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***- Courses of Literature-***

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## Preface

The present course book (pedagogical stand) is arranged as a road map for second year LMD licence learners of English as a foreign language. The purpose of this course book is to provide learners with the basic linguistic and literary tools that will enable them to improve their writing skills, and understanding rhetorical strategies when reading and analysing a literary text. In pursuit of these aims, a careful selection of basic literary elements and texts of fiction has been made since a meaningful writing necessitates good reading.

It is thanks to many years of teaching second year LMD students at the department of English and a thoughtful observation of the learners' need to read, appreciate and apprehend literary texts. Divided into two semesters, the material in use in this course book has been adapted to suit the learners' needs with regard to structure and use the English language, on the other hand, to introduce learners to western culture and the development of American literary heritage through time. The structure of this course book is designed in a way to make students understand the text (intrinsic reading) and analyse it from a different perspective (extrinsic reading). Also, it would help learners relate the course content with the courses of civilization in an interdisciplinary way.

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## **SEMESTER ONE**

### **Unit 1 :**

#### **Literature : Definitions, Role and Use**

#### **What is Literature ?**

It should be clear from the beginning of this course that there is no real final consensus or one all embracing definition of the term « literature ». It is also noteworthy that some of the definitions of literature given by scholars are largely according to their wealth of life experience within their geographical locations. Before digging deeper, let us consider literature both in its broad and narrow definitions. Gyasi defines it in its broad sense as « anything that is written » (2008:1) while Rees sees it in its narrow sense as « any writing which expresses and communicates thoughts, feelings and attitudes towards life » (2008 :2)

The quest to find a clear definition for “literature” is a road that is much travelled, though the point of arrival, if ever reached, is seldom satisfactory. Most attempted definitions are broad and vague, and they inevitably change over time. Concepts of what is literature change over time as well. What may be considered ordinary and not worthy of comment in one time period may be considered literary genius in another. It is obvious that the broad definition seems to be vague and amorphous in that it includes works that are not literary per se, like works in the fields of education, biology, history, and host of others (Welleck and Warren, 1993 :22). Why ? Because they are written. However, they can not be qualified as real literature. The narrow definition, on the other hand, delineates literature from its general purview to what can be called literature as a subject of scholar. Some more definitions would be followed by an evaluation of each to see which is the appropriate definition.

For centuries, scholars, historians, writers and others have debated but have failed to agree on a definition of the term. Some assumes that literature is simply anything that is written. Derived from the Latin « littera » meaning « letter » the root meaning of this word refers to primarily written word and seems to support the broad definition. However, these broad definitions have eliminated the importance of oral traditions upon which much of literary works are based including Homer's *The Illiad* and *The Odyssey*, the English epic *Beowulf* and native American legends.

### ***To solve this difficulty***

Some scholars define literature as an art (written form of art) thereby leaving open the question of its being written or oral ; narrowing this definition to equate it to imaginative and creative writing. Hence, by narrowing down the meaning of literature to a « work of art » provides consensus or a consistent rule

- A text should have peculiar qualities before it can be declared a literary text. a peculiar aesthetic quality (element of language beauty. Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the concept of the beautiful and strives to determine the criteria for beauty in a work of art.
- Moody says that literature springs from our inborn love of telling a story of arranging words in pleasing patterns of expressing some special aspects of our human experiences (1987 :13).
- Bulton defines it from a functional perspective as the imaginative work that gives us imagination, recreation, revelation, recognition and redemption (1980 :75).

All these definitions describe literature from different perspectives. Still, there are certain things that are common to them. They all recognise the fact that literature is imaginative, expresses thoughts and feelings, deals with life experiences and uses words in a powerful

effective yet captivating matter. It is a permanent expression of words (both written and spoken) arranged in pleasing accepted patterns or forms.

Etymologically, literature has to do with letters, the written as opposed to the spoken word, though not everything that is written down is literature. As a classification, it does not really have any firm boundary lines. There is recurring agreement amongst theorists though that for a work to be called literature must display excellence in form and style.

**Self-assessment Exercise :**

List the characteristics that distinguish literature from other disciplines.

- Literature is created in an ornamented aesthetical and in elevated language
- Written form of art
- It is mostly oral (plays, songs written doawn and speak about human experiences)
- In literature, there are figures of speech the language is rather metaphorical, figurative and sophisticated.
- It illicit feelings like human agony.

Generally, most people have their own ideas of what literature is. When enrolling in a literary course at university, you expect that everything on the reading list will be “literature”. Similarly, you might expect everything by a known author to be literature, even though the quality of that author's work may vary from publication to publication (Welleck and Warren, 1993 : 85). Perhaps you get an idea just from looking at the cover design on a book whether it is “literary” or « non-fiction ». Literature then, is a form of « demarcation », however « fuzzy », based on the premise that all texts are not created equal (1993 :86). Some have or are given more value than others.

Most forays into the question of “what is literature” go into how literature works with the reader, rather than how the author set about writing it. It is the reception, rather than the writing, which is the object of inquiry. Largely, what we call “literature” is often a subjective value judgment, and naturally, value judgments, like literary tastes, will change. There is also general agreement that literature foregrounds language, and uses it in artistic ways. Terry Eagleton goes some way towards a definition of literature and its relationship to language: “Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech” (2003 :15). Just as architecture is the art form that arises out of the human ability to create buildings, literature is the art form that arises out of the human ability to create language.

The common definition of literature, particularly for university courses, is that it covers the major genres of poetry, drama, and novel/fiction. The term also implies literary quality and distinction. This is a fairly basic view of literature because, as mentioned in the introduction, the meaning of the term has undergone changes, and will no doubt continue to do so. Most contemporary literary histories show a shift from the *belles-lettres* tradition, which was concerned with finding beauty, an elevated use of language, emotional effects and moral sentiments before something could be called literature.

Does it really matter what “literature” is? Does everyone have to agree? Because there is no hard and fast definition of literature, perhaps it is more beneficial to seek and analyse instead. What purposes does literature serve? What distinguishes literature from non-literary works? What makes us treat something as literature? Would it be easier to ask “what isn't literature”?

Literature is something that reflects society, makes us think about ourselves and our society, allows us to enjoy language and beauty, it can be didactic, and it reflects on “the human condition” (Gyasi, 2008 :13). Literature is a tool of self-examination and self-scrutiny

as it serves as a mirror revealing readers to themselves. It has social and political effects via works that mark a revolution of thought such as George Orwell, AlTayib Salih, Kurt Vonnegut, Toni Morrison or Edward Said. Literature is the creation of another world, a world that we can only see through reading literature.



## SEMESTER ONE

### Unit 2 :

#### Why is Literature an Important Subject?

#### The Significance of Literature Reading

*« literature is one of the most interesting and significant expression of humanity »* P.T. Barnum

Nowadays, especially at university, many students believe that literature is not that important or underestimates its abilities to stand the test of time in providing knowledge. There is a stigma in society that people who rather prefer science and mathematics will be more successful as compared to those passionate toward literature and other arts to get unsatisfying careers. Somewhere along the line, here are some reasons why literature is that important summarized by Mary M. Kennefy's « Defining a literature » (2001 :1-2)

- **Expanding Intellectual Horizons**

Literature opens readers'eyes on more than what the front door shows. It helps them realise, learn, question, build intuition that expand their life experiences. It helps to reach critical thinking, readers learn to infer (Kennedy, 2001 :4). Literary elements like symbols are hints that help readers make connections, probe themes, learn more about characters moods and mentalities. Reading expands intellectual and cognitive skills. Readers start to give sentences and words more attention to realize the importance of hidden meanings so they they may come out with a conclusion.

- **Literature as a Gateway into the Past**

History and literature often overlap. History is not just about power struggles, world order, wars, distinguished names and distinctive dates. It is about people who are product of their time with their own life and experiences. Literature gives a step towards the past it includes stories about people who came before and walked on the same ground on which we step (Kennedy, 2001 :8). The study of literature enhances appreciation of history since they are both inextricably intertwined. The understanding of history complexities in past literary works expands appreciation and analysis of present political complexities.

- **Appreciation for Other Cultures and Beliefs Learning**

Reading about history, anthropology, culture and theological studies about culture and beliefs of other people. It allows readers to experience other social codes and political systems. It helps develop personal views and insight into the minds where we can learn, understand, appreciate and create empathy. The body of world literature contains most available knowledge about humanity, beliefs, self-perception, philosophy and interactions with the human beings and the social environment. Some of life's most important lessons are subtly expressed in art. The figurative language of literature carries out a deep unexpressed idea that simple language can not interpret.

- **Better Writing Skill**

The study of literature hones language skills and teaches new and valuable techniques of communication. The exposure to new ideas and new ways of looking at assumptions serve in expanding vocabulary and improve students' ability to write. New words are tools for grasping new ideas. Each new idea is a building block upon which more knowledge may be acquired. Altogether, these benefits refine students' ability to think and thus guide them towards an informed mature thinking via developing critical thinking.

- **Developing Critical Thinking**

The encouragement to developing critical thinking leads students to question the static previously accepted knowledge. Children usually take for granted anything taught to believe which provide schemas or building blocks of knowledge. As they grow older, they start observing, examining and evaluation then criticising certain ideas. Between rejection and adoption lies real examination. However, human progress often results from the rejection and often the revolution against assumed facts. The more ideas people are exposed to, the more of assumptions come under scope of analysis and either discard or ground their ideas in.

- **Addressing Humanity**

All forms of literature : poems, novels, short stories or plays help us address human nature. Literature is more about the ambiguity of and inferring meaning behind words to come out with different interpretations from different perspectives. Generally, people *say what they say what they mean and they mean what they say* in an ideal world. In reality, ambiguity,

double entendres and nuances of meaning give more depth and opens gates to endless possibilities of thoughts development. Literature is like Aristotle says « about teaching and delight » it is about learning, appreciating and reveling.

When students study Literature, they learn to appreciate words and their power. They travel to other realms and times through the texts they read. They understand about their own culture and others'. Most importantly, they learn to consider multiple perspectives and understand the complexity of human nature. The impact of literature in modern society is undeniable. Literature acts as a form of expression for each individual author. Some books mirror society and allow us to better understand the world we live in mindset and figure out how others think and feel.

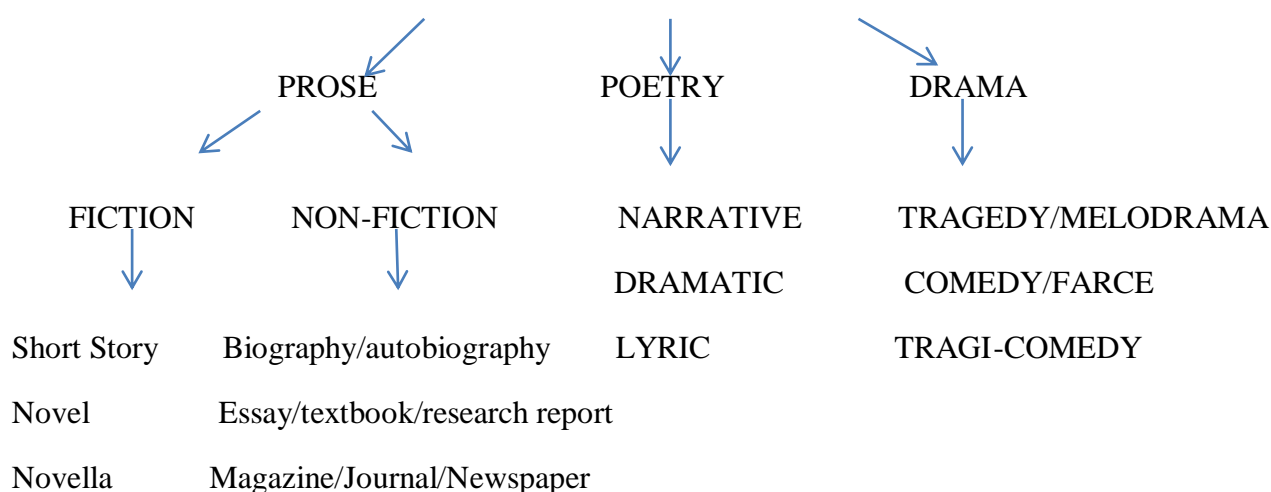
## SEMESTER ONE

### Unit 3:

#### Literary Genres : Prose, Poetry and Drama

#### Definitions, Differences and Examples

#### Literary Genres (Forms)



#### What is Prose ?

Prose is derived from the Greek word « prosa » meaning straightforward. It consists written works within the common flow of conversation presented in a direct manner. Unlike poetry, prose is ordinary language that follows regular conventions and does not contain formal metrical structure. Most forms of writing are done in prose including short stories, novels, journalism and academic writings.

1. **Short story** is a brief artistic form of prose which is centered on a major main event with few characters. It is rather a narrative involving one or more characters, one plot and one single impression.

Examples : Guy de Maupassant's *The Necklace*, D.H Lawrence's *The Rocking Horse Winner*, and *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe.

2. **Novel/ novella** is a long narrative divided into chapters. The events may be taken from true-to-life stories and spans for a long period of time with many characters involved. The novella is shorter than the novel and is a long artistic form of prose which covers both main and sub-events.

Examples : A.S Byatt's *Possession*, Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love*, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. James Joyce's *Ulysses*, George Orwell's *1984*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

Examples of novellas : Gorge Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, John Steinback *Of Mice and Men*

There are other forms of fiction that existed before the emergence of novels and short stories and interpreted certain beliefs and cultures of human beings. Foltales contain :

1. **Fable** is a fictitious short story that meant to tell a lesson or moral. The characters are usually animals or inanimate objects with human characteristics. Their purpose is to enlighten the minds of children to events that mold their ways of thinking or attitudes. Examples : Aesop's fables and Chinese Zodiac.
2. **Legends** are fictitious narratives usually about origins, natural or folk hero. The stories take place in a particular time and place and is partly true partly fiction. It provides historical information regarding culture and views of particular group of people or country. Examples : Odysseus, Robin Hood, Ali Baba, King Arthur.
3. **Myths** and traditional sacred stories are often based on historical events that meant to serve as an explanation for some natural phenomena or human behaviours. The stories typically revolving around characters are basically gods and heroes whose aim is to explain a natural phenomenon or a cultural practice. Examples : Greek mythology.

## What is Poetry ?

It is derived from the Greek word « Poeio » meaning I create. It is an imaginative awareness of experience expressed through meaning sound and rhythmic word choice (distion) to evoke emotional response. According to William Wordsworth « Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions. While Matthew Arnold defines it as « a delightful form of utterance with a figurative language ». Therefore, poetry is « literature » in a metrical form and is about internal feelings and external imagination. Unlike prose, poetry is a literary work in which the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensely by the use of distinctive style, rhythm and rhyme. It may or may not have a story but definitely has a structured method of writing.

## Types of Modern Poetry



Sonnet (14 lines poem) Petrarch's and Shakespearean Sonnets

Acrostic the first letters of each line spell out a word or phrase. The word or phrase can be a name, a thing

Haiku the first and last lines having five "moras," and the middle line having seven (referred to as the 5-7-5 structure).

Limerick a humorous poem consisting of five lines

Examples :

### ACROSTIC POEMS

#### **A FRIEND**

**F** is for the fun we had together

**R** is for the relaxing time we shared together

**I** is for the interesting moments we had

**E** is for the entertaining time we spent

**N** is for the never-ending friendship that we'll have

**D** is for the days we'll never forget

### HAIKU POEM **Sonia Sanchez** "Haiku [for you]"

love between us is

speech and breath. loving you is

a long river running.

### LIMERICK POEM AABBA

#### **STAR**by Kaitlyn Guenther

There once was a wonderful star  
Who thought she would go very far  
Until she fell down  
And looked like a clown  
She knew she would never go far.

**Self-assessment Exercise :**

Try to write an example of each of poems (Haiku, limerick or acrostic types using your own words.

**Poetry Sub-Classes**

Narrative Poetry is a form of poetry that describes important events in life either real or imaginary. It can be :

- a. **Epic** ; an extended narration about heroic exploits under supernatural control. It may deal with heros and gods. The hero or the heroine usually has the following characteristics : idealism, courage, moral principles, wisdom, beauty, chivalry and justice. Example : Beowulf, Homer's The Illiad (Achilles)
- b. **Ballad** is considered as the shortest and simplest of narrative poems. It has a single structure and tells a single incident. Taylor Samuel Coleridge's The Rime of Ancient Manner
- c. **Lyrical Poetry** has been derived from lyre, a musical stringed instrument used during the Grecian period to accompany the poetry sung during different festivities. It is related to human expression of feelings and emotions.

**Elements of Poetry****Structure : Formal and Thematic Components****The Poem's parts :**

- **Stanza** in poetry is defined as the smallest unit of lines or paragraph in a poem. A particular stanza has a specific meter and rhythm. It stands for paragraph in prose writing.
- **Rhythm** includes the syllables in the lines. The best method of understanding this is to read the poem aloud and follow the stressed and unstressed syllables. It is the ordered application of stress : if the rhythm is fast, the poem indicates action and excitement. However, if the rhythm is slow, it indicates peacefulness or agony.

A NIGHT or TWO aGo

And NOW she TURNS her PERFECT FACE

UPON the WORLD below

- **Rhyme** is the repeated sound which helps connect the poem together and gives pleasure to listeners. The free verse, though, does not follow this system. Robert Frost's « Neither Out Far nor in Deep »

The people along the sand (A)

All turn and look one way. (B)

They turn their back on the land. (A)

They look at the sea all day. (B)

- **Meter** is the basic structural make-up of the poem every line in the poem must adhere to this structure.
- **Emotions and attitudes** refer to anything described in the poem. Emotions are the signs of attitudes. They deal with the poet's feelings expressed through behaviour.

Example E.E Cummings' If

If freckles were lovely, and day was night,  
And measles were nice and a lie warn't a lie,  
Life would be delight,-  
But things couldn't go right  
For in such a sad plight  
I wouldn't be I.

**Thematic components :**

- **Theme** is what the poem is about. It is the central idea that the poet wants to convey. It can be a story or a thought or a description of something or someone. It is considered as the plot, the way the argument or presentation of the poem is developed. A poem may state a problem in 8 lines and give the answer to the problem in the next 6 lines.
- **Imagery and Symbols**

Imagery is closely related to sensations related to human 5 senses. It may be :

Auditory imagery--- sound



Olfactory imagery----smell

Gustatory imagery----taste

Organic imagery----an internal sensation such as hunger, thirst, fatigue

Tactile imagery---- touch (soft, hot, cold)

- **A symbol** is an object, character, figure used to represent an idea or concept.

Example : Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken", the two roads symbolize the choice between two paths in life. A symbol is a visible object or action that suggests some further meaning in addition to itself.

### Steps to Analyse a Poem

What is the genre of the poem ?

Who is speaking ? who is the persona ? who is the listener ?

What is the structure ? Form and style

(stanza, rhythm, rhyme, meter, tone, mood, imagery)

Content/context/figures of speech, symbols

Themes

### What is drama ?

Drama is a type of literature telling a story, which is intended to be performed to an audience on the stage. Generally speaking, while drama is the printed text of a play, the word theatre often refers to the actual production of the text on the stage. Drama originated in Greece over 2.500 years ago as an outgrowth of the worship of the god Dionysus.

- Comedy** comes from the Greek word « KOMOS » meaning festivity and revelry. This form usually light and written with purpose of fun and amusement and has a happy ending. Shakespeare's *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Measure for Measure*, *As You Like It*.
- Tragedy** involves a hero struggling mightily against dynamic forces. He faces death or ruin without success or satisfaction obtained by the protagonist in the comedy. Shakespeare's *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*.

- c. **Farce** is an exaggerated comedy that seeks to arouse mirth by laughable situations which are roughly ridiculous. The characters seem to be caricatures and the motives are undignified and absurd. Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*.
- d. **Melodrama** seen in musical play with the Opera. It arouses immediate and intense emotions and usually sad but there is a happy ending for the principal character. James Mc Cain's *Mildred Pierce*.
- e. **Tragicomedy** is a play that does not adhere strictly to the structure of tragedy. It is usually a serious play that has also some of the qualities of the comedy. It arouses thought through laughter. Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

## SEMESTER ONE

### Unit 4 :

### Figures of Speech

### Definition and Examples

Figurative language is a variation in the use of word, the wording or language. In expressing or describing something, an author conveys a way that is different. In author conveying feelings and thoughts also use language in different way. It makes expression of varied thoughts and feelings. Figurative language comes to how to compose sentence effectively and aesthetically, it can give a concrete description in mind of the reader. Figurative language also describe as the way to arrange the word to express theme, ideas, and feeling of the author. The aims of figurative language as to dignify, clarify, intensify and persuade (Harmon, 2006: 8). It is used in accordance to the situation and the condition of the fact. The author the literary work using language as the instrument. Language can influence the reader and make the positive effect. Figurative language has many kinds, and the figure of speech can be a word or phrase that possesses a separate meaning from it literal (denotative definition).

1. **Simile** is a direct comparison between two things which are particularly different using the connective words 'as or like).

Examples :

He is as proud as a peacock.

Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart.

Her eyes were shining like diamonds.

She is as busy as a bee.

Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale.

2. **Metaphor** is a direct comparison of two things or two ideas without using like or as.

A metaphor is an implied simile : He fought like a tiger (simile) He is a tiger (metaphor). Human moral characteristics can be used as a metaphor.

Example : the daffodils smiled at him.

The sky is crying today.

Examples :

Coming events cast their shadows before.

Life is a dream.

Shakespeare's Macbeth « life is but a walking shadow, a poor player/ that struts and froths his hour upon the stage »

3. **Personification** is type of metaphor. It is the use of human characteristics (physical attributes) to describe unhuman objects, animals or abstract ideas.

Examples :

Death lays its icy hands on the king.

You may find him at the mouth of the river.

Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet : « The grey-ey'd **morn smiles** on the **frowning night**,  
Chequering the eastern clouds with streaks of light. »

4. **Mytonymy** is the substitution of one term for another that generally associated with it. It means calling something not by its name, but by something that stands for it.

Examples :

- **Crown** - in place of a royal person

We will swear loyalty to the **crown**.

- The **White House** or **The Oval Office** - used in place of the President or White House staff

The White House will be making an announcement around noon today.

- **Suits** - in place of business people

If we don't get these reports in today, the **suits** will be after us.

- **Heart** - to refer to love or emotion

My dear, you have all of my **heart**.

- **Dish** - for an entire plate of food

That fancy fish **dish** you made was the best of the evening.

Metonymy is used to provide meaning and connections to concepts. Writers often use it in this way, as well as to be more poetic or simply to make a long sentence more concise.

“I’m mighty glad Georgia waited ‘til after Christmas before it seceded.” *Gone with the Wind*,  
Margaret Mitchell

5. **Synechdoche** is a figure of speech used to refer to a part of the whole to represent the whole.

Examples : hired hands refers to workers. The farmer needed to bring on some hired hands.

Bread refers to food. I am looking forward to breaking the bread with you.

6. **Hyperbole** is a figure of speech derived from a Greek word that means « excess ». It is an excessive overstatement or conscious exaggeration of fact. It is used to make a point or show emphasis.

Examples :

I have told you about it a million times already.

A thousand apologies for being late.

Her mile was a mile wide.

This bag weighs a ton.

### **Self-assessment Exercise**

**Identify and explain which kind of figure of speech is expressed in each sentence :**

- ✓ The thunder was as loud as fireworks.
- ✓ Water called invitingly to the swimmers.
- ✓ The smoke was cotton balls billowing from the chimney.
- ✓ Alice’s voice is velvet.
- ✓ The grass is a green carpet for the golfers.
- ✓ The glasses danced on the shelf during the earthquake.
- ✓ The clock is the keeper of time.
- ✓ The rusty door bell screamed every time the door opened.
- ✓ The wind was like a piercing arrow.
- ✓ Music is the salve that caresses us.
- ✓ The swing rocked like a baby learning to walk.
- ✓ The fresh apple was crispy like a new dollar bill.

- ✓ Water is the hammer that erodes the rocks.
- ✓ This film has been the bomb of this season in Cannes festival.
- ✓ That ball sat in the outfield.
- ✓ The mountain listened to the rumbles beneath the surface.
- ✓ Hunger sat miserably in the informal settlement
- ✓ I had to hold my tongue.

## SEMESTER ONE

### Unit 5 :

#### Elements of Fiction : Understanding the Text

In fiction, the author uses elements of fiction to create a fictional story. Elements of fiction are useful to reach understanding and eventual appreciation of the piece of literature. In literature classes, students are introduced to elements of fiction in order to be able to analyse how the writer constructed an novel or a short story. The students should trace the existence of the following element in the text of fiction :

#### **Setting**

#### **Plot/plot structure**

#### **Character**

#### **Point of view**

#### **Theme**

#### **Literary devices : imagery and symbolism**

It is important to note here that it is not obligatory to find all the elements of fiction in the same work. There are cases where setting is not mentioned in the story and this does not influence its consistency.

**1. Setting (place and time)** the story should have physical and chronological setting.

a. the physical setting is where the story takes place. Furthermore, the chronological setting denotes the time when the story takes place. The setting can also be the social environment that frames the characters and controls their mentality, lifestyle, culture.

- The geographical location (country, by the sea, in the mountain)
- The daily life and lifestyle of certain groups of people living in a certain place in the world.
- The time period in which the action takes place (specific hints such as September 11th, season of the year like thanksgivings)

The setting is therefore used to evoke the mood and the atmosphere (social or cultural) to prepare the readers for the coming actions.

2. **Characters** are the actors of the story. They are the people, animals, or forces that inhabit a story. Characterization is a means by which the author presents the actors of the story. The characterization may be done by the direct description of the characters or by showing the character in action or by making other characters present and give details about a given character.

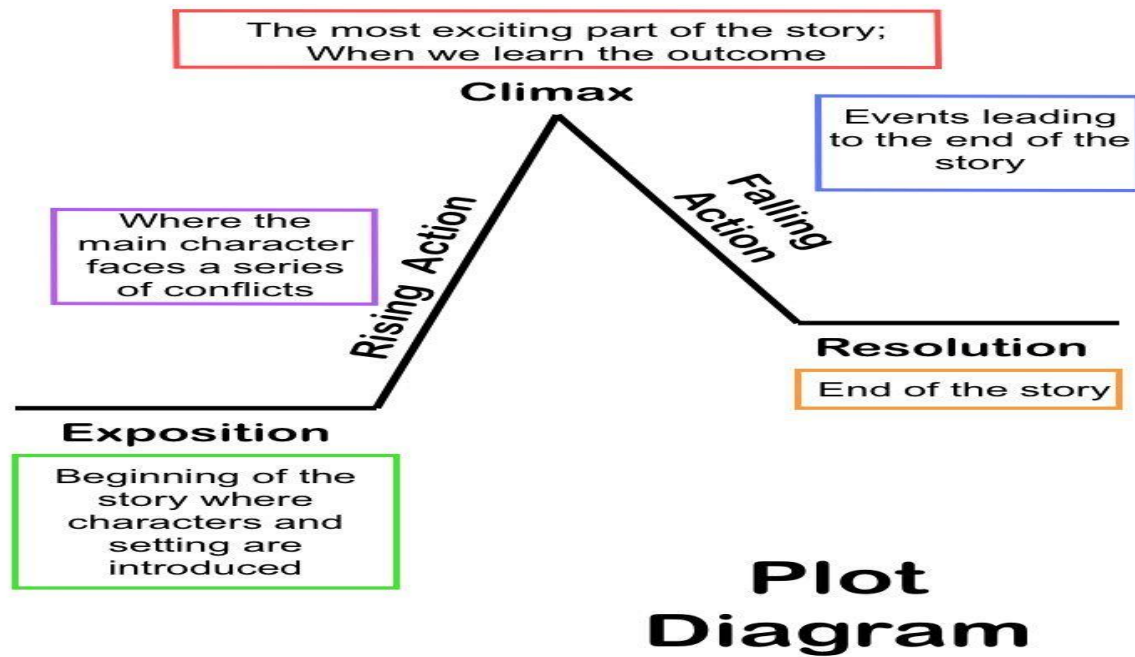
The main character (the hero) is called the protagonist. Contrariwise, the opposing character is called the antagonist. Their conflict may spark the story's plot and arouse more suspense. Characters may be major (principal) the central figure of the story or minor ('supplementary) who help the major character(s) and are generally static while the major character is always dynamic as they s/he shows a considerable change of attitude, behaviour, state of mind sometimes reaches maturity and gains experience as the actions progress. The character may be flat with simple moral traits or stock characters who embody the archetypes or stereotypes like « the fatal woman, « the cruel stepmother » while round characters are more complex and many-sided than flat or stock characters as they reflect inconsistencies and internal conflicts.

3. **Plot** is the series of events that give the story meaning and effect. A story must include elements that complicate, attract, increase tension and create suspense within the story. All stories require conflicts which embody a clash of ideas, actions, beliefs and desires. The conflict might be between the protagonist and the antagonist man vs man. It can be internal (psychological, mental, emotional or moral) the protagonist against himself. It might be external (social or political). The protagonist can be at odds with society, technology, setting (against environment or natural phenomena) something spiritual (ghosts), or supernatural/ fate (God as an alien being). Therefore, the analysis of the plot necessitates the study of the strategic events of the story through plot structure.

The plot structure includes an inciting incident (the main event from which the rest of the story progresses). It displays the goal that the main character strives to achieve and also



the challenges and obstacles that impede his path. In the plot structure, there are rising actions that lead to the climax that represents a turning point and gives way to the resolution of the conflict and leads to tying up loose ends.



This diagram is taken from tutors.com

**To sum up :**

In the analysis of the story's plot, one should consider the following points :

- Conflicts, challenges, obstacles that go in opposition with the protagonist's desires.
- Beginning, the middle (rising actions), the climax and the end falling action (denouement) Situation-action-resolution or situation-action-complication (open ended story)
- Linear plot : static and straightforward chronological development of events
- Modular plot is constructed of unrelated components or independent elements rather than interconnected events. This may include flashbacks (a leap to the past), a frame story (a story within a story) or a back story including elements significant to the main theme of the story.

4. **Theme** is the central meaning or insight and the controlling idea and the unifying concept of the whole story (the characters, plot, setting, point of view). In fiction, the theme is inferred and abstracted from the details of characters and actions and not presented as the other elements of fiction. It is the topic of the story (what it is about/ the result of the entire story). It is the main idea that the writer or the poet wants the reader to understand and retain. It is also a recurring social or psychological issue like aging, violence, alienation. The author weaves the theme into the actions of the plot used as a vehicle to convey it.
  
5. **Point of view** refers to the position from which the story is told and viewed. It serves to direct the attention of the reader to a certain way of understanding and evaluating the characters and the events of the story. The narrative voice cannot be always that of the author's. This voice can be that of one of the characters in the story (first-person) or semi-detached observer (third-person limited) or a detached observer (third-person omniscient all-knowing). This voice may influence readers's perception and further evaluation in criticising the literary work.

## **SEMESTER ONE**

### **Unit 6 :**

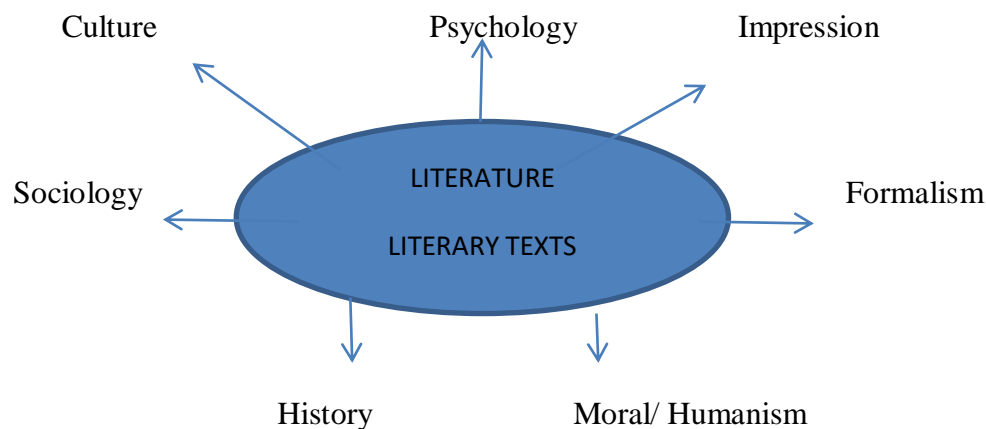
#### **Literary Theory/Literary Criticism**

#### **Towards the Interpretation/Analysis of Literary Texts**

Theorists such as Plato and Aristotle declare that the source of beauty is inherent within the art object itself. Literature's chief purpose is to tell a story describing and detailing a variety of human experiences. Is literature a story that contains certain aesthetic and literary qualities that all somehow pleasingly culminate in a work of art? If so, can texts be considered artifacts that can be analysed, discussed and studied to discover their essential meaning? Or does a literary text have an ontologic status, that is, exist in itself or must it have audience and readers? The answer to these questions have been long debated and the various responses make up the corpus of LITERARY THEORY.

A better understanding of literary theory can be gained by investigating the etymology of the word theory derived from Greek word « theoria. It means a view or perspective. It offers us a view of life, an understanding of why we interpret texts. What exactly is influencing us during reading process, culture, understanding of the nature of literature itself, political or social views. Theory questions the assumptions, the beliefs and feelings of readers' response. Literary theory questions our « common sense » interpretation of the text asking us to get beyond our initial responses (Eagleton, 2003 :74). Such theorizing enables readers to examine their personal world-view and articulate their individual views about reality to understand how these assumptions affect the readers' interpretation of not only any work of art but also the definition of literature itself.

Readers' response to a literary text is largely conditioned or socially constructed on how we arrive at interpreting the meaning or the themes of a given literary work. Consciously or unconsciously, readers have developed a certain mindset that accommodates their expectations and impression when reading a novel or short story. This is the idea on which literary theory is based: understanding and interpreting the meaning of the text, art, culture, aesthetics and ideological positions. Components, readers' critique rest later when involving further analysis according to a certain theory (literary approach: psychoanalytical, feminist, marxist)



A very basic way of thinking about literary theory is that these ideas act as different lenses critics use to view and talk about art, literature and culture. These different lenses allow critics to consider works of art based on certain assumptions within different schools of theory. For example: if a critic is applying Marxist theory on a text, he should focus on class struggles or socioeconomic traits in the text. On the other hand, if the critic is working with post-colonial theory, s/he might consider how characters from colonial powers (Britain, France or USA) treat characters from Africa, India, Caribbean or the Middle East. Therefore, literary theory proposes particular, systematic approaches to literary texts that impose a particular line

of intellectual reasoning to it. Example : a psychoanalytical literary theorists may take the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud or Gustav Jung and seek to reach a critical understanding of Hemingway's *To Whom the Bell Tolls* or to Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado*.

The term 'criticism' is often understood to be: • The act of finding fault; censure; disapproval • The act of criticizing, especially adversely • But the term 'criticism' as it is used in this course signifies: • The act of interpreting, analyzing and making judgments of individual and comparative worth of works of art such as literature (Barry, 2002 :7). Literary criticism is the interpretation, analysis, classification and ultimately the judgement of a literary work. Literary criticism is done in a form of a literary essay, yet an in-depth book reviews can be considered as literary criticism. The critical essay may examine a particular literary work or look at an author's writings as a whole.

### **Who is a Critic ?**

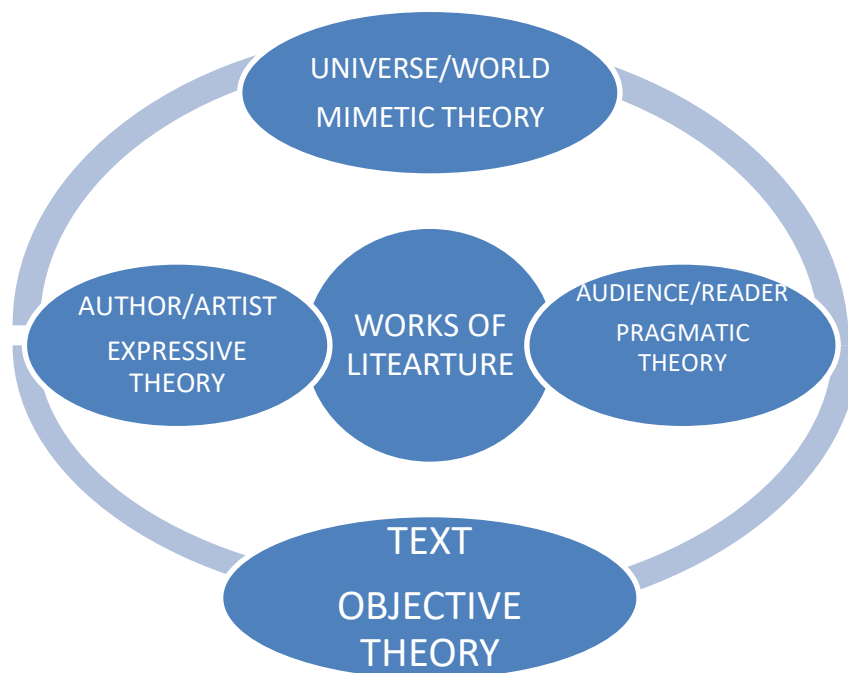
A critic is one who passes judgement derived from Greek « KRITIKOS » means « able to make judgements », the one who judges the merits or faults of books or plays. The critic focuses mainly on the evaluation of the qualities of a literary work and argues a certain interpretation or understanding of a particular meaning's in literary texts (Barry, 2002 :11). The task of a critic is to explain and attempt to reach a critical understanding of what literary texts mean in terms of their aesthetic as well as social, political and cultural statements and suggestions. More than evaluating and discussing a literary text, a critic seeks to reach a logical and reasonable understanding of not merely what the author intends to mean (Bressler, 2001 :17) but also what different cultures and ideologies make them capable of meaning.

<b>LITERARY CRITICISM</b>	<b>LITERARY THEORY</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The practice of interpreting a literary text</li> <li>• Critical analyses are in-depth examination of some aspects in the literary text</li> <li>• The critic may examine any element in the text :</li> <li>• Characters' psychological/social development</li> <li>• Kinds of conflicts (racial, sexual, social, political, psychological)</li> </ul> <p>Narrative point of view (technics of narration)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The study of principles (approaches) which help the critic make sense of the literary text.</li> <li>• It strives to give sense to the literary text.</li> <li>• Schools of thought (feminism, postcolonial theory, Marxism, psychoanalysis, cultural studies) provide a framework (a basis/approach) for further text's discussion.</li> </ul>

Providing the academic arena in which those interested in literary theory can posit philosophical assumptions as to the nature of the reading process touch upon : the epistemological nature of learning and the nature of reality itself (Source). Literary theory offers a variety of methods that enable readers to interpret a text from different and often conflicting standpoints. Putting the literary text in its environment (social, political, psychological) and examining the nature and the form of the text getting deeper in its structure and themes involve different theories of examining a literary text as defined by Charles E. Bressler (2011 :15)

1. **MIMETIC Theory of Arts** 'mimetic means imitation and the word first used by Aristotle in the 4th Century B.C where he states that tragedi is the imitation of an action. It sees a literary work as reflecting the universe as a « mirror » since literature imitates and reflects life. The critic focuses on the truth and accuracy of representation.

2. **PRAGMATIC Theory of Arts** seeks to examine the effects that a literary text has on audience (extent of influence and appeal) in terms of instruction (teaching) and aesthetic pleasure (delight) ARISTOTLE
3. **EXPRESSIVE Theory of Arts** focuses on the author's feelings and psyche and examines the text as an expression of the writer's feelings, imagination and principles. The emphasis is put on the extent to which the work revealed the writer's state of mind. Romantic critics such as Wordsworth and Coleridge were expressive critics.
4. **OBJECTIVE Theory of Arts** focuses on the text without the reader or the author. The text is expressive i itself. What is important is the message that can be inferred and interpreted from the text as an ontological entity.



**Important points in time to be taken into consideration from the beginning of the journey in American literature**

**Timeline: the Birth of Nation**

<b>1492</b>	<b>Columbus lands in America</b>
<b>1607</b>	<b>Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement, was founded.</b>
<b>1620</b>	<b>the Pilgrim Fathers found Plymouth Plantation in New England</b>
<b>1630</b>	<b>Massachusetts Bay Colony</b>
<b>1692</b>	<b>Salem Witch Trials</b>
<b>1773</b>	<b>Boston Tea Party</b>
<b>1775-1783</b>	<b>American War of Independence</b>
<b>1776</b>	<b>Declaration of Independence</b>
<b>1791</b>	<b>Bill of Rights ( first 10 amendments to the U.S constitution</b>
<b>1803</b>	<b>Louisiana Purchase: the U.S. acquisition of most of Midwest</b>
<b>1812</b>	<b>War of 1812 between the U.S. and Great Britain</b>
<b>1823</b>	<b>The Monroe Doctrine asserts U.S. influence over the Americas</b>

**Key Texts : Early American Literature**

**Sir Walter Raleigh**, *The Discoverie of Guiana* (1595)

**John Smith**, *A True Relation of Virginia* (1608), *A Map of Virginia* (1612)

**John Winthrop**, *A Model of Christian Charity* (1630)

**William Bradford**, *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1630/1648)

**Anne Bradstreet**, *"A Dialogue between Old England and New"* (1642)

**Revolutionary Literature (1730-1830)**

**William Hill Brown**, *The Power of Sympathy* (1789)

**James Fenimore Cooper**, *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* ( 1826)

**Washington Irving**, *"Rip Van Winkle"* (1819), *"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"* (1820)

**Thomas Paine**, *Common Sense* (1776)

**Benjamin Franklin**, *Autobiography and The Way to Wealth*

**Thomas Jefferson**, *The Declaration of Independence*



## SEMESTER ONE

### Unit 7 : Early American Literature

#### Voices from the Margin

First, it is important to hint at native American literature. Native Americans, the first inhabitants of the continent, produced oral traditions that can not be properly considered « literature ». Different cultures created divergent types notably of oral literature such as myths, legends, songs. Those narratives passed down from generation to another in an oral tradition.

**Exploration period (1492-1607)** is characterized by European writings describing the explorers' travels, expeditions and impressions of the New World and its native people(s). this literature was produced in form of letters and journals written by explorers.

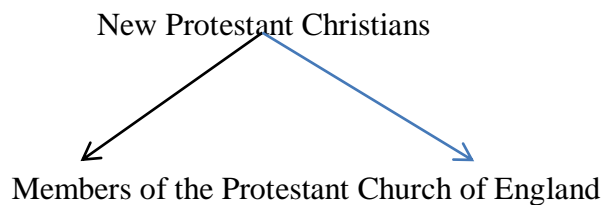
**Colonial Period (1607-1765)** is dominated by Puritan beliefs and therefore literature that reflected their lifestyle and plans. This period was not rich in terms of literary works (works of fiction) since the works produced were basically religious, historical or didactic away from fiction, entertainment or emotions. It is also important to mention that slave narratives were rare since they were banned and considered immoral. The forms of this literature are limited to journals, narratives, sermons, polemics, tracts and some poems related to theology. The American literary history begins with **the Age of Colonialism**.

The colonial period marks the beginning of the history of America. It is related to the era of colonising the continent (perpetual settlement of Europeans). Not only Spanish and English explored and claimed the territories, but also the French and Portuguese invaded some other territories of the American continent and therefore produced literature(s) which are part of the beginnings of the early American literature.

Early American literature in English expressed mainly English taste, lifestyle, ideas and forms of writing. This means that early American literature is highly influenced by the literature of England. Therefore, the umbilical cord was always maintained between England and America as far as literary works are concerned. As years passed by, literary forms and theories started to develop and be nourished by a lifestyle and mentalities and even taste which was different from the English one.

Early American literature was marked by a religion blueprint since the Puritans were interested in theology. Other topics like issues of living in a new land, the promised land, exploration, plantations agriculture, relations with the native people are also dominant in the Puritans' journals and sermons. On the other hand, Pilgrims landed in the Massachusetts Bay in 1620 and had a big influence on the culture of the newly developing colonial system.

Early American literature was founded by two religious groups coming from England



Stand in opposition to the Anglican Church (The Church of England)

« People of the Book » the Bible as opposed to human organisations and monarchies

Fanatics about the Bible Law

**PURITANS**

**PILGRIMS**

**(Non-Separatists)**

**(Separatists)**

## **Puritans/Pilgrims : Hard Ways of Separation and Persecution**

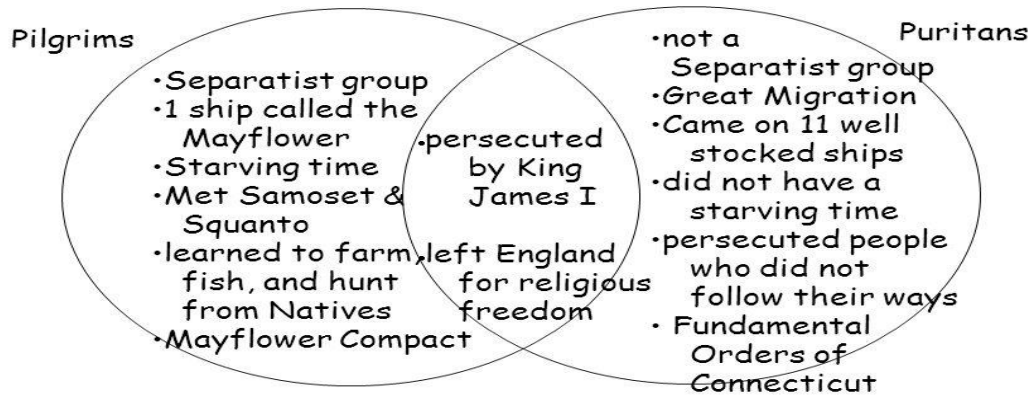
Let us get back to the genesis of the religious split in Europe

To understand the difference between those groups, let us get back to the Protestant Reformation and emergence of Lutherism (Martin Luther which swept through Europe in 1517. Clergies under Luther's guidance got access to the Bible in native languages. They began to question why the Roman Catholic worship is different from the primitive Christian Church. However, it is important to hint at the first religious split from the Catholic Church in 1534 when King Henry VIII wanted a divorce and the Pope would not accept it. The king announced a divorce with the Catholic Church and created the Anglican Church which was similar to Catholicism in everyway except the Pope carrying divine authority, it was the British Crown.

British citizens were urged to attend the Church of England, and those who did not were punished by the state. The Pilgrims were one group of farmers living in Northern England were known as separatists began to worship in secret. They were persecuted and most of them faced the loss of their homes and life. They first fled to Netherlands which was far more religiously tolerant, peaceful and diverse. The only obstacle was culture, the Pilgrims were afraid of losing their English lifestyle. They decided to move further to establish and preserve their true English lifestyle and religion and separate from Europe to the NewWorld. They are symbols of Manifest Destiny.



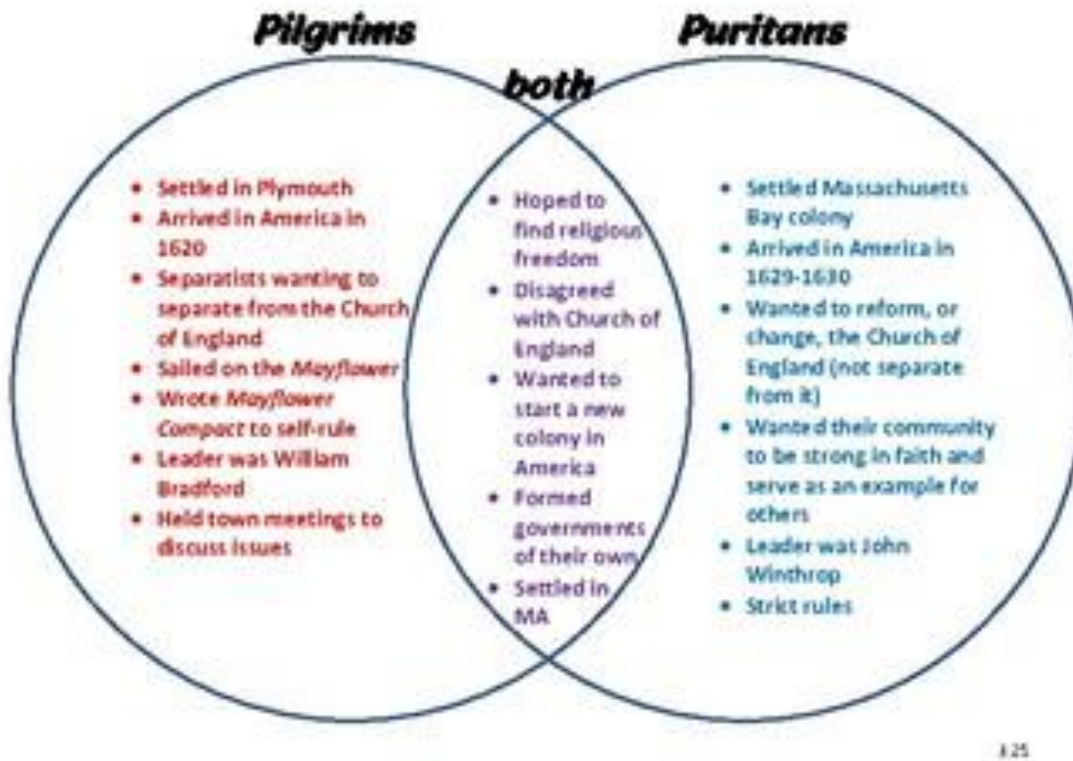
### Compare & Contrast Pilgrims & Puritans



Not all the Separatists were able to cross the Atlantic, the Pilgrims' spiritual leader Reverend John Robinson stayed in the Netherlands. In his *Of Plymouth Plantation*, William Bradford recounted the difficult farewell at the Docks of Delftshaven where a ship would take them to meet the Mayflower in London. As far as their name « Pilgrims » is concerned, the separatists were first known as « first-comers » or « forefather » (Bross, 2020 : 12) . it was not before 1800 that the first usage of Pilgrims came to the fore when a group of citizens of Plymouth proposed the creation of a *Pilgrim Society* to celebrate the founding of the Plymouth Colony in 1620.

## Differences and Similarities between the Puritans and the Pilgrims

Taken from Tutors.com



While Pilgrims call for an entire separation with the Church of England, the Puritans sought to reform it from within. The Puritans are non-separatists and less radical than the Pilgrims ; however, they still share a lot in common such as the form of worship and self-organization called « the congregational way ». The Puritans decided to reach the New World but not for the same reason as the Pilgrims. Having money, they decided to invest and own lands in America. They also believed that they might establish a better version of the Church of England in the New World.

## **Let us have a glimpse on what Puritanism is :**

Puritanism, which is originated as a reform movement within the Church of England, greatly influenced American life and politics in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Its adherents hoped to purify church and society through an emphasis on God sovereignty, the individual experience of grace, and a generally skeptical attitude toward institutional hierarchies (Bross, 2020 : 14). The Bible was seen as the only necessary dogmatic authority. Faith, rather than good works, served as the most important way of salvation.

It is noteworthy to mention Calvinism the basic theological doctrines of the colonists (Puritans and Pilgrims)

1. Total Depravity /Original Sin (Adam and Eve)
2. Limited Atonement/ Jesus' Grace is given to the elect, very few chosen people
3. Irresistible Grace/salvation is given by God cannot be earned
4. The perseverance of the saints/ chosen by God will remain in grace with the elect till death
5. Predestination/ everything had been predestined by God and the elect are already chosen

The reiteration of the term « elect » and « chosen » gives allusion to Judaism. The Pilgrims and Puritans were persecuted in England and sought to quit it in search for the Promised Land. Similarly, Jews were led by Moses out of slavery in Egypt into the Promised Land. Hence, Bradford led the Pilgrims from persecution and Winthrop led the Puritans to the New World. These groups fled from oppression and suffered for their religious principles. Winthrop and Bradford led their followers out of « bondage » (Bross, 2020 :18) ; as a result, they believed they were the chosen people just like Moses, favored by God. The idea of the Promised Land was applied on New England (Bross, 2020 :22). They believe that God directly intervenes in the lives of all mankind through providences. As far as literary texts are concerned, Puritans believed that they have a divine mission ; therefore, their productions were expressed in a **biblical style of writing** based on writing expressions of religious ideals

serving as moral lessons to encourage piety and holiness in an effort to emphasise self-examination, devotion and faith.

As opposed to fiction where beauty of language is the major element, writing was plain and direct without decoration with a simple style and a simple language. Puritans' fanaticism reflects their intolerance to other religions practised in their midst. They wanted to impose their own way of belief in their colonies. Their fanaticism was the main factor of their decline and downfall later on since it challenged the unity and freedom of other people coming from different places of Europe who believed in other religions. Time has changed ; accordingly, the needs and expectations of the colonies changed. New religious leaders sought to cut relation with old divided groups of Pilgrims and Puritans and favoured a milder, more congenial Christianity. The rise of American pluralism was one of the major factors of Puritans' downfall later on.

Colonial period remained hard impressed on the American mind and influenced the American thoughts, beliefs, actions, and values. The colonial period is important in the American history and literature because it served as the dominant force in the creation of American literature and valued learning and education. The emphasis on sermon and Bible study led to the importance of education. Puritans wanted an educated audience since most of the Puritans were bookish and literate. As a result, Massachusetts Bay Colony became a cultural centre and Harvard was the first college in English North America. Harvard, one of the major pillars of education and sciences in present United States was established in 1636 as the first college founded in America. Apart from the importance of education, Puritanism encouraged the preminence of individuals and the freedom from oppressive government. However, Puritanism fell in the trap of fanaticism, it is ironical how Puritans escaped persecution in favor of freedom to find themselves installing new way of oppression towards the others. Colonial period was a corner stone in the American history since it helped bring

the revolutionary glories of the American Enlightenment since it called for a separate way contrary to the British way of thinking, living and handling issues. It also helped bring to light the artistic triumphs of the age of Romanticism.



## **SEMESTER ONE**

### **Unit 8 :**

#### **Reading a Poem "A Dialogue between Old England and New" by Anne Bradstreet**

The first eye-catching element is the diction (words/ Old English). This long poem contains records in the history of England and the birth of the history of America. Anne Bradstreet depicts the drastic change in faith and the tension between Catholicism and Protestantism. It is important to track the development of the shift of the image of the motherland in this poem, there is a dialogue between the mother and daughter. The two first stanzas of this poem are chosen to see the kind of English used in the 17th century and understand the split between Europe and America that the poet expresses.

Through the poem, the poet evokes her concern over the social, political problems that England was still facing. The poem covers the English crisis of 1642, which occurred at the beginning of the English Civil War. King Charles I and Parliament, led by Oliver Cromwell, split for a variety of reasons, the most prominent being the division of power between the monarchy and the legislature. This war was not continuous and only featured three major battles, but was nonetheless disruptive to English life until 1649, when Charles was executed (Bross, 2020 :45). That is, 1642 was the point at which politics had seemed to break down completely, when what Bradstreet, writing from Massachusetts, called "Old England" was faced with the most urgent crisis it had experienced since the end of the Wars of the Roses in 1485. What seems on the one hand to be a domestic conversation turns out to be a meditation on how England fell into its current state of civil war, and a prayer that the

mother country might find itself restored to its rightful place as a leader among the Christian nations of Europe.

The first stanza is composed of 8 lines. The persona is the voice of the new England showing pain concerning the lamentable situation of Old England.

New England.

Alas, dear Mother, fairest Queen and best,

With honour, wealth, and peace happy and blest,

What ails thee hang thy head, and cross thine arms, *Meaning* : You (object)/ thy= your

And sit i' the dust to sigh these sad alarms?

What deluge of new woes thus over-whelm

The glories of thy ever famous Realm?

What means this wailing tone, this mournful guise?

Ah, tell thy Daughter; she may sympathize.

**Rhyme scheme** : aa/bb/cc/bb

In this first stanza of the poem a mother and daughter relationship is established between Old England and New. But this is no regular mother-daughter relationship; the roles seemed to be reversed. New England, the daughter, sees her mother hang her head and cross her arms, like a disappointed little child. She also looks to comfort her by asking her mother to tell her what is wrong; something a mother would do to a child. This switch in a typical mother-daughter relationship establishes New England's superiority over Old England.

Old England.

Art ignorant indeed of these my woes, *Meaning* : Are you ?

Or must my forced tongue these griefs disclose,

And must my self dissect my tatter'd state,

Which Amazed Christendom stands wondering at?

And thou a child, a Limb, and dost not feel *Meaning* : You

My weak'ned fainting body now to reel?

This physic-purging-potion I have taken

Will bring Consumption or an Ague quaking,  
Unless some Cordial **thou** fetch from high,  
Which present help may ease my malady.  
If I decease, **dost** think **thou shalt** survive?*Meaning* : do you think you shall  
Or by my wasting state **dost** think to thrive?  
Then weigh our case, if 't be not justly sad.  
Let me lament alone, while **thou art** glad.*Meaning* : You are

**Rhyme scheme** : cc/bb/ee/fg/hi/jj/aa

The second stanza contains 14 lines in which Anne Bradstreet personifies England as a mother. Old England shares her numerous woes with her daughter. She is sick from the political and religious strife and desperately hopes for a reprieve from her troubles. Old England replies that she thinks New England should be aware of her mother's sorrows. Meanwhile, Old England has taken a purging concoction and her weak body is reeling. She hopes that New England will bring her a cordial. If Old England ceases to exist, she says, her daughter cannot live either.

The relationship between Old and New England seems to be strong just as a mother and her daughter. From this, students may infer that Anne Bradstreet interprets the Puritan rather than the Pilgrim's separatist attitude to England. Puritans like Anne Bradstreet were steadfastly opposed to Catholicism. She wrote this poem only 150 years after Martin Luther began the Protestant Reformation and ignited a lasting and impassioned conflict between the two denominations. Catholics and Protestants clashed many times throughout this time period, and monarchs were forced to embrace either one religion or the other - and some even changed their minds (like Henry VIII). In this context, she points out that Old England is experiencing waning piety and regular sinful behavior, and partially blames these problems on the Catholic presence in England. New England's rather messianic views, however, foresee a Protestant revival powerful enough to abolish Catholicism and all its trappings. While this did

not ever happen, Bradstreet's words are a testament to the deep religious divisions that existed in the 17th century and the poet's comprehensive understanding of the world outside New England.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise**

Towards an understanding of poems' analysis/ follow the steps

Try to read the third and fourth stanzas of Anne Bradstreet's poem

- put their lines number spot their rhyme schemes

-Sort out old words/ diction and infer meaning

-write a summary of your own words of both stanzas

## SEMESTER ONE

### Unit 9 :

#### William Bradford's *Of The Plymouth Plantation*

Example of Colonial Writings : Of Plymouth Plantation by William Bradford Chapter 1

#### Contextualizing Questions

1. What kind of text are we dealing with?
2. When was it written?
3. Who wrote it?
4. For what audience was it intended?
5. For what purpose was it written?

#### Chapter 1 : On Separatist Interpretation of the Reformation in England 1550-1607

In this chapter of his diaries, Bradford began with an explanation of Puritans' migration to the New World. The time frame in which he wrote these words are roughly in 1630 ; however, the events he pointed at some historical points in time. Bradford promises to write in a simple, "plain" style, without lots of elaborate literary devices or sentence constructions. As a result, *Of Plymouth Plantation* is fairly easy for 21st century people to read, at least compared with other texts from the 1600s. Bradford characterizes the plain style as an extension of the Pilgrim ethos: simple, spare, and honest.

#### What exactly happened ?

This chapter explains the reformation roots in England, the reason of its emergence and how it developed. Bradford did not give exact dates and facts, yet he began with a

Biblical form explaining the persecution and terror the gospel and its followers endured during these hard times. New Plymouth, William Bradford writes, was founded by a group of English colonists seeking to escape religious persecution. During the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation swept across England, ushering in a debate about how Christianity should be practiced. Some people, like Bradford, preferred a simple and unceremonious expression of their faith, while others held relatively close to the devotions and hierarchies of the Catholic Church. As the latter group gained power within the Church of England, their opponents, called Puritans (a derogatory term given to them) were oppressed. After imprisonments, house arrest, and other injustices, Bradford reports, the Puritans resolved to leave England in secret. Bradford situates the story of the Pilgrims' migration to America within a broader narrative, alluding to the persecution of Christians throughout history. Note, though, that he is careful to distinguish "true Christians" from "vile" Catholic institutions and ceremonies—and the true Christians are always portrayed as innocent victims of both supernatural and human evil.

Throughout history, Bradford claims, the Devil has tried to fight Christianity through various means. In ancient Rome, for example, he killed Christians. Then, when the Christian Church became powerful, he succeeded in tempting clergymen, so that Christianity itself was corrupted with "vile canons and decrees." (Bross, 2020 :75). The Devil has used two different means to fight Christianity: attacking Christianity from the outside, and corrupting and twisting it from the inside. In modern England, the Devil has more often used the second method.

Bradford situates the story of the Pilgrims' migration to America within a broader narrative, alluding to the persecution of Christians throughout history. Note, though, that he is careful to distinguish "true Christians" from "vile" Catholic institutions and ceremonies and

the true Christians (Ford, 1998 : 115) are always portrayed as innocent victims of both supernatural and human evil.

The Protestant reformers who sought to fight the evils of “popery” (Catholicism) became locked in a “bitter war” with each other (Ford, 1998 :110). Virtuous Protestant reformers supported a simple Christian religion, based on humble pastors’ interpretations of the gospels. The other, “episcopal” reformers supported a Christianity tarnished by the “popish manner,” with its emphasis on gaudy ceremony. Under the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the episcopal party” became too powerful. They criticized other Christian reformers for being too “high and mighty,” and gave them a derisive nickname, “Puritans.” (Ford, 1998 : 110). By emphasizing ceremony, episcopal Christians risked reverting to old-fashioned popery.

William Bradford recounts the story of the Plymouth Plantation. It begins when a group of North English preachers found the true word of God. They began to reform their lives, despite the fact that they were scorned by their neighbors, and they refuse to acknowledge the authority of prelates (i.e., bishops and other high religious authorities). After the coronation of King James I, prelates begin to wield much more power over the English church, and the North English reformers saw that England was in danger of returning to popery.

## **SEMESTER ONE**

### **Unit 10 :**

#### **Moving Forward in American Literature History**

#### **The Revolutionary Period**

##### **Here We Are: The Revolutionary Period (1765-1790)**

##### **The Spot light on POLITICS**

This period usually refers to writings that are Politically motivated, either in support of British rule, in support of American patriotism and independence, or relating to the constitution. Unlike Puritan's sermons, journals and diaries, this period is known of its shift from religion to politics: political documents, speeches and letters. The urgent needs of people : taxation, representation, and government would dissipate religious concerns.

The authors of the American constitution (1789) founded a secular self-made political entity.



##### **Period of Enlightenment (1750-1800)**

During this period, there was an emphasis and dependence on logic and science (common sense). This does not mean that the Bible, as the source of knowledge, was discarded. The writers became more politically, anti-British and revolutionary oriented. Rationalism (reason/science/logic) and enlightenment prevailed.

As opposed to Puritanism which carried out the heritage of Man as naturally sinful, the enlightenment wanted to get beyond that and made of Man a source of knowledge, reason and success.



Reading an excerpt, the introduction of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* to understand the shift of discourse from religious to political. Introducing students to pamphlets.

By January 1776, the American colonies were in open rebellion against Britain. Their soldiers had captured Fort Ticonderoga, besieged Boston, fortified New York City, and invaded Canada. Yet few dared voice what most knew was true they were no longer fighting for their rights as British subjects. They weren't fighting for self-defense, or protection of their property, or to force Britain to the negotiating table (Ford, 1998 :147). They were fighting for independence. It took a hard jolt to move Americans from professed loyalty to declared rebellion, and it came in large part from Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*. Not a dumbed-down rant for the masses, as often described, *Common Sense* is a masterful piece of argument and rhetoric that proved the power of words (Ferguson, 2000 : 111).

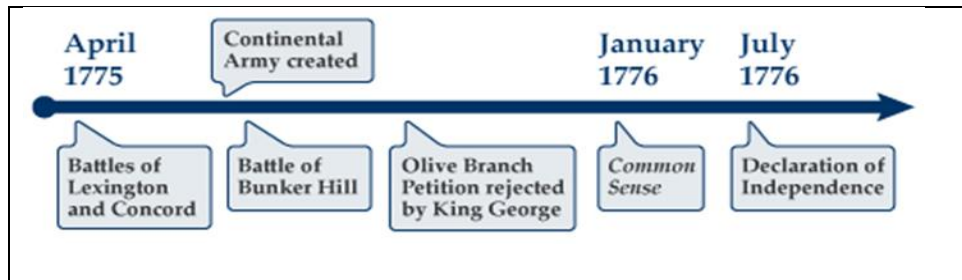
The typical figure of a "Founding Father" composed, elite, and empowered. And to us his famous essays are awash in powdered-wig prose. But the portrait and the prose belie the reality. Thomas Paine was a firebrand, and his most influential *Common Sense* was a fevered no-holds-barred call for independence (Ferguson, 2000 :117). He is credited with « turning the tide of public opinion at a crucial juncture, convincing many Americans that war for independence » (Ferguson, 2000 :120) was the only option to take, and they had to take it now, or else.

*Common Sense* appeared as a pamphlet for sale in Philadelphia on January 10, 1776. The first printing sold out in two weeks and over 150,000 copies were sold throughout America and Europe. It is estimated that one fifth of Americans read the pamphlet or heard it read aloud in public. General Washington ordered it read to his troops. Within weeks, it seemed, reconciliation with Britain had gone from an honorable goal to a cowardly betrayal, while independence became the rallying cry of united Patriots. How did Paine achieve this?

### Contextualizing Questions

1. What kind of text are we dealing with?
2. When was it written?
3. Who wrote it?
4. For what audience was it intended?
5. For what purpose was it written?

Over a year elapsed between the outbreak of armed conflict and the Declaration of Independence. During these fifteen months, many bemoaned the reluctance of Americans to renounce their ties with Britain despite the escalating warfare around them. “When we are no longer fascinated with the Idea of a speedy Reconciliation,” wrote Benjamin Franklin in mid-1775, “we shall exert ourselves to some purpose. Till then Things will be done by Halves.” In addition, there remained much discord among the colonies about their shared future. “Some timid minds are terrified at the word independence,” wrote Elbridge Gerry in March 1776, referring to the colonial legislatures. (qtd in Ferguson, 2000 :128) “America has gone such lengths she cannot recede, and I am convinced a few weeks or months at furthest will convince her of the fact, but the fruit must have time to ripen in some of the other Colonies.”(qtd in Ferguson, 2000 : 130). In this environment, *Common Sense* appeared like a “meteor,” wrote John Adams, and propelled many to support independence. Many noted it at the time with amazement.



**Introduction:** The ideas I present here are so new that many people will reject them. Readers must clear their minds of long-held notions, apply common sense, and adopt the cause of America as the “cause of all mankind.” How we respond to tyranny today will matter for all time.

**Critically speaking :** What made Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* so esteemed and “enlightening”?

Some critics argue that *Common Sense* brought nothing new, that it simply put forward the will to independence in down to earth language that all common people understand. However, this trivializes Paine’s accomplishment. He rather Carried the voice of dissent, revolution, will to change. He did present a new message in *Common Sense* : rather an ultimatum. Either they give up reconciliation, or forever lose the chance for independence. He was clear when he put it : « If we fail to act, we’re self-deceiving cowards condemning our children to tyranny and cheating the world of a beacon of liberty » (qtd in Ford, 1998 :178).He sought to envisage a new model of a nation different from the European model, he wrote, « It is our calling to model self-actualized nationhood for the world. The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind. » (qtd in Ford, 1998 :182). Paine’s *Common Sense* epitomizes the mood and the need of the age of enlightenment when reason and judgement are the main elements. It was the period where people started to value society and rules and show concern with the universal experience.

## SEMESTER TWO

### Unit 1 :

### **Romanticism : A Path to Real literary Production**

In this course, students will be introduced to both British and American Romantic works  
Transcendentalism and the concept of nature as related to the philosophy of Romanticism  
American works (short stories) : Nathaniel Hawthorne/Edgar Allan Poe (Gothic)  
Poem : Longfellow (Fireside Poets)  
Brainstorming

#### **Romantic Period (American Renaissance) 1828-1865**

This period was the first major explosion of a genuine American body of literature. This period witnessed the rise of most well-known American writers.

On the other hand, in Europe, Romanticism was a literary and artistic movement of the nineteenth century that arose in reaction against eighteenth century Neoclassicism and placed a premium on fancy, imagination, emotion, nature, individualism and exotica.

As for American literature, there are two points to be considered during this period :

#### **The Age of Transcendentalism (1836-1860)**

**Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau**



Anti-Transcendentalists (Gothic writings) and Fireside Poets

#### **What is Neoclassicism ?**

The English Neoclassical movement, Neo (New) Classic (Roman and Greek heritage). This movement was derived from both classical and contemporary French models, (see Boileau's L'Art Poétique (1674) and Pope's "Essay on Criticism" (1711) as critical statements of Neoclassical principles) which interpreted a body of works on art as related to Man and his

social experiences. Among these ideas, readers find a tendency to order, logic, restraint, accuracy, and a strong will to correctness. These characteristics would enable artists of different arts to imitate or reproduce the patterns and themes of Greek or Roman originals. It is a journey back to the classical era with new tools. Neoclassicism dominated English literature from the Restoration in 1660 until the end of the eighteenth century, when the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) by Wordsworth and Coleridge marked the full emergence of Romanticism. (Encyclopedia Britannica)

**Imagination**

**Intuition**

**Idealism**

**Inspiration**

**Individuality**

### **Romanticism in America**

After Puritanism and Enlightenment, American people started to write fiction away from religion and reason. The steps that America passed through in its history necessitated certain ways of thinking and therefore literature, as a human expression, was influenced by the social, political and psychological development of the American. Only with the emergence of Romanticism, a genuine first full-fledged literary works came to the fore that developed. This literary movement was made up of a group of authors who wrote and published between about 1820 and 1860, when the U.S. was still founding itself as a new nation different and separated from the European lifestyle and mentalities (Philips and Karen, 2010 :15). Romanticism marked a mutation as far as self-representation is concerned, a shift from the communal representation to the individual representation.

American artists were influenced by the Romantic movement that had developed back in Britain. Like the British Romantics, their literary works emphasized intuition, emotion, love of nature, individualism and imagination. American Romanticism is not called "American" Romanticism out of the blue. American writers do share affinities with their

European counterpart across the sea ; however, they wanted to develop a genuine representation of the American layman in an effort to develop their own distinct brand of Romanticism. As long as Romanticism is interested in nature and society, The U.S.'s unique history and landscape influenced the movement in special ways. The American Romantics were preoccupied with questions of democracy and freedom, which were rooted in the American Revolution that had led to independence from Britain back in 1776 (Rosenthal, 2008 :78). This need to be distinctive and original resulted in a number of American masterpieces and classics of all the time. Since this period marked a breakthrough in the American literary history, it is generally referred to as the “American Renaissance” of literature (Rosenthal, 2008 :85), often has been identified with American romanticism and transcendentalism.

Literary nationalists at this time were calling for a movement that would develop Romanticism, which reached American from Europe in the early 19th century, appealed to Americans as it emphasized an emotional, individual relationship with God as opposed to the strict Calvinism of previous generations. Romanticism emphasized emotion over reason and individual decision-making over the constraints of tradition. The Romantic movement was closely related to New England transcendentalism, which portrayed a less restrictive relationship between God and the universe.

Romanticism gave rise to a new genre of literature in which intense, private sentiment was portrayed by characters who showed sensitivity and excitement, as well as a greater exercise of free choice in their lives. A unique American literary style to distinguish American literature from British literature (Myerson, 2000 :84). Authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman wrote their best and most famous works during this period. In recent years, female authors such as Emily Dickinson and Harriet Beecher Stowe have been added to the list of great authors from

the period. During the mid-nineteenth century, many American literary masterpieces were produced. Sometimes called the “American Renaissance” (a term coined by the scholar F.O. Matthiessen), this period encompasses (approximately) the 1820s to the dawn of the Civil War (Myerson, 2000 :75). Often considered a movement centered in New England, the American Renaissance was inspired in part by a new focus on humanism as a way to move from Calvinism. The American Renaissance is characterized by renewed national self-confidence and a feeling that the United States was the heir to Greek democracy, Roman law, and Renaissance humanism. The American preoccupation with national identity (or nationalism) in this period was expressed by modernism, technology, and academic classicism, a major facet of which was literature.

Protestantism shaped the views of the vast majority of Americans in the antebellum years. In quest of understanding the American self, the religious fervor during this time was related to transcendentalists who advocated a more direct knowledge of the self and an emphasis on individualism (Harmon, 2006 :73) .The writers and thinkers got interest in transcendentalism, later developed an interest in nature that created an outpouring trove of American Renaissance writings.

## **SEMESTER TWO**

### **Unit 2 :**

#### **Transcendentalism in American Literature**

What is Transcendentalism ?

Transcendentalism began as a protest against the general state of culture and society at the time, and in particular, the state of intellectualism at Harvard and the doctrine of the Unitarian church, which was taught at Harvard Divinity School. Among Transcendentalists' core beliefs was an ideal spiritual state which "transcends" the physical and empirical and is only realized through the individual's intuition, rather than through the doctrines of established religions. (Encyclopedia Britannica)

Many American writers were influenced by the idealism that transcendentalism proffered. Therefore, they started to express its ideas through new stories, poems, essays, and articles. The ideas of transcendentalism would lead American thought and culture through a prolific print culture, which allowed the emergence wide dissemination of magazines and journals. Ralph Waldo Emerson emerged as the leading figure of this movement. In 1836, he published "Nature," an essay arguing that « humans can find their true spirituality in nature, not in the everyday bustling working world of Jacksonian democracy and industrial transformation » (Myerson, 2000 :49). In 1841, Emerson published his essay "Self-Reliance," which was a call to individuality by urging readers to think about/for themselves and reject the mass conformity and mediocrity taking root in American life.



The call to individualism initiates a clear-cut with the mainstream American life in search of greater spiritual essence. American Romanticism brought through a new voice of revolution, yet cultural and artistic in this context. In 1849, Emerson published his lecture “Civil Disobedience” and urged readers to refuse to support a government that was immoral. In 1854, he published *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, a book about the two years he spent in a small cabin on Walden Pond near Concord, Massachusetts (Myerson, 2000 :67). David Henry Thoreau and Walt Whitman also added to the transcendentalist movement, most notably with his 1855 publication of twelve poems, entitled *Leaves of Grass*, which celebrated and emphasized the importance of self-reliance and the subjective experience of the individual. One of the poems, “Song of Myself,” emphasized individualism, which for Whitman, was a goal achieved by uniting the individual with all other people through a transcendent bond (Hogle, 2002 :37).

However, Some critics and other writers of Gothic/ Dark Romanticism showed their disagreement with transcendentalism’s cynical emphasis on excessive individualism by hinting at the destructive consequences of compulsive human behavior. Some examples of this reaction against transcendentalism represent the dark side of human nature that might challenge the exaggerated ideals of transcendentalism. For instance, Herman Melville’s novel *Moby-Dick* accentuated the perils of individual obsession by telling the tale of Captain Ahab’s single-minded quest to kill a white whale, Moby Dick, which had destroyed Ahab’s original ship and caused him to lose one of his legs. On the other hand, Edgar Allan Poe, a popular author, critic, and poet, decried, “the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists.” (Hogle, 2002 :95) These American writers who questioned transcendentalism illustrate the underlying tension between individualism and conformity in American life. Other notable works from this time period include Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851).

Questioning the authority of mainstream culture or W.A.S.P (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) discarded other categories of Americans from this project of retaining individual identity. As often happens, literary historians emphasize the works produced by white men during the American Renaissance, but many African Americans and women produced great literary works, too. Emily Dickinson began writing poetry in the 1830s, and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) rose to a prominent reputation in the late 1970s. African-American literature during this time, including slave narratives by such writers as Frederick Douglass and early novels by William Wells Brown, has gained increasing recognition as well.

The rise of the short story replaced the sermons and pamphlets, self-expression shifted to fiction. The Romantic movement in America was widely popular and influenced American writers such as James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving. Romantic literature was personal and intense; it portrayed more emotion and intuition than ever seen in neoclassical literature in Europe. On the other hand, America's preoccupation with freedom and democracy became a source of motivation for Romantic writers. Writers started to get interest in the psychological development of their characters, and the main characters typically displayed extremes of sensitivity and excitement (Bendixen and Nagel, 2003 ;14). The works of the Romantic Era also differed from preceding works in that they spoke to a wider audience, to the layman, as costs came down and literacy rose during the period. The Romantic period also saw an increase in female authors and readers.

It is important to have an idea of the prominent Romantic writers whose touch is still available in American literature classics. Considered as social and psychological realism away from the ideals of Transcendentalism, American Romantic Gothic literature first emerged with Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1820) and *Rip Van Winkle*

(1819), followed from 1823 onwards by *The Leatherstocking Tales* of James Fenimore Cooper. In his popular novel *Last of the Mohicans*, Cooper expressed romantic ideals about the relationship between men and nature. These works had an emphasis on heroic simplicity and fervent landscape descriptions of an already-exotic mythicized frontier peopled by “noble savages” (source). Edgar Allan Poe’s tales of the horror and his balladic poetry were more influential in Europe notably France ; however, the melodrama atmosphere helped the emergence of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* (1850).

The advent of a national literary consciousness in the United States is generally attributed to the American Renaissance period, from around 1830 to the beginning of the Civil War. Prior to this period, much of American Literature was serialized in periodicals, rather than as cohesive publications. As publishing companies began to take hold in the States, there was an influx of print journalism and new literary works. Two of the most popular genres to come from this period was Transcendentalism, with authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau, or Dark Romanticism, favored by Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville. Transcendentalists often had a more optimistic tone to their work than Dark Romanticists, but both factions focused on themes of nature, spirituality and separation from civilization.

The rise of literacy and widespread readership helped writers to publish their works in newspapers to reach all people of all categories. In the early nineteenth century, most newspapers were mouthpieces of politicians usually controlled by political parties and served to support those parties’ ideas and candidates. Yet, journalism soon changed to address ordinary people to reach broader public interests, covering new topics appealing to human-interest stories that were important and relevant to everyone instead of a select few (source). Many of the changes that came with this shift brought about new features influenced current journalism, such as the editorial page, personal interviews, business news, and foreign-news

correspondents. Newspapers presented literary columns and book excerpts that catered to an emerging middle class and literate audience. Advances in technology, such as the telegraph and railroad, made it possible to receive and report on news faster than ever before. Penny press newspapers began to publish sensational human-interest stories and relied on advertising, instead of subscriptions, to sell issues. Some reform movements published their own newspapers (Ford, 1998 :18), and abolitionist papers in particular were met with a great deal of controversy as they reported on the evils of slavery.

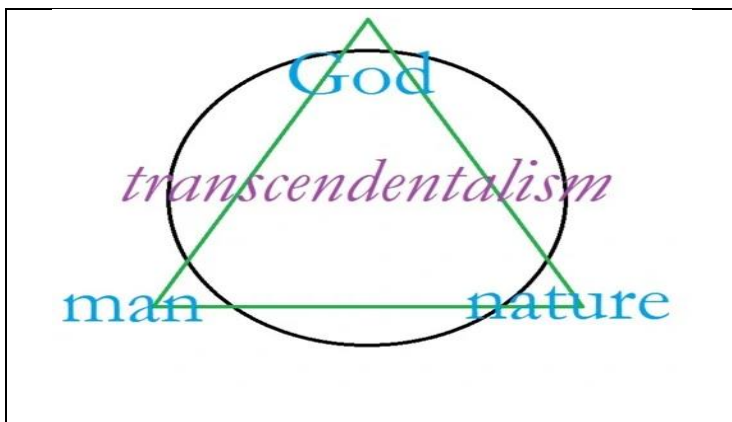
## SEMESTER TWO

### Unit 3 :

#### Exploring Transcendentalism : Reading an excerpt of Ralph Waldo

#### Emerson's *The Book of Nature*

Let us first recapitulate the major elements of Transcendentalism



In his powerful sermon "A Discourse of the Transient and Permanent in Christianity" (1841), Theodore Parker has summarized the major tenets of Transcendentalism (Parker, 151) as follows :

- Transcendentalism is a form of philosophical idealism (Platonic).
- The transcendentalist rises above the lower animalistic impulses in life, as well as the cultural restrictions of society, and moves from the rational to a spiritual realm.
- God or the Life Force in the universe can be found everywhere, thus no need for churches or holy places. God exists as a spirit in all people and nature.
- Every person possesses the "inner light" of God, which must be nourished. Every person possesses "intuition," an essential and in-dwelling understanding of right and wrong (moral action).

- Culture and society (external principles imposed by social and political authorities) tend to corrupt human intuition, establishing other determiners for morality and truth (church, government, peer groups) that deny nature.
- Learning can also aid intuition and connect human beings to nature, resulting in the drive for self-culture by learning new ideas and skills.
- People should return to and live close to nature, for it is our greatest teacher. Nature is emblematic, and understanding its “language” can bring them closer to the divine. Romantic poets are aware of the importance of this spiritual connection, so they write in the language of nature, helping readers connect their lives to the spiritual realm. Therefore, poets replace the priests and ministers of the church.
- Individualism lies at the heart of Transcendentalism. Every individual needs to be self-reliant and thus not depend upon others if he or she is to be free and to live life fully. Self-empowerment is attained by defying the authority of “empty” conventions and senseless rules.
- Jesus had God in him too, like all people, but he was not God. In many ways, though, he taught valuable lessons and lived a transcendent life, which should be studied. The miracles of the Bible are doubted in terms of specialness; the universe around us everyday is full of the miracles of nature.

Going back to read an excerpt of the Book of Nature by Emerson (chapter 1)

Training students to read, understand then to summarize

Deeply interested in how human beings reflect on solitude, the stars, and the grandeur of nature, Emerson tries to shift from the universal world, symbolized in the stars that he views at night, and focuses on how Man should speculate and perceive objects around him.

Emerson portrays the vast landscape in which he walks and how he, as a poet, can best integrate all that he sees. What is most important in this sequence is the relationship between Man (the poet), stars (the universe) and the landscape (nature). Emerson's meditation via gazing at stars is an example of nightly rediscovering the eternal, in Platonic terminology "The One", making each experience new and continues the theme of progress and education from the introduction.

Using stars as symbols of the universe, Emerson states that we take stars for granted because they are always present in our lives, no matter where we live. However, although they are accessible because we can see them, they are also inaccessible: Their distance from us makes them more elusive than we might imagine. Here, Emerson begins to flesh out the idea that people need firsthand experiences in nature, such as probing the surroundings, that's why he brings up the example of someone looking at the stars alone. This kind of experience is so impactful that it temporarily uproots a person from their mundane, day-to-day lives and connects them with the divine, or the sublime (Myerson, 2000 :102). (The sublime is a key concept in Romanticism, which preceded Transcendentalism. It essentially refers to the overwhelming emotions that can bubble up when a person is alone in nature.)

From universe to nature, Emerson moves on to discuss the immediate landscape around him. Creating a bond between stars and the landscape, he furthers the theme of a chain linking everything in the universe. Just as stars are accessible to all who will take the time to gaze at them, so too is the everyday landscape around us. Through the example of the disparate farms forming a single landscape, Emerson returns to the concept of unity and interconnectedness. Taken together, every element of nature ( a leaf or a flower) combine to form the natural world. Recalling the farms he sees while walking, Emerson encourages readers to perceive nature as an integrated whole (one unit) and not merely as a collection of

individual objects. He distinguishes between knowing who owns various farms and being able to see a unified landscape vista comprising one single farm.

The third component in the triangle (universe/nature/poet) is now the poet considered as the person who is most likely to see the whole of things differently and may interpret this image of wholeness through a beautiful language. In this sequence, Emerson differentiates between the poet and other people: The poet, he says, is one of the few people who can see nature plainly, not superficially, as most of us do (Sealts and Ferguson, 1969 :12). The theme of casting away old beliefs in effort to reach new ways of representing the American self and identity is present: Instead of the theories of the past presented as ("the dry bones"( Sealts and Ferguson, 1969 :13) that Emerson said needed to be discarded, the person who yearns to see with new eyes must cast off years like a snake sheds its skin, revealing the child inside himself. A child, Emerson says, accepts nature as it is rather than manipulating it into something it is not, as an adult would do (Sealts and Ferguson, 1969 :14).Emerson states that when he himself stands in the woods, he feels the Universal Being flowing through him. This notion of the Universal Being, which he identifies with God, is what many readers identify as transcendentalism (Emerson, 1967 :47). Any piece in nature, including the universe and human beings, engages in this animating life force that links of the nature componenets. However, there is a paradox in Emerson discourse when he states in form of oxymoron, "I am nothing. I see all." (Emerson, 1967 :79) it might mean that losing oneself in the grandeur of nature is the effective way to find one self and be identified with God, the One. The theme of self identification comes at the core of the transcendental thinking. Readers should infer the ideas of Emerson and scrutinize the symbols presented in this chapter to understand the message laying behind images and symbols.Finally, Emerson gets back to the core idea in the poetic line of Plotinus: « Nature does not have a personality that it alone devises. Humans, he says, who are paramount over nature, grant to it human characteristics we perceive it to



have »(Emerson, 1967 : 83). This hearkens back to Emerson's structured definitions of nature (the natural world) and Nature (the natural world plus everything that's not the Soul as related to God.

**Self-Assessment Exercise :**

After reading chapter 1 of Book of Nature by Emerson, try to trace the major tenets of transcendentalism in the chapter.

## SEMESTER TWO

### Unit 4 :

#### **Gothic Romanticism : A Journey into the Dark Side of Human Nature**

*"That Gothicism is closely related to Romanticism is perfectly clear, but it is easier to state the fact than to prove it tidily and convincingly. There is a persistent suspicion that Gothicism is a poor and probably illegitimate relation of Romanticism, and a consequent tendency to treat it that way. There are those, indeed, who would like to deny the relationship altogether."*  
(Robert Hume, "Gothic Versus Romantic," p.282)

While the Transcendentalists often wrote of the lusterous side of human nature with a very optimistic tone, Gothic Romantic writers focus on the dark side of human nature. Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville wrote with the purpose of giving readers more of a reality check away from idealism. The defiance to standards and human superiority displays a common theme in Dark Romantic writing of the shunning of civilization. Gothic Romantic writings marked the primary rise back in 1765 (Walpole's *Otranto*) through 1820 (Maturin's Melmouth *the Wanderer*) it's primarily been studied as a British movement (source), but it's also a huge movement in America and on the Continent (France, Germany, Netherlands). American Romantic Gothic literature made an early appearance with Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1820).

Romanticism is often characterized as the larger movement, of which the Gothic is a part, a subset, or variety. Other literary critics distinguished between Romanticism and Gothic literature considering them as quite distinct, or even see the Gothic as the precursor that leads to the rise of Romanticism (Harmon, 2006 :127). Romanticism marks the larger category in terms of number of authors and texts, critics get more interested in it , as a movement known

of greater aesthetic values. While Romanticism glorifies the inherent sublimity of human intentions, Dark Romanticism is characterized by a preoccupation with emotions like apprehension, fear, and the grotesque aspect of imagination. On the other hand, Gothic literature is often deemed as the more popular genre; it's also identified more typically with women (Hogle, 2002 :187) since it reflects the dark side of human nature, the evil emotion. While Romanticism is identified with men, dominated with a sense of individualism and idealism that transcends the evilish innate emotions. Both of these factors lead to the further marginalizing of the Gothic compared to the Romantic.

Despite sharing membership in the American Renaissance with optimistic Transcendentalists, Dark Romanticists took a more pessimistic view of human nature, writing narratives often tainted by destruction and sin. Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville, authors of the Gothic genre, often corresponded with one another. This led to a more cohesive body of literature with shared themes (Hogle, 2002 :190). Dark Romanticist authors tend to criticize and reject the exaggeration of the Transcendentalist movement regarding human expectations and abilities in a hypocrite society. Though Herman Melville supported activism and defied standards of capitalist societies, he did not share the more optimistic views of Transcendentalists. In Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener," the title character constantly repeats the phrase "I would prefer not to," (Melville, 1922 :89) eventually becoming jailed and dying alone because of his disobedience and abstinence. While critics disagree about interpretation, Bartleby's unpleasant end could be perceived as an overturn of the idealistic ideas of Transcendentalism. In addition to Melville, both Poe and Hawthorne joined the same track and wrote works criticizing Transcendentalists.

Nature stays a popular theme in the American Renaissance, favored by Transcendentalists as well as Dark Romanticists. Contrary to the spiritual, positive view of nature in Transcendentalism, these authors illustrated nature as ominous and powerful. As

opposed to Emerson who considered the forests as source of spirituality and a way to find oneself, Nathaniel Hawthorne often portrayed the forests as a dark force where one may lose himself. In fact, the forests represent Hawthorne's view of human nature: unpredictable and difficult to understand (Harmon, 2002 :176). Well, the portrayal of nature differs and went in accordance with gothic needs. In Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown", the woods reveal the true actions of the Puritan community, exposing religious corruption. Similarly, Poe utilizes natural surroundings to contribute to the gothic atmosphere.

With *The Fall of the House of Usher*, Poe establishes the mood of the work by painting a vivid picture of how the surrounding nature's darkness has bled into the mansion itself. Melville's "Moby Dick" portrayed how weak man is in comparison with the forces of nature. In this sense, nature tends to be an enemy rather than an ally, a source of power that may lead to human's downfall.

Furthermore, these authors' characterization of their protagonists reflects their aim to portray flawed individuals prone to sin and destruction. Their works acted as a foil to the more optimistic bent of Transcendentalist literature. Traits such as hubris, cruelty and hypocrisy are common in Dark Romanticist characters such as Hawthorne's Goodman Brown, Poe's Montresor, or Melville's Captain Ahab. Often their narratives end unhappily as a result of the protagonist's evilish actions. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown", the narrator's choice to commit a sin opens his eyes to the sinfulness of those around him. He becomes mistrustful of everyone and allows this knowledge to affect his life so completely that even "his dying hour was gloom" (Stewart, 1948 :39). Many characters die or are irreparably changed by the end of Dark Romanticist literature.

While Transcendentalists and Dark Romanticists both published narratives in the American Renaissance, Dark Romanticists presented a much more cynical take on comparable topics. Transcendentalism focused on the individual, eschewing reason for spiritual intuition and asserting that God already exists in the individual (Hogle, 2002 :187), the Dark romantics took a somewhat dimmer view of the essential goodness of human nature. They focused on the dark side of the soul and the reality of evil and sin in the human heart, undercutting the optimistic worldview of the Transcendentalists.

Authors such as Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville were critical of reformers, depicted nature as a dangerous and destructive force, and dramatised the actions of their characters as prone to destructive behavior. Touching upon dark side of the human nature was an invitation to open eyes on the vices of the new American society with all its hypocrisy and cynicism. Their contributions to the American Renaissance created a rich and diverse national and real literary consciousness.

Let us dig deeper in the characteristics/elements of the Gothic story

Gothic novels and short stories usually deal with frightening or spooky magic subjects. Most Gothic novels are set in ruined castles or large old houses with ghosts, and were written in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Hogle, 2002 :175). The style was made popular by Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), and influenced writers such as Mary Shelley and Edgar Allan Poe, as well as 20th-century horror stories and horror films. For Romantic poets and painters of the 19th century, Gothic architecture created strong sensations of terror, that provoked a feeling of "awe" (mix of fear and fascination). As a consequence, the motives found in Dark Romanticism belong to the realm of "the uncanny" (*le mystérieux*) (Hogle, 2002 :176) where Love becomes lust, Nature features mist and lightning and buildings often feature haunts and ruination.

## **SEMESTER TWO**

### **Unit 5 :**

#### **Intrinsic Reading of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat"**

#### **Reading, Appreciating and Understanding Dark Romanticism**

While Transcendentalism influenced the individual, Dark Romantic authors sought to influence the popular. Literary critics observe works of the subgenre to break from Transcendentalism's tenets in a few key ways. Jerrold Hogle has summarized these differences in the following points (2002 :194)

Firstly, Dark Romantics are much less confident about the notion perfection is an innate quality of mankind, as believed by Transcendentalists. Subsequently, Dark Romantics present individuals as prone to sin and self-destruction, not as inherently possessing divinity and wisdom. The Dark Romantics embraced the ideas of humanized evil in the form of Satan, devils, ghosts, vampires, and ghouls. Secondly, while both groups believe nature is a deeply spiritual force, Dark Romanticism views nature in a much more sinister light than does Transcendentalism. For the Dark Romantics, the natural world is dark, decaying, and mysterious; when it does reveal truth to man, its revelations are evil and hellish.

Finally, whereas Transcendentalists advocate social reform when appropriate, works of Dark Romanticism frequently show individuals failing in their attempts to make changes for the better. Their tales and poems commonly feature outcasts from society, personal torment, and uncertainty as to whether the nature of man will bring him salvation or destruction. The legacy of the Dark romantics can be found in a variety of media. From early in its inception, the film industry created the vampire and horror film genres in such works as *Nosferatu* (1922) and *"The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari"* (1920). These have spawned an entire genre

(source). Another genre that was deeply influenced by Dark romanticism was the graphic novels, originating with the Batman comics in late 1930's.

### **What does the title denote/connote ? "The Black Cat"**

The Black cat has got a bad connotation of bad omen related to superstition. From the beginning, readers among whom the students are left with an impression that there is horror behind this title. Besides, Edgar Allan Poe is known for his gothic and horror short story set fundamentally on macabre and evil side of human nature. The short story "The Black Cat" remains one Edgar Allan Poe's most mystifying and horrifying tales as the narrator confesses and recounts macabre past events prior to his imminent execution.

The personality of the narrator changes from human to perverse after taking a black cat home. Things become worse when he struggles with alcoholism and cuts out an eye of the cat with fiendish pleasure and hangs it to the limb of the tree. Having lost his house due to a fire, he finds comfort in a new black cat. Shortly after taking it home, the initial fondness develops into an increasing dislike and even hatred towards the animal, which prompts him commit more horrible crimes. Now, students are presented with a short story, a real work of fiction in American literature. They should follow the steps suggested in the elements of fiction course to facilitate the task of analysis. After reading the short story, the students should follow these steps :

- **Literary genre** : Short Story, detective story, fiction, horror, suspense and thrill
- **Setting (time/place)** :1843, (unnamed place, possibly U.S.) in the jail as the narrator is waiting for his execution.
- **Characters (protagonist/antagonist)** : the unnamed narrator is the protagonist/ the black cat is the antagonist.
- **Plot (diagram of actions)**

## **1. Initial Situation**

Death Row : The first thing we learn is that the nameless narrator is going to die the next day, and that he wants to write his story, which will be ugly. This story, the narrator says, is going to be about some things that happened to him at home. The "consequences" of what happened "have terrified -have tortured – have destroyed" him (Poe and Quinn, 1992 :45). We don't yet know why he's going to die the following day, or where exactly he is.

## **2. Conflict**

A Drinking Problem : The narrator tells us that as a kid the he was a kind, sensitive animal lover. We also learn that he and his wife had had "birds, gold-fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a cat" (Poe and Quinn, 1992 : 3). The cat, of course, is Pluto. The conflict begins to unfold when the man describes the way his personality changed for the worse when he started drinking heavily, several years after Pluto became his pet. The conflict is within the narrator's home, between himself and his wife and pets, who he begins to abuse, physically and verbally, except for Pluto.

## **3. Complication**

Pluto is Murdered : When the narrator turns on Pluto, he does not do it halfway. First he cuts the cat's eye out, and then he hangs him from the tree in his garden ; leaving the body there when he goes to sleep. This definitely complicates things for the narrator. He is now a cat murderer, and his once happy home seems to be more and more nightmarish, especially for the other characters.

## **4. Climax**

Fire : Somehow, when the narrator goes to sleep that night (after murdering Pluto in the morning) his house catches on fire. Someone (it's never revealed who) wakes him



from his sleep with a warning, just in time. The narrator, his wife, and "a servant" escape the flames. All the family's financial security goes up in smoke. Presumably, the birds, gold-fish, [...] fine dog, rabbits, [and] small monkey perish in the flames, though the narrator never mentions them again (Poe and Quinn, 1992 :3). The climax propels this desperate family into poverty and into changing residences.

## **5. Suspense**

The Cat Comes Back : readers can think of the second cat as either a modified version of Pluto, or a completely different cat. In any case, the arrival of the second cat marks the halfway point in this story. It is suspenseful precisely because we aren't sure what the second cat is. If the narrator can be believed, the cat is not only missing an eye, like Pluto, but also grows an image of a gallows on his chest (a "gallows" is an apparatus used for hanging people). The cat also seriously gets on the narrator's nerves. We might see the cat as affectionate, and desperate for affection, but the narrator sees him as executing some awful plot against him. In the stage we see the narrator getting worse and worse. And we learn that the narrator is writing from a "felon's cell" (Poe and Quinn, 1992 :20). Waiting to see what lands him in jail adds another layer of suspense to the story.

## **6. Denouement**

The Perfect Crime : During that fateful trip to the cellar of the family's new residence (an "old building") the narrator tries to kill the cat with his axe. When his wife intervenes, the axe is turned on her. The narrator thinks he's successfully hidden the body and bluffed the cops. He isn't upset about killing his wife, and is happy he has managed to make the cat run away.

## **7. Conclusion**

In the conclusion, the cat reappears, and the murder is discovered. The man seems convinced that the cat exposed him on purpose. The description of the cat's "voice" coming

from inside the wall suggests that if the cat did intentionally allow himself to be walled up, in order to expose the man, he paid an awful price for it.

Major conflict :What does the cat actually mean to the narrator: is there some dark, malevolent, or inhuman aspect to the animal(s), or can the things that happen to the narrator be explained by natural cause and effect?

- **Mood and tone** : diabolic, gloomy, suspenseful, vengeful, nightmarish, erratic
- **Point of view** : who is the narrator ? in this story we read events from the criminal (protagonist) perspective. These events might be true or not since the narrator is suffering from a mental break down. He, readers should wonder whether the narrator is reliable or not.
- **Themes**
  1. **Violence** : In "The Black Cat" the unnamed narrator offers readers a parade of violent acts. Eye gouging, hanging, axing – these are the gruesome highlights. Until the end of the story, when somebody is killed, the detailed accounts of violence are focused on Pluto, the black cat who moves from pampered pet to persecuted beast. The violence the unnamed narrator practices against his wife and the other pets is rather vague. Yet, we get a pretty clear picture of what is happening. And by the end of the story the narrator has completely destroyed his family, and perhaps, completely destroyed himself in the process. In this horror classic, violence is an insidious beast that creeps, spreads, and grows uncontrollably, destroying all the bodies and minds it touches.
- **Drugs and Alcohol** : In some stories (think stories by Ernest Hemingway) drinking has both positive and negative effects on the drinkers. Not so in "The Black Cat." The unnamed narrator of this grim tale claims he began abusing his wife and pets when his drinking got out of control, wrecking his personality. Some readers think this is a "temperance" narrative, a popular genre in Poe's day. "Temperance" in this context

means "sobriety." The Temperance Movement focused on educating the public on the perceived dangers of drinking, and pushing legislature prohibiting the manufacture, use, and sale of alcohol. In a temperance narrative alcohol is the major issue, and is to blame for all the bad things that happen in the story. Here, alcohol fades out of the story just when things get bad, suggesting that alcohol is only

- **Freedom and Confinement** : "The Black Cat," a claustrophobic tale of marital life gone wrong, offers a distinct movement from freedom to confinement. We meet the narrator already in his prison cell, writing, to free himself from his bonds – the literal bonds of the cell, and the bondage confining his mind and heart. How he became so trapped is the subject of his writing and the reason why he has taken the pen to the page. We learn how he traps his wife and pets in a cycle of violence and abuse. As things go from bad to worse, the physical spaces the characters inhabit shrink. While the man's story begins in a house of wealth and comfort (or so he implies) it ends in brick tomb in the cellar of a rundown building.
- **Transformation** : Disturbing physical and psychological transformations – often for the worst – are characteristic of most horror and Gothic tales. In "The Black Cat" some form of transformation occurs in nearly every paragraph. For the narrator, these changes are psychological. After he gets married, his personality spirals deeper and deeper toward the dark side, cruelly abusing his pets and his wife. His initially happy home life is turned upside down, and everyone involved is adversely affected and changed for the worse.

## **SEMESTER TWO**

### **Unit 6 :**

#### **Extrinsic Reading : Getting Beyond the Text and Plot**

#### **A Psychoanalytic Reading of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat"**

In "The Black Cat," the narrator's wife makes frequent comments about some of the superstitions associated with black cats, such as the fact that they are supposed to be witches in disguise. We will look at the history of such superstitions, which may help understand the story from a different layer.

Many of the deleterious stereotypes regarding black cats arose in the Middle Ages, a time of entrenched religious power and concomitant superstition and persecution of perceived evildoers. The Romans and Egyptians worshiped a pantheon of gods, many in the form of idols, and the cat was seen as part of that tradition that Christianity needed to rout out to maintain and expand its power (De Marr, 1970 :157). Thus, the association of the cat, notably the black cat, with paganism became commonplace. On the other hand, Normans and Germanic peoples saw a black cat as an omen of imminent death, and a black cat crossing one's path was bad luck. In Scotland, it was commonly believed that there was a fairy called the Cat Sith (De Marr, 1970 :158) that had the appearance of a large black cat and could steal a dead person's soul before the gods claimed it.

Black cats were strongly associated with witches. The devil apparently sent black cats to assist witches, and witches could turn themselves into black cats so they would not be detected. Black cats could also be the familiars of witches. According to American Folklore, some of the roots of these superstitions can be explained as follows: "There is an English folktale in which a father and son, traveling home late one night, saw a black cat cross their

path. The son threw a stone at the creature, fearing it was a witch's familiar, and the stone hit the cat in the left leg. The injured animal gave forth an unholy shriek and fled under the stoop of a house belonging to a woman long suspected of being a witch. The next morning, the father and son met the old woman at the local marketplace and saw that she was limping on her left leg. From that day, the people in that town were sure that the woman was an evil witch that prowled their town at night in the shape of a black cat, looking to do mischief against anyone who crossed her." (Hogle, 2002 :103) These fears and superstitions traveled to America with the European peopling of the Atlantic seaboard. Black cats and witches were still associated with each other, and both were still targeted and killed. With Halloween's co-opting of the black cat as an emblem of terror.

Not all societies have negative associations with black cats, however. In some places in the world, it is considered good luck for a black cat to greet you at your door, for a black cat to enter your home, and for you to encounter three black cats in succession. In Japan, a single woman who owns a black cat will have good luck and many suitors; in Scotland nowadays, a black cat arriving at a home signals prosperity.

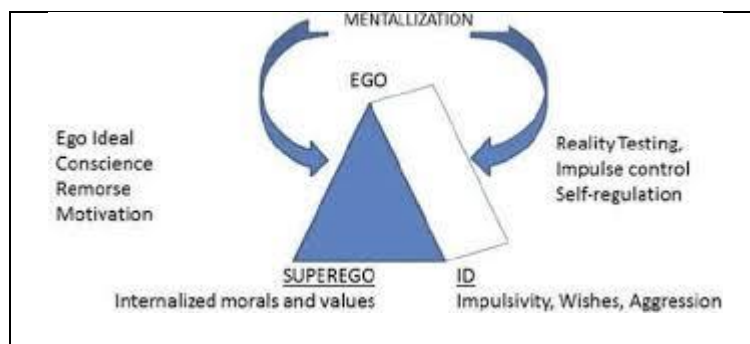
### **Reading, criticising, then commenting on the themes**

The short story *The Black Cat* is, like any other short story of Edgar Allan Poe, morbid leaving the readers perplexed and disturbed at the end. In using the Psychoanalysis approach of literary criticism in this story, the narrator's character development will be elaborated based on Sigmund Freud's division of human personalities of id, ego, and superego.

Psychoanalytical criticism is adopting the methods of reading and interpreting literary texts as related to the theory of psychoanalysis presented by Sigmund Freud. Psychoanalytic critics argue that literary texts, like dreams, express the secret unconscious desires and anxieties of

the author ; that a literary work is a manifestation of the author's own neuroses. One may psychoanalyze a particular character with a literary work as a projection of the author's psyche. Therefore, psychoanalytic criticism seeks to explore literary texts by examining :

- How mental and psychological development occur.
- How the human mind works.
- The root causes of psychological problems
- How the Id, Ego and Superego are represented in the text.



The narrator of the story « The Black Cat » has a very peculiar and complex mind. He is capable of showing the nurturing side of him as shown in these lines:

« From my infancy, I was noted for the docility and humanity of my disposition. » (Poe and Quinn, 1992 :2)

Let us go back to the narrator's childhood to gauge his relationship to animals. This attitude of a seemingly peaceful individual is the narrator's nature which he inherited from no other than his parents. It was because of his parents as well that he loved and had a special fondness for animals. According to the narrator, he was indulged by his parents' variety of pets when he was a kid. As he was growing up though, this fondness slowly diminished. This could be blamed to the influence of his surroundings and the people he came to grow up with. Because of the influences coming from various sources, the attitude of the narrator changed including his desires. This is where the « **id** » of the narrator started to become very apparent.

As defined, the id is where the aggression and desires come from. This is the core of a personality, the wanting to gratify the desires because if not, the person will become tense or worse, will resort to unnatural behaviors. When the narrator went home one night, intoxicated with alcohol, the cat avoided him. In the beginning, the cat named Pluto was the playmate of the narrator. He favored Pluto best and Pluto adores him too by attending to him when he is home. But as Pluto grew older, he somewhat became peevish. That night the narrator went home, Pluto avoided him, which is something he did not like. That apathetic reaction of Pluto coupled with the narrator's intoxicated state made him unreasonable. He went on rage and seized Pluto as shown in the following lines:

« I seized him;.. The fury of the demon instantly possessed me. I knew myself no longer. My original soul seemed, at once, to take its flight from my body. » (Poe and Quinn, 1992 :5)

Another instance of the narrator pleasing himself is when the next black cat happened to come into his and his wife's lives. He, like Pluto, came to love the cat. But that affection did not last for as the time went by, his aversion to that cat grew until this aversion turned into loathsome. The second black cat suffered the same fate as Pluto. The narrator lost his sense of reason.

There is little to note with the narrator's development of the « **ego** ». As per definition, the ego is the component of personality that is responsible for dealing with reality (Bressler, 2011 :17). It is the ego that ensures that the impulses of the id be satisfied in a manner that will be well received by society. The mental capacity or incapacity of the narrator makes his ego under pressure. The dictation of his rational mind was very short-lived as he did not really suffer for the misconduct that he made to Pluto. In the case of the second black cat, the ego of the narrator held him back from hurting the black cat as stated in these lines:

« At such times, although I longed to destroy it with a blow, I was yet withheld from so doing, partly by a memory of a former crime,.. » (Poe and Quinn, 1992 :5)

It could be said that from the statement mentioned, the way the narrator dealt with the reality of his killing Pluto was by listening to his conscience.

On to the narrator's « **superego** ». The superego the last component of the personality trait to be developed by an individual. The superego is what holds the three together, hence it is also accounted for a person's sense of right and wrong (Bressler, 2011 :18). The narrator knows what he did was wrong. This was shown by his guilt and his trying of holding back from putting the second cat in the same fate with Pluto.

With that being said, it can be said that the narrator in the story « The Black Cat » is dominated by his id then his ego and superego. He was more concerned about attaining his desires regardless of his ways in doing so, and regardless if he endangers himself or the people around him in the process. His id did not claim just mere pleasure, but pleasure after pleasure. He did not like Pluto any longer so he did not feed him then for more pleasure, he killed him. His wife then prevented him from killing the second black cat, he killed her in that instant. This murder is the reason why at the beginning of the text, a foreshadowing of his death was made. All these things the narrator was able to do because of a very powerful substance called alcohol.

The whole story lies between the id and the superego ; he himself is consumed by the spirit of alcohol which in turn paved way for the spirit of Perverseness. Perverseness according to him is the most basic characteristic of man, it is equivalent to the dictum that man by nature is evil, or in the Dostoevskian pronouncement that one is a spiteful man (Hogle, 2002 :184). Perverseness equates to the id that is based upon pleasure-principle, however, there is also pain which could be found in seeking pleasure. Could we find that pleasure in the anonymous man's murder of ill-usage and murder of the black cat? Was that the effect on him after his deed? Guilt is a heavy feeling of unease (it shares a character of



anxiety), however, prior to this is the desire to commit something wrong or to transgress (violation of the law, in this case murder) (Hogle, 2002 :189). The anonymous narrator described himself to be tender hearted and humane (again, another point for his defense ergo conscience), he is very fond of animals especially with the black cat. Despite this, it is not enough because he got irritated, disgusted, and the spirit of alcohol pervading his system revealed the surfacing of aggression. If the id is based upon the pleasure-pain principle then we are not really certain which it is that it wants; it is confused and what else should confusion evoke but dread and the horror in which the man had felt.

The Eros of life instincts in the story is subtle. The perverted relationship one can guess between the anonymous man's relationship with animals than with his own wife. The anonymous man says before hanging the cat, that he was in tears because he can see that cat loved him and what other affections he felt from the cat. The gallows on the cat's breasts represents death, naturally, he felt that dreadful horror of his mental deterioration and transgression.

## SEMESTER TWO

### Unit 7 :

#### Fallibility of Man and Hypocrisy of Religious Societies

#### A Journey into Darkness : Nathaniel Hawthorne's « Young Goodman Brown »

Thinking of the title : Young (innocence) Goodman (innocence related to goodness) Brown (general name)

Known of his criticism of the vices of Puritanism, Hawthorne wrote a story of a man who lost his faith upon his temptation by the devil. Like Adam in the book of Genesis, Goodman Brown, out of curiosity, wanted to know what lies behind the mystery of the forest. As a result, Goodman Brown is rewarded for his curiosity with information that changes his life for the worse. In the course of the ceremony in the forest, the devil tells Goodman Brown and Faith that their eyes will now be opened to the wickedness of themselves and those around them. Adam and Eve were exiled from the Garden of Eden and forced to undergo all the trials and tribulations of being human (Bross, 2020 :15), and Goodman Brown returns from the forest to find out that he was living a lie ; hence, he has become suspicious of those around him, even the woman he once loved.

It is important to get back to the historical context of the story :

In “Young Goodman Brown,” Hawthorne references three dark events from the Puritans’ history: **the Salem Witch Trials of 1692, the Puritan intolerance of the Quakers, and King Philip’s War.** During the Salem Witch Trials, one of the most nightmarish episodes in Puritan history, the villagers of Salem killed twenty-five innocent people who were accused

of being witches. The witch hunts often involved accusations based on revenge, jealousy, botched child delivery, and other reasons that had little to do with perceived witchcraft (Bross, 2020 :167). The Puritan intolerance of Quakers occurred during the second half of the seventeenth century. Puritans and Quakers both settled in America, hoping to find religious freedom and start their own colonies where they could believe what they wanted to. However, Puritans began forbidding Quakers from settling in their towns and made it illegal to be a Quaker; their intolerance soon led to imprisonments and hangings. King Philip's War, the final event referenced in Hawthorne's story, took place from 1675 to 1676 and was actually a series of small skirmishes between Indians and colonists. Indians attacked colonists at frontier towns in western Massachusetts, and colonists retaliated by raiding Indian villages. When the colonists won the war, the balance of power in the colonies finally tipped completely toward the Puritans.

These historical events are not at the center of "Young Goodman Brown," which takes place after they occur, but they do inform the action. For example, Hawthorne appropriates the names of Goody Cloyse and Martha Carrier, two of the "witches" killed at Salem, for townspeople in his story. The devil refers to seeing Goodman Brown's grandfather whipping a Quaker in the streets and handing Goodman Brown's father a flaming torch so that he could set fire to an Indian village during King Philip's War. By including these references, Hawthorne reminds the reader of the dubious history of Salem Village and the legacy of the Puritans and emphasizes the historical roots of Goodman Brown's fascination with the devil and the dark side.

In "Young Goodman Brown," Hawthorne reveals what he sees as the corruptibility that results from Puritan society's emphasis on public morality, which often weakens private religious faith. Although Goodman Brown has decided to come into the forest and meet with the devil, he still hides when he sees Goody Cloyse and hears the minister and Deacon

Gookin. He seems more concerned with how his faith appears to other people than with the fact that he has decided to meet with the devil. Goodman Brown's religious convictions are rooted in his belief that those around him are also religious. This kind of faith, which depends so much on other people's views, is easily weakened. When Goodman Brown discovers that his father, grandfather, Goody Cloyse, the minister, Deacon Gookin, and Faith are all in league with the devil, Goodman Brown quickly decides that he might as well do the same. Hawthorne seems to suggest that the danger of basing a society on moral principles and religious faith lies in the fact that members of the society do not arrive at their own moral decisions. When they copy the beliefs of the people around them, their faith becomes weak and rootless.

**Literary Genre :** short story

**Setting :** Salem

**Characters (protagonist/antagonist) :** Goodman Brown Vs the devil

Goodman Brown : A young resident of Salem and the story's protagonist. Goodman Brown is a good Christian who has recently married Faith. He takes pride in his family's history of piety and their reputation in the community as godly men. His curiosity, however, leads him to accept an invitation from a mysterious traveler to observe an evil ceremony in middle of the forest, one that shocks and disillusion him.

Faith : Goodman Brown's wife. Faith is young, beautiful, and trusting, and Goodman Brown sees her as the embodiment of virtue. Although Goodman Brown initially ignores Faith's claims to have had disturbing nightmares, seeing her at the evil ceremony in the forest prompts him to question his wife's righteousness.

The Old Man/Devil : The man, possibly the devil, who tempts Goodman Brown into attending the ceremony in the forest. The man intercepts Goodman Brown in the middle of the dark road, then presides over the ceremony. He sees through the Salem villagers' charade of Christian piety and prides himself on the godly men he has been able to turn to evil.

Goody Cloyse : A citizen of Salem Village who reveals herself to be a witch. Goody Cloyse is a Christian woman who helps young people learn the Bible, but in secret she performs magic ceremonies and attends witch meetings in the forest. Goody Cloyse was the name of an actual woman who was tried and convicted of witchcraft during the historical Salem Witch Trials of 1692; Hawthorne borrows her name for this character.

The Minister : The minister of Salem. The minister, a respectable pillar of the community, appears to be a follower of the devil.

Deacon Gookin : A member of the clergy in Salem who appears to be a follower of the devil. The deacon is an important man in the church of Salem, and Goodman Brown thinks of him as very religious.

Plot (Diagram of events)

## **Exposition**

Departing Salem on Woodland Track Two

Hawthorne starts us off in atmosphere of suspense and mystery. We learn that young Goodman Brown is going on a "journey" through the forest but we don't know where—or why (Hawthorne and Harding, 1987 :3). (But, if you've ever seen the New England woods at night, they're pretty spooky.

We also get a little background information: young Goodman Brown is a happily married man from Salem village, he takes pride in his community and its leaders, and his family did some pretty wicked stuff back in the day. The ground is ripe for a moral conflict.

Rising Action :Shortly after heading into the woods, young Goodman Brown meets up with a mysterious traveler with a snake-shaped staff. This is where the weird stuff starts to go down.This traveler leads our hero to witness some pretty freaky scenes. First, a pious old woman named Goody Cloyse is revealed as a witch. Next, a deacon and minister come riding along, chatting about their love of "deviltry" and devil-worship (43). And to top it all off, young Goodman Brown hears the voice of his wife, and becomes convinced that she's been up to some really naughty stuff.

Climax

Devils in the Details

These all lead to climax 1: the protagonist, convinced that his wife has turned evil, runs madly through the forest and right into—our second climax. This one's a freaky meeting that celebrates sin, guilt, and evil. But, this time, our hero manages not to give in. So, two climaxes: one where young Goodman Brown gives in to wickedness, one where he doesn't.

How's that for psychological drama?

Falling Action

The standard ideas change

Young Goodman Brown returns to town in the morning, shaken by what he has seen. A series of tiny conflicts emerge, as Brown tries to resist the hypocrisy and devilish influences of his townspeople.

Resolution is that really the end of everything? In his final paragraph, Hawthorne jumps years and years ahead to show what kind of a man young Goodman Brown becomes gloomy.

Basically, Brown spends the rest of his life suspecting the worst about people. How's that for a warning?

Themes : (Taken from e-Notes.com)

### 1. The Weakness of Public Morality

In "Young Goodman Brown," Hawthorne reveals what he sees as the corruptibility that results from Puritan society's emphasis on public morality, which often weakens private religious faith. Although Goodman Brown has decided to come into the forest and meet with the devil, he still hides when he sees Goody Cloyse and hears the minister and Deacon Gookin. He seems more concerned with how his faith appears to other people than with the fact that he has decided to meet with the devil. Goodman Brown's religious convictions are rooted in his belief that those around him are also religious. This kind of faith, which depends so much on other people's views, is easily weakened. When Goodman Brown discovers that his father, grandfather, Goody Cloyse, the minister, Deacon Gookin, and Faith are all in league with the devil, Goodman Brown quickly decides that he might as well do the same. Hawthorne seems to suggest that the danger of basing a society on moral principles and religious faith lies in the fact that members of the society do not arrive at their own moral decisions. When they copy the beliefs of the people around them, their faith becomes weak and rootless.

### 2. The Inevitable Loss of Innocence

Goodman Brown loses his innocence because of his inherent corruptibility, which suggests that whether the events in the forest were a dream or reality, the loss of his innocence was inevitable. Instead of being corrupted by some outside force, Goodman Brown makes a

personal choice to go into the forest and meet with the devil; the choice was the true danger, and the devil only facilitates Goodman Brown's fall. Goodman Brown is never certain whether the evil events of the night are real, but it does not matter. If they are a dream, then they come completely from Goodman Brown's head a clear indication of his inherent dark side. If they are real, then Goodman Brown has truly seen that everyone around him is corrupt, and he brought this realization upon himself through his excessive curiosity. Goodman Brown's loss of innocence was inevitable, whether the events of the night were real or a dream.

### 3. The Fear of the Wilderness

From the moment he steps into the forest, Goodman Brown voices his fear of the wilderness, seeing the forest as a place where no good is possible. In this he echoes the dominant point of view of seventeenth-century Puritans, who believed that the wild New World was something to fear and then dominate. Goodman Brown, like other Puritans, associates the forest with the wild "Indians" and sees one hiding behind every tree. He believes that the devil could easily be present in such a place, and he eventually sees the devil himself, just as he had expected. He considers it a matter of family honor that his forefathers would never have walked in the forest for pleasure, and he is upset when the devil tells him that this was not the case. He himself is ashamed to be seen walking in the forest and hides when Goody Cloyse, the minister, and Deacon Gookin pass. The forest is characterized as devilish, frightening, and dark, and Goodman Brown is comfortable in it only after he has given in to evil.

#### Symbols

##### The Staff

The devil's staff, which is encircled by a carved serpent, draws from the biblical symbol of the serpent as an evil demon. In the Book of Genesis, the serpent tempts Eve to taste the fruit



from the forbidden tree, defying God's will and bringing his wrath upon humanity. When the devil tells Goodman Brown to use the staff to travel faster, Goodman Brown takes him up on the offer and, like Eve, is ultimately condemned for his weakness by losing his innocence. Besides representing Eve's temptation, the serpent represents her curiosity, which leads her into that temptation. Goodman Brown's decision to come into the forest is motivated by curiosity, as was Eve's decision to eat the forbidden fruit. The staff makes clear that the old man is more demon than human and that Goodman Brown, when he takes the staff for himself, is on the path toward evil as well.

#### Faith's Pink Ribbons

The pink ribbons that Faith puts in her cap represent her purity. The color pink is associated with innocence and gaiety, and ribbons themselves are a modest, innocent decoration. Hawthorne mentions Faith's pink ribbons several times at the beginning of the story, imbuing her character with youthfulness and happiness. He reintroduces the ribbons when Goodman Brown is in the forest, struggling with his doubts about the goodness of the people he knows. When the pink ribbon flutters down from the sky, Goodman Brown perceives it as a sign that Faith has definitely fallen into the realm of the devil—she has shed this sign of her purity and innocence. At the end of the story, when Faith greets Goodman Brown as he returns from the forest, she is wearing her pink ribbons again, suggesting her return to the figure of innocence she presented at the beginning of the story and casting doubts on the veracity of Goodman Brown's experiences.

## SEMESTER TWO

### Unit 8 :

#### **Extrinsic Reading : "Young Goodman Brown" from a Psychological Lens**

In the story "Young Goodman Brown" by Nathaniel Hawthorne is about a man trying to figure out whether he wants his "pure" faith or instead go to the evil side. From a Psychological criticism lens, the character Young Goodman Brown, experiences conflict between his consciences and subconscious. This is illustrated by the situation Young Goodman Brown put himself into when he did not know he was meeting with an evil substance. Moreover, Young Goodman Brown was sent on a journey far inside the woods to meet a devilish figure to see if he would bring Goodman happiness. In contrary, it was not at all what Goodman thought the meeting was going to go like. Within, the story Goodman is going to discover a side in life he never knew; the dark and evil side of existence.

To start with, "Young Goodman Brown" started his journey early in the morning and while he was leaving to go, his young wife Faith wanted him to stay and go some other time. In response, Goodman said "My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done 'twixt now and sunrise." (Hawthorne and Harding, 1987 :8) Meaning that Goodman had already planned to go on this particular day and time; from this, his wife had a bad feeling that something bad was going to happen. Furthermore, the fact that his wife named Faith was already getting bad feelings from her husband's tripe in the morning to go see someone seemed to her that something evil was probably a waiting her husband.

Subsequently, as Young Goodman Brown was heading towards his destination he started to consider what his wife was feeling and so he got these wired feelings almost like something bad was close by. As he walked, "Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making

more haste on his present evil purpose.” Ultimately, Goodman did not recognize new setting he was getting himself into until he was deep in the thick forest. Then he thought to himself, “There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree... he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, “what if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!” (Hawthorne and and Harding, 1987 :6). As Goodman made his way, a series of thoughts and new fears came to his head as he saw the place in which he was now in.

In following, Young Goodman Brown was almost there, “His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and, looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree.” (Hawthorne and Harding, 1987 :9). In short words, young Goodman Brown knew that this was not what he had expected. Therefore, as the devilish creator made an attempt to trick Goodman into the evil side, Goodman figured that he had to stop right away. He told the evil figure that he would not go with him just yet. In response the evil figure went away, but took Goodman’s wife; for not having to leave with him and so Goodman was broken hearted for a while. Within, this battle Young Goodman Brown had going on inside him; in that time, he found out that pure faith was more meaningful and meant more to him than anything.

Overall, in the story “Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne truly had a very meaningful message behind it. The perspective that the story was being seen as was from the Psychological criticism lens, as Goodman illustrated the struggle between two forces himself and what came to be an evil spirit. In which, resulted in a quest to find the only “pure” thing Young Goodman Brown could not live without, Faith.

## **SEMESTER TWO**

### **Unit 9 :**

#### **Fireside Writers : An invitation to Wisdom**

##### **Henry Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life"**

The Fireside poets were a group of 19th-century American poets, mostly situated in the Northeast United States. Also referred to as the schoolroom or household poets, they wrote in conventional poetic forms to present domestic themes and moral issues. The “fireside” moniker arose out of their popularity, as families would read their books by the fire in their homes. Highly popular among both general readers and critics, the Fireside poets deeply shaped their era until their decline in popularity in the early 1900s. Poets often included in this group were Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, James Russell Lowell, William Cullen Bryant, and Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. These poets' general adherence to standard poetic forms, rhythm, meter, and rhyme made their poetry especially suitable for memorization and recitation. Their themes and their presentation of traditional and nationalist values made them popular poets to teach.

The fireside poets (also called the "schoolroom" or "household" poets) were the first group of American poets to rival British poets in popularity in either country. Today their verse may seem more Victorian in sensibility than romantic, perhaps overly sentimental or moralizing in tone, but as a group they are notable for their scholarship, political sensibilities, and the resilience of their lines and themes. (Most schoolchildren can recite a line or two from "Paul Revere's Ride" or The Song of Hiawatha.)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, and William Cullen Bryant are the poets most commonly grouped together under this heading. In general, these poets preferred conventional forms over experimentation, and this attention to rhyme and strict metrical cadences made their work popular for memorization and recitation in classrooms and homes. They are most remembered for their longer narrative poems (Longfellow's *Evangeline* and *Hiawatha*, Whittier's *Snow-bound*) that frequently used American legends and scenes of American home life and contemporary politics (as in Holmes's "Old Ironsides" and Lowell's anti-slavery poems) as their subject matter.

At the peak of his career, Longfellow's popularity rivaled Lord Alfred Tennyson's in England as well as in America, and he was a noted translator and scholar in several languages. In fact, he was the first American poet to be honored with a bust in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner. *Hiawatha* itself draws not only on Native American languages for its rhythmic underpinning, but also echoes the *Kalevala*, a Finnish epic. Lowell and Whittier, both outspoken liberals and abolitionists, were known for their journalism and work with the fledgling *Atlantic Monthly*. They did not hesitate to address issues that were divisive and highly charged in their day, and in fact used the sentimental tone in their poems to encourage their audience to consider these issues in less abstract and more personal terms.

"Psalm" means "glorification with respect". So it shows the poet's admirable attitude towards life and the keynote of the poem.

In 1838, "A Psalm of Life" was first published in *Voice of the Night*. It is very influential in China, because it is said to be the first English poem translated into Chinese. It was when Longfellow was struck with great dismay by the death of his wife and an unrequited courtship of a young woman that the lyric poem was created. However, despite all the

frustrations Longfellow tried to encourage himself, which can be proved in the following parts.

Analysis taken from Pang L. « An Appreciation of A Psalm of Life »

### The Gist of the Poem

There are total nine stanzas in the poem.

In the first two stanzas, Longfellow begins his poem straightly with the question “what is the life”. He doesn’t agree the opinion that the destiny of dying means we should waste our time. On the contrary, we should save time to achieve our value. From the third stanza, he starts to tell readers how to spend life which is the theme of A Psalm of Life. He points out that the goal of life is to act and to be better. Now that life truly exists, we should “act in the glorious present”. In the seventh and eighth stanza, the poet illustrates the meaning of life which is to leave a glorious name behind us and to give the later generation encouragement. The ninth stanza is a generalization of the whole poem. He urges people to act now, to pursue their dreams, to make progress, so that everyone can have a meaningful life.

### The Theme of the Poem

As for the theme of the poem, it’s very clear to see. Full of the spirit of struggle and optimism, the poem is undoubtedly very inspiring in light of the bad situation where Longfellow was at that time. The poem was written three years after Longfellow’s wife died. However, he was strong enough to fight for his own future. He wrote this poem to tell us that life is short while art is eternal. He encourages and inspires not only himself but also millions upon millions of readers.

The didactic tone and content expresses the theme of the poem time is fleeting, act in the living present. (It corresponds to Longfellow’s writing style: often using didacticism in his

poetry.) Specifically speaking, Longfellow uses a passionate and spirited style to inspire us to face cherished life positively with hope like daring generals. And during the voyage of life, we should display our subjective initiative and constantly strive to make a difference. Act in the living present and don't let time slip through our fingers by living in the past or daydreaming about the future. At the same time, we shouldn't waste time or to be hesitate to act, just seize every opportunity.

### Literature Characteristics of the Poem

#### Rhyme Scheme

“A Psalm of Life” adopts the form of a stanza with four lines rhyming “abab, cdcd, efef, ...” with the odd lines in the feminine rhyme and the even ones in the masculine rhyme. For example, in odd lines: numbers/slumbers, fleeting/beating, pleasant/present; in even lines: dream/seem, goal/soul, fate/wait. “The light and strong thymes, appear in rotation, lend pleasure to our ears, aid memorization and achieve a kind of balance (Longfellow and Humphrey, 1928 :3).

As to the rhythm, the poem is mainly in trochaic tetrameter. By applying such a pattern of meter, the poet, on the one hand, discloses the lively nature of the poem to readers, and on the other hand makes the poem violent, emphatic and challenging in expression (Longfellow and Humphrey, 1928 :3).. This poem is recognized for its melody-like musicality.

#### Rhetorical Devices

The poet uses several rhetorical devices which make the poem more beautiful.

Alliteration is the use, especially in poetry, of the same sound or sounds, especially consonants, at the beginning of several words that are close together. Some verse adopts the

alliteration. For example, the third, sixth, eighth and seventeenth line have this kind of words: soul and slumbers, grave and goal, spoken and soul, broad and battle. This usage of alliteration makes the poem's rhythm bright and fluent. When we read it, we feel powerful and ambitious, which is in accordance with its theme. It's truly an infectious poem.

Quotation is regarded as a phrase or short piece of writing taken from a longer work of literature, poetry, etc. or what someone else has said. It increases the reliability of views. In this literature work, "Dust thou art, to dust returnest" is quoted from the Bible Ecclesiastes Chapter 3:19 "For dust thou art, and into dust shalt thou be turned again" and Chapter 3:20 "They are both going to the same place-the dust. They both came from it; they will both go back to it".

#### Simile and Metaphor

Longfellow uses a lot of similes and metaphors to vividly express the life philosophy. Line 15 "our hearts ... like muffled drums" and line 19 "dumb like driven cattle" are two examples of simile. As for metaphor, life is compared to an empty dream; world, battle; life, bivouac; life, sailing. Both simile and metaphor visualize images.

#### Personification

"Our hearts ... are beating funeral marches to the grave" and "Let the dead Past bury its dead" make abstract philosophy easily understood by using personification, which is the description of an object or an idea as if it had human characteristics.

#### Cohesion and Coherence

The reason why the poem has an abundant content and clear logic is that it uses many synonyms and antonyms. Synonyms can increase the variety of vocabulary and the beauty of rhythm, such as "end" and "goal", "stout" and "brave", "battle" and "strife", "tomorrow" and



“future”. Antonyms have a sharp contrast of two opposition, such as “dream” and “real”, “life” and “grave”, “enjoyment” and “sorrow”. Special capitalization of some words can draw readers’ attention. For example, “Time”, “Life”, “Future”, “Past” and “Present” emphasize that we should treasure time and life, living in the present neither in the past nor future.

As what has been mentioned, the purpose that why Longfellow writes “A Psalm of Life” is to pacify his soul, encourage himself to walk out sorrow and act in the living present. So I think that objects on whom the poet wants to have a didactic impact also include himself. Besides, if we consider contemporary literature tradition, we can also find something valuable. Puritanism is a cultural heritage for Americans. American Romantic authors tend to more moralize, edify and less to entertain than their English and European counterparts. So it’s reasonable for Longfellow to write such a didactic and optimistic poem in that period. Nationally, America was a new nation with political, economic and cultural independence in 19th century. The economic boom brought about a tremendous sense of optimism and hope. So, the background of America also inspires Longfellow to keep a positive attitude to life and future.

#### Reality of Human Existence

The theme is about the significance of life. Since the past passed by and the future is not coming yet, what people can hold tightly just is the living present, not immersed in the memory or illusion about future. Holding tightly means we should make full use of time. As for students, the most important thing is working hard and taking unremitting efforts. On in this way can we compensate for the regret and create our future. Besides, it also reminds readers that though mankind has lived a long time our own individual time on earth is limited and will pass very quickly, with each heartbeat a further step towards the grave. So try, like

great men of the past, to make something of ourselves in our short time on earth and leave behind something by which to be remembered.

### Conclusion

“A Psalm of Life” has a unity of form and spirit. The main contribution of the appreciation relies on that not only tidy structure, clear logic, harmonious meter and strong rhythm in form, but also positive theme, rich implication and persuasive tone in content are discussed. Both the behind meaning and literal beauty of the poem are worthy of our deep appreciation. Keep a devout attitude to read it: our mind needs bread of spirit as our body needs bread.

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