song, see.  
It was our table.

8)

Kate Tempest, “Bubble Muzzle” (2012)

Link to the text: <https://genius.com/Kate-tempest-bubble-muzzle-annotated>

### *Questions to be discussed in class*

1. One of these poems was written as a song. Can you guess which one? Which kinds of features make it particularly appropriate for singing? Which other features would you single out about this poem in terms of sounds?
2. Some of these poems are rich in alliteration and onomatopoeia. Which ones? Do the repeated sounds match the poems’ moods? For which purposes are these rhetorical figures used?
3. Some of these poems make use of dialogue as a structural technique in their composition. Who are the voices involved in those dialogues? How do they differ? How do you think dialogues may change the reading of a poem?
4. How is punctuation handled in poems 3 and 4? To which ends is it put and what does it contribute to convey and suggest?
5. How is music present in poems 3 and 5? Do you find any similarities and differences between these two poems in terms of their use of music?
6. After reading the text of Kate Tempest’s “Bubble Muzzle” (poem 8), check out its performance: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwdQ\\_wHrRKQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwdQ_wHrRKQ) Has your understanding of the poem changed after watching it being performed? How does intonation, among others, have an impact in the way you understand the text?

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## Week 13

### Day 25

#### Unit 3: Poetry

##### 3.5. Structures of comparison: simile, metaphor and conceit

This session focuses on the use of simile, metaphor and conceit or extended metaphor in poetry as the major devices of comparison and construction of images based on resemblance. Special attention is paid to conceits; Abraham Cowley's "Destinie" (1656) and its likening of the world to a chessboard functions as a gateway to explaining the use of conceits specifically in the seventeenth-century and in connection with the so-called metaphysical poetry (Alden, Corns, Ettenhuber). I.A. Richards's distinction, as formulated in his foundational *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, between tenor ("the underlying idea or principle subject which the vehicle or figure means") and vehicle ("the saying we use to communicate that idea") for the analysis of the so-called 'two halves of metaphor' is explored. The Readings of the Day, provided without the names of authors and titles of poems of the texts to encourage speculation about the historical period when they were written are the following:

- 1) Abraham Cowley, "Destinie", *Pindarique Odes* (1656)
- 2) Robert Hass, "Heroic Simile" (1976)
- 3) Maya Angelou, "Still I Rise", *And Still I Rise* (1978) → A reading of this poem by Angelou is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqo50LSZ0>
- 4) Margaret Atwood, "Mushrooms", *True Stories* (1981) → A reading of this poem by Atwood is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYFQNYV8qVI>
- 5) A.R. Ammons, "Pet Panther", *Lake Effect Country* (1983)
- 6) Thom Gunn, "Tamer and Hawk", *Collected Poems* (1995)
- 7) Eavan Boland, "House of Shadows. Home of Simile" (2006)

*READINGS OF THE DAY*

1)

*Strange and unnatural!* lets stay and see  
    This *Pageant* of a *Prodigie*.  
Lo, of themselves th'enlivened *Chesmen* move,  
Lo, the unbred, ill-organ'd *Pieces* prove,  
    As full of *Art*, and *Industrie*,  
    Of *Courage* and of *Policie*,  
As *we our selves* who think ther's nothing *Wise* but *We*.  
    Here a proud *Pawn* I admire  
    That still advancing higher  
    At top of all became  
    Another *Thing* and *Name*.  
Here I'm amaz'ed at th'actions of a *Knight*,  
    That does bold wonders in the fight.  
    Here I the losing party blame  
    For those false *Moves* that break the *Game*,  
That to their *Grave* the *Bag*, the conquered *Pieces* bring,  
And above all, th'ill *Conduct* of the *Mated King*.

What e're these *seem*, what e're *Philosophie*  
    And *Sense* or *Reason* tell (said I)  
These Things have *Life*, *Election*, *Libertie*;  
    'Tis their own *Wisdom* molds their *State*,  
    Their *Faults* and *Virtues* make their *Fate*.  
    They do, they do (said I) but strait  
Lo from my'enlightned Eyes the Mists and shadows fell  
That hinder *Spirits* from being *Visible*.  
And, lo, I saw *two Angels* plaid the *Mate*.  
With *Man*, alas, no otherwise it proves,  
    An *unseen Hand* makes all their *Moves*.  
    And some are *Great*, and some are *Small*,  
Some climb to *good*, some from *good Fortune* fall,  
    Some *Wisemen*, and some *Fools* we call,  
*Figures*, alas, of *Speech*, for *Desti'ny* plays us all.

2)

When the swordsman fell in Kurosawa's Seven Samurai  
in the gray rain,  
in the Cinemascope and the Tokugawa dynasty,  
he fell straight as a pine, he fell  
as Ajax fell in Homer  
in chanted dactyls and the tree was so huge

the woodsman returned for two days  
to that lucky place before he was done with the sawing  
and on the third day he brought his uncle.

They stacked logs in the resinous air,  
hacking the small limbs off,  
tying those bundles separately.  
The slabs near the root  
were quartered and still they were awkwardly large;  
the logs from the midtree they halved:  
ten bundles and four great piles of fragrant wood,  
moons and quarter moons and half moons  
ridged by the saw's tooth.

The woodsman and the old man his uncle  
are standing in midforest  
on a floor of pine silt and spring mud.  
They have stopped working  
because they are tired and because  
I have imagined no pack animal  
or primitive wagon. They are too canny  
to call in neighbors and come home  
with a few logs after three days' work.  
They are waiting for me to do something  
or for the overseer of the Great Lord  
to come and arrest them.

How patient they are!  
The old man smokes a pipe and spits.  
The young man is thinking he would be rich  
if he were already rich and had a mule.  
Ten days of hauling  
and on the seventh day they'll probably  
be caught, go home empty-handed  
or worse. I don't know  
whether they're Japanese or Mycenaean  
and there's nothing I can do.  
The path from here to that village  
is not translated. A hero, dying,  
gives off stillness to the air.  
A man and a woman walk from the movies  
to the house in the silence of separate fidelities.  
There are limits to imagination.

3)  
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 backyard.

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.

4)

In this moist season,  
mist on the lake and thunder  
afternoons in the distance

they ooze up through the earth  
during the night,  
like bubbles, like tiny  
bright red balloons  
filling with water;  
a sound below sound, the thumbs of rubber  
gloves turned softly inside out.

In the mornings, there is the leaf mold  
starred with nipples,  
with cool white fishgills,  
leathery purple brains,  
fist-sized suns dulled to the colors of embers,  
poisonous moons, pale yellow.

Where do they come from?

For each thunderstorm that travels  
overhead there's another storm  
that moves parallel in the ground.  
Struck lightning is where they meet.

Underfoot there's a cloud of rootlets,  
shed hairs or a bundle of loose threads  
blown slowly through the midsoil.  
These are their flowers, these fingers  
reaching through darkness to the sky,  
these eyeblinks  
that burst and powder the air with spores.

They feed in shade, on halfleaves  
as they return to water,  
on slowly melting logs,  
deadwood. They glow  
in the dark sometimes. They taste  
of rotten meat or cloves  
or cooking steak or bruised  
lips or new snow.

It isn't only  
for food I hunt them  
but for the hunt and because  
they smell of death and the waxy  
skins of the newborn,  
flesh into earth into flesh.

Here is the handful  
of shadow I have brought back to you:  
this decay, this hope, this mouth-  
ful of dirt, this poetry.

5)

My attention is a wild  
animal: it will if idle  
make trouble where there  
was no harm: it will  
sniff and scratch at the  
breath's sills:  
it will wind itself tight  
around the pulse  
or, undistracted by  
verbal toys, pommel the  
heart frantic: it will  
pounce on a stalled riddle  
and wrestle the mind numb:  
attention, fierce animal  
I cry, as it coughs in my  
face, dislodges boulders  
in my belly, lie down, be  
still, have mercy, here  
is song, coils of song, play  
it out, run with it.

6)

I thought I was so tough,  
But gentled at your hands,  
Cannot be quick enough  
To fly for you and show  
That when I go I go  
At your commands.

Even in flight above  
I am no longer free:  
You seeled me with your love,  
I am blind to other birds—  
The habit of your words  
Has hooded me.

As formerly, I wheel  
I hover and I twist,  
But only want the feel,  
In my possessive thought,  
Of catcher and of caught  
Upon your wrist.

You but half civilize,  
Taming me in this way.  
Through having only eyes  
For you I fear to lose,  
I lose to keep, and choose  
Tamer as prey.

7)  
One afternoon of summer rain  
my hand skimmed a shelf and I found  
an old florin. Ireland, 1950.

We say *like* or *as* and the world is  
a fish minted in silver and alloy,

an outing for all the children,  
an evening in the Sandford cinema,  
a paper cone of lemonade crystals and

say it again so we can see  
androgyny of angels, edges to a circle,  
the way the body works against the possible—

and no one to tell us, now or ever,  
why it ends, why  
it always ends.

I am holding



two whole shillings of nothing,  
observing its heaviness, its uselessness.

And how in the cool shadow of nowhere  
a salmon leaps up to find a weir  
it could not even know  
was never there.

***Questions to be discussed in class***

1. Identify the similes and the metaphors present in these poems. What do they help the poetic voice reflect on?
2. Read the extract from I.A. Richards's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* and identify the tenor and vehicle of the metaphors you have listed in the previous exercise.
3. Reflect on the placing within the poem of some of these metaphors and similes. Does it make a difference in your understanding of the poem whether these are located at the beginning of the poem, in its middle or at its end?
4. How unexpected would you say are the comparisons established in these poems? Do you find anything surprising or shocking in the associations they are ultimately based on?
5. How do these structures of comparison ally with or rely on other formal strategies (meter, rhythm, etc.) to get their meanings across?

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## Day 26

### Unit 3: Poetry

#### 3.6. More on figurative language

This session examines a selection of rhetorical figures or tropes, a list of twenty of the most common ones students are asked to look up in Chris Baldick's *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), and to identify them in the eight poems that make up the Readings of the Day. These have been chosen to illustrate how a selection of these figures work as structuring principles of the selected poems; most saliently: allegory (poem 1), ekphrasis (poem 2), apostrophe (poem 3), metonymy (poem 4), anaphora and chiasmus (poem 5), paradox (poem 6), anaphora and visual layout (poem 7), and antithesis (poem 8). Naturally, further instances of all these and other rhetorical figures (including metaphor and simile, and sound-based figures, as discussed in previous sessions), will be identified and read in connection with the topics of the poems and the approaches chosen by their authors in their handling. As usual, students are not provided with the names of authors and titles of poems of the texts selected for the Readings of the Day to encourage speculation about the historical period when they were written, the exception being on this occasion Claude McKay's "The White House", as the title of the poem is here provided to facilitate understanding the metonymy at work:

- 1) From Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (I.iv) (1590)
- 2) John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1819)
- 3) H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), "Oread" (1914)
- 4) Claude McKay, "The White House", *Harlem Shadows* (1922)
- 5) T.S. Eliot, "The Rum Tum Tugger", *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939)
- 6) Anne Stevenson, "The Victory" (1970)
- 7) Mary Ann Hoberman, "Fish", *Yellow Butter, Purple Jelly, Red Jam, Black Bread* (1981)
- 8) Jackie Kay, "Between the Dee and the Don", *Fiere* (2011)

*READINGS OF THE DAY*

1)

Most wretched wight, whom nothing might suffice,  
Whose greedy lust did lacke in greatest store,  
Whose need had end, but no end couetise,  
Whose wealth was want, whose plēty made him pore,  
Who had enough, yet wished euer more;  
A vile disease, and eke in foote and hand  
A grieuous gout tormented him full sore,  
That well he could not touch, nor go, nor stand:  
Such one was *Auarice*, the fourth of this faire band.

2)

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,  
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?  
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,  
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;  
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
For ever piping songs for ever new;  
More happy love! more happy, happy love!  
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,

For ever panting, and for ever young;  
All breathing human passion far above,  
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,  
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?  
What little town by river or sea shore,  
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?  
And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell  
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede  
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
With forest branches and the trodden weed;  
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought  
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!  
When old age shall this generation waste,  
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

3)  
Whirl up, sea—  
whirl your pointed pines,  
splash your great pines  
on our rocks,  
hurl your green over us,  
cover us with your pools of fir.

4) Title of the poem: "The White House"

Your door is shut against my tightened face,  
And I am sharp as steel with discontent;  
But I possess the courage and the grace  
To bear my anger proudly and unbent.  
The pavement slabs burn loose beneath my feet,  
And passion rends my vitals as I pass,

A chafing savage, down the decent street;  
Where boldly shines your shuttered door of glass.  
Oh, I must search for wisdom every hour,  
Deep in my wrathful bosom sore and raw,  
And find in it the superhuman power  
To hold me to the letter of your law!  
Oh, I must keep my heart inviolate  
Against the potent poison of your hate.

5)

The Rum Tum Tugger is a Curious Cat:  
If you offer him pheasant he would rather have grouse.  
If you put him in a house he would much prefer a flat,  
If you put him in a flat then he'd rather have a house.  
If you set him on a mouse then he only wants a rat,  
If you set him on a rat then he'd rather chase a mouse.  
Yes the Rum Tum Tugger is a Curious Cat--  
And there isn't any call for me to shout it:  
For he will do  
As he do do  
And there's no doing anything about it!  
The Rum Tum Tugger is a terrible bore:  
When you let him in, then he wants to be out;  
He's always on the wrong side of every door,  
And as soon as he's at home, then he'd like to get about.  
He likes to lie in the bureau drawer,  
But he makes such a fuss if he can't get out.  
Yes the Rum Tum Tugger is a Curious Cat--  
And there isn't any use for you to doubt it:  
For he will do  
As he do do  
And there's no doing anything about it!

6)

I thought you were my victory  
though you cut me like a knife  
when I brought you out of my body  
into your life.  
Tiny antagonist, gory,  
blue as a bruise, the stains  
of your cloud of glory  
bled from my veins.  
How can you dare, blind thing,  
blank insect eyes?  
You barb the air. You sting

with bladed cries.  
Snail. Scary knot of desires.  
Hungry snarl. Small son.  
Why do I have to love you?  
How have you won?

7)

Look at them flit  
Lickety-split  
Wiggling  
Swiggling  
Swerving  
Curving  
Hurrying  
Scurrying  
Chasing  
Racing  
Whizzing  
Whisking  
Flying  
Frisking  
Tearing around  
With a leap and a bound  
But none of them making the tiniest  
                                  tiniest  
                                  tiniest  
                                  tiniest  
                                  tiniest  
                                  sound

8)

I will stand not in the past or in the future  
not in the foreground or the background;  
not as the first child or the last child.  
I will stand alone in the middle ground.

I was conceived between the Dee and the Don.  
I was born in the city of crag and stone.

I am not a daughter to one father.  
I am not a sister to one brother.

I am light and dark.

I am father and mother.

I was conceived between the Dee and the Don.

I was born in the city of crag and stone.

I am not forgiving and I am not cruel.

I will not go against one side.

I am not wise or a fool.

I was not born yesterday.

I was conceived between the Dee and the Don.

I was born in the city of crag and stone.

I can say tomorrow is another day tomorrow.

I come from the old world and the new.

I live between laughter and sorrow.

I live between the land and the sea.

I was conceived between the Dee and the Don.

I was born in the city of crag and stone.

***Questions to be discussed in class***

1. Look for definitions of the following rhetorical figures in Chris Baldick's *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1990):

(1) Allegory (2) Anadiplosis (3) Anaphora (4) Antithesis (5) Apostrophe (6) Chiasmus (7) Ekphrasis (8) Epistrophe (9) Epizeuxis (10) Exclamation (11) Hyperbole (12) Litotes (13) Metonymy (14) Metonymy (15) Personification (16) Polypoton (17) Synaesthesia (18) Synecdoche (19) Synecdoche (20) Understatement (21) Zeugma

2. Which of them affect word order, or involve omission, inclusion and repetition?

3. Find illustrations for as many of them as you can identify in the Readings of the Day. Do you find a tendency in the way different figures combine? Why do you think that is so?



4. To which ends are repetition of sounds, words and syntactic structures put in the previous poems? How do these repetition-based strategies relate to the content of the poems?
5. How do some of these poems present opposing or contrasting ideas? Are there any differences in the ways different poems handle them and the effects that such contrasts create?
6. How do punctuation, meter and rhyme interact with the use of some of these rhetorical figures or tropes? How can the former become a way to enhance the effects of the latter?

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## Week 14

### Day 28

#### Final revision for exam

The final session, in addition to addressing any queries and doubts that students may have about Units 1 (Prose fiction) and 2 (Drama), particularly reviews Unit 3. For this reason, two poems are listed as Readings of the Day, namely, Thomas Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush", and Elizabeth Bishop's "One Art"; they are to be discussed in a comprehensive manner, analysing matters of rhythm, metre, rhyme, sounds, and figurative language.

#### *READINGS OF THE DAY*

1) Thomas Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush" (1900)

I leant upon a coppice gate  
    When Frost was spectre-grey,  
And Winter's dregs made desolate  
    The weakening eye of day.  
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
    Like strings of broken lyres,  
And all mankind that haunted nigh  
    Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be  
    The Century's corpse outleant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
    The wind his death-lament.  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
    Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
    Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among  
    The bleak twigs overhead  
In a full-hearted evensong  
    Of joy illimited;

An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,  
In blast-beruffled plume,  
Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings  
Of such ecstatic sound  
Was written on terrestrial things  
Afar or nigh around,  
That I could think there trembled through  
His happy good-night air  
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew  
And I was unaware.

2) Elizabeth Bishop, "One Art" (1976)

The art of losing isn't hard to master;  
so many things seem filled with the intent  
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster  
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.  
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:  
places, and names, and where it was you meant  
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or  
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.  
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,  
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.  
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture  
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident  
the art of losing's not too hard to master  
though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster.



## Day-by-day syllabus

### An Introduction to Literatures in English course in 28 sessions

<b>WEEK 1</b>	<b>Day 1</b>	<p><b>General introduction to the course:</b> Class structure, readings, assignments, assessment</p>
	<b>Day 2</b>	<p><b>Prose fiction: 1.1. The narrator (I)</b> Readings of the day: Charles Dickens, from <i>Great Expectations</i> (1861); George Eliot, from <i>Middlemarch</i> (1871); F. Scott Fitzgerald, from <i>The Great Gatsby</i> (1925); Patricia Highsmith, from “Ming’s Biggest Prey” (1975).</p>
<b>WEEK 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<p><b>Prose fiction: 1.2. The narrator (II)</b> Readings of the day: William Golding, from <i>The Spire</i> (1964); William Faulkner, from <i>The Sound and the Fury</i> (1929); John Fowles, from <i>The French Lieutenant’s Woman</i> (1969).</p>
	<b>Day 4</b>	<p><b>Prose fiction: 1.3. Characters and characterization</b> Readings of the day: Jane Austen, from <i>Emma</i> (1815); Fay Weldon, from “Delights of France or Horrors of the Road” (1985); Charles Dickens, from <i>Oliver Twist</i> (1837-1839); Harriet Beecher Stowe, from <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i> (1852).</p>
<b>WEEK 3</b>	<b>Day 5</b>	<p><b>Prose fiction: 1.4. Plot</b> Readings of the day: Richard Wright, from “The Man Who Was Almost a Man” (1961); Joseph Conrad, from <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (1899); Edith Wharton, from <i>The House of Mirth</i> (1905); George Eliot, from <i>Adam Bede</i> (1959).</p>

	<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Prose fiction: 1.5. Plot movement: time management</b> Readings of the day: John Updike, from ‘Pygmalion’ (1981); Agatha Christie, from <i>Sleeping Murder</i> (1976); Willa Cather, from ‘Paul’s Case: A Study in Temperament’ (1905); Kurt Vonnegut, from <i>Slaughterhouse Five</i> (1969).
<b>WEEK 4</b>	<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Prose fiction: 1.6. Setting</b> Readings of the day: Stephen King, from <i>The Shining</i> (1977); Charles Dickens, from <i>Hard Times</i> (1854); Charlotte Perkins Gilman, from ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ (1892); Cormac McCarthy, from <i>The Road</i> (2006).
	<b>Day 8</b>	<b>Introduction session to essay writing</b>
<b>WEEK 5</b>	<b>Day 9</b>	<b>Training session for Essay 1</b> Reading of the day: Margaret Atwood, ‘Happy Endings’ (1983).
	<b>Day 10</b>	<b>Drama: 2.1. Dramatic texts: conventions</b> Reading of the day: Oscar Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> (1895), Act I
<b>WEEK 6</b>	<b>Day 11</b>	<b>Drama: 2.2. Dialogues and wordplay</b> Reading of the day: Oscar Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> , Act II
	<b>Day 12</b>	<b>Drama: 2.3. Drama and society: from text to context</b> Reading of the day: Oscar Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> , Act III
<b>WEEK 7</b>	<b>Day 13</b>	<b>Drama: Screening of the play <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>, by Oscar Wilde</b> <b>[Deadline: Essay 1]</b> Production performed at the Vaudeville Theatre, London, in 2018
	<b>Day 14</b>	<b>Drama: Screening of the play <i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i>, by William Shakespeare</b> Screening of Shakespeare’s Globe 2013 production of <i>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</i> filmed on the Globe stage.

<b>WEEK 8</b>	<b>Day 15</b>	<b>Drama: Screening of the play <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (continued)</b>
	<b>Day 16</b>	<b>Feedback and discussion: Essay 1</b>
<b>WEEK 9</b>	<b>Day 17</b>	<b>Training session for Essay 2</b>
	<b>Day 18</b>	<b>Drama: 2.4. Prose, verse and dramatic form</b> Reading of the day: William Shakespeare, <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (1595), Act I
<b>WEEK 10</b>	<b>Day 19</b>	<b>Drama: 2.5. Monologues: the chorus, soliloquies and asides</b> Reading of the day: William Shakespeare, <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , Act II
	<b>Day 20</b>	<b>Drama: 2.6. Plays within plays</b> Reading of the day: William Shakespeare, <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , Act V
<b>WEEK 11</b>	<b>Day 21</b>	<b>Poetry: 3.1. An Introduction to prosody (I)</b> Readings of the day: 1) William Blake, "The Tyger" (1794); 2) William Wordsworth, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (1807); 3) Lord Byron, "The Destruction of Sennacherib" (1815); 4) Walt Whitman, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" (1860); 5) Christina Rossetti, from <i>Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book</i> (1872); 6) Sylvia Plath, "Metaphors" (1960).
	<b>Day 22</b>	<b>Poetry: 3.2. An Introduction to prosody (II)</b> Readings of the day: 1) Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, <i>The Second Book of Virgil's Aeneid</i> , lines 1-17 (1557); 2) William Shakespeare, Sonnet 130, "My Mistress' Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun" (1609); 3) Mary Robinson, "London's Summer Morning" (1800); 4) William Cullen Bryant, from "Thanatopsis" (1817); 5) Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus" (1883); 6) Amy Lowell, "The Taxi" (1914); 7) Wallace Stevens, "Metaphors of a Magnifico" (1918); 8) William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow" (1923); 9) Margaret Walker, "Childhood" (1942).

<b>WEEK</b> <b>12</b>	<b>Day 23</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>[Deadline: Essay 2]</i></p> <p><b>Poetry: 3.3. Rhyme</b>  Readings of the day: 1) Edmund Spenser, Sonnet LXXV, “One Day I Wrote her Name” (1595); 2) William Shakespeare, Sonnet 116, “Let Me not to the Marriage of True Minds” (1609); 3) Edgar Allan Poe, from “The Raven” (1845); 4) Emily Dickinson, “The Wind Didn’t Come from the Orchard — Today” (1862); 5) Lewis Carroll, “Jabberwocky” (1871); 6) Stevie Smith, “A Father for a Fool” (1938); 7) Gwendolyn Brooks, from “The Anniad” (1949) .</p>
	<b>Day 24</b>	<p><b>Poetry: 3.4. Sounds</b>  Readings of the day: 1) Robert Burns, “It was upon a Lammas Night” / “Corn Rigs” (1786); Wilfred Owen, “The Last Laugh” (earliest draft, 1918); 3) Langston Hughes, “The Weary Blues” (1925); 4) e e cummings, “may i feel said he” (1935); 5) Anne Sexton, “Music Swims Back to Me” (1959); 6) Eve Merriam, “Onomatopoeia” (1964); 7) Raymond Carver, “Plus” (1982); 8) Kate Tempest, “Bubble Muzzle” (2012).</p>
<b>WEEK</b> <b>13</b>	<b>Day 25</b>	<p><b>Poetry: 3.5. Structures of comparison: simile, metaphor and conceit</b>  Readings of the day: 1) Abraham Cowley, “Destinie” (1656); 2) Robert Hass, “Heroic Simile” (1976); 3) Maya Angelou, “Still I Rise” (1978); 4) Margaret Atwood, “Mushrooms” (1981); 5) A.R. Ammons, “Pet Panther” (1983); 6) Thom Gunn, “Tamer and Hawk” (1995); 7) Eavan Boland, “House of Shadows. Home of Simile” (2006).</p>
	<b>Day 26</b>	<p><b>Poetry: 3.6. More on figurative language</b>  Readings of the day: 1) Edmund Spenser, from <i>Faerie Queene</i> (1590); 2) John Keats, “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (1819); 3) H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), “Oread” (1914); 4) Claude McKay, “The White House” (1922); 5) T.S. Eliot, “The Rum Tum Tugger” (1939); 6) Anne Stevenson, “The Victory” (1970); 7) Mary Ann Hoberman, “Fish” (1998); 8) Jackie Kay, “Between the Dee and the Don” (2011).</p>
<b>WEEK</b> <b>14</b>	<b>Day 27</b>	<p><b>Feedback and discussion: Essay 2</b></p>
	<b>Day 28</b>	<p><b>Final revision for exam</b>  Thomas Hardy, “The Darkling Thrush” (1900); Elizabeth Bishop, “One Art” (1976).</p>