UERJ
INSTITUTO DE LETRAS

LÍNGUA INGLESA 2

Writing

Prof. Felipe Fanuel X. Rodrigues

2025.1

UERJ – INSTITUTO DE LETRAS
English Language 2 – WRITING (2025.1)

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AIM
To develop writing skills in English, with a focus on the literary essay.

March
14 Introduction to the course – Break the ice – What is a literary text? (Zyngier, p. 13-18)
21 Revisiting the structure of an essay (Spencer & Arbon, p. 2-6, 62)
28 Writing an introduction and a conclusion (Spencer & Arbon, p. 77-92)

April
04 Using information from other authors (Spencer & Arbon, p. 127-132)
11 Defending a position / Developing an argument (Spencer & Arbon, p. 156-160, 170-176)
18 Holiday (Good Friday)
25 Analyzing genres and perspective (Cohen, p. 15-25)

May
02 Analyzing style (Cohen, p. 49-65)
09 Analyzing structure (Cohen, p. 67-80)
16 Oral Presentations - Interpreting fiction: "Everyday Use", by Alice Walker
23 Oral Presentations - Interpreting fiction: "Recitatif", by Toni Morrison
30 Understanding a literary essay (Alexander, p. 58-63, 126-137)

June
06 Organizing ideas in a literary essay (Cohen, p. 119-140)
13 Oral Presentations – Interpreting poetry: "Bocas: A Daughter's Geography" (Ntozake Shange), "Still I Rise" (Maya Angelou)
20 Drafting a literary essay (Griffith, p. 255-272)
27 ABRALIC (academic leave)

July
04 Writing practice
11 Writing Test (Literary essay)
18 Results/Feedback (face-to-face)

EVALUATION
Oral Presentations (3.0) + Exercises (2.0) + Writing Test (5.0) = 10.0

Writing Test (Literary essay)
Assessment criteria: ability to convey meaning through the use of linguistic repertoires, register, and organization.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
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COHEN, B. Bernard. *Writing about Literature*. Revised edition. Glenview, IL, Abingdon, England: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973.
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SPENCER, Carolyn M. & ARBON, Beverly. *Foundations of Writing: Developing Research and Academic Writing Skills*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1996.
ZYNGIER, Sonia. *Developing Awareness in Literature*. Rio de Janeiro: Faculdade de Letras/UFRJ, 2002.

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ZYNGIER, Sonia

Developing Awareness in Literature. Sonia Zyngier. Faculdade de Letras/UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro, 2002.

102p. – 26cm

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1. Conscientização Literária 2. Ensino de Literatura 3. Literaturas Estrangeiras Modernas 4. Lingüística Aplicada.

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SETEMBRO/2002

Opening Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions in English or in Portuguese on a separate sheet of paper. This is just for our files and will not affect your grade. So, **be as frank as possible.** Answering this questionnaire should not take more than one hour.

- **Part A**

1. Why are you interested in the study of English?

2. What do you think of the study of literature?

3. Where did you learn English?

4. What is your experience with the language?
Do you use it regularly? If yes, where, when and why?

5. What do you think of reading:

   - poetry?
   - plays?
   - novels?
   - short stories?
   - essays?

6. Make a list of the books you have read these past twelve months.

7. Can you list different types of reading?

8. How much time do you dedicate to reading literary texts that are not mandatory?

9. How much time do you spend with the computer? What do you use it for?

10. Do you think that reading literary criticism is important? Why?

Diagnostic Test

Read the following poem and write an account of what you think the poet is trying to express. Justify your explanation based on the linguistic patterns you find in the text.

The Lamb

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life & bid thee feed,
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing woolly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice!
Little Lamb who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee!
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb;
He is meek & he is mild,
He became a little child;
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.

Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

BLAKE, William (1789) (1986). "The Lamb", in ABRAMS, M. H. (ed.) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. NY: W.W. Norton & Co., p. 32.

Unit 1

What is a literary text? Checking Literariness

1. Complete this passage with the most common words that come to your mind. Use <u>one</u> word for each blank space:

When many faces I can ..... I'm lost in multiplicity. And ..... my identity, I ask in ....., ... is me? The I that hides in flesh and ..... is blind and ..... when not alone. When many voices can be ..... crescendo, ... word on word, I cannot ..... the voice that ..... in solitude when ..... falls. For only there is wholeness found beyond the range of sight and ..... the integrated ..... is free to come and ....., to hear and ..... .

2. How do you feel when you are lost in a crowd? Is your experience different from the description in the text?

_____

_____

3. Now go to the end of this Unit. Read Passage 1 entitled "Lost in a crowd". Check how your options above compare to the author's choices. How different or similar were your answers?

_____

_____

4. Compare "a" and "b" below:

a. For only there is wholeness found — beyond the range of sight and sound ...

b. For only there is wholeness found
Beyond the range of sight and sound.

Which is more poetic? _____

Why? _____

5. Check the words that have been used to describe the author's experience.

a. What is being observed? _____

b. Do the words used introduce a different way of appreciating the object under observation?

_____

_____

6. Now, consider this title: *"The Arrival of the Bee-Box"*. What do you expect the text wil be about? How do you think the author will deal with this subject?

_____

_____

7. Describe a bee-box. Complete:

• Bee-boxes are _____

8. How can you get a bee-box? _____

9. Read the poem:

10. How did the poet get a bee-

11. Look at your description in

9. Read the poem:

The Arrival of the Bee-Box

I ordered this, this clean wood box
Square as a chair and almost too heavy to lift.
I would say it was the coffin of a midget
Or a square baby
Were there not such a din in it.

The box is locked, it is dangerous.
I have to live with it overnight
And I can't keep away from it.
There are no windows, so I can't see what is in there.
There is only a little grid, no exit.

I put my eye to the grid.
It is dark, dark,
With the swarmy feeling of African hands
Minute and shrunk for export,
Black on black, angrily clambering.

How can I let them out?
It is the noise that appals me most of all,
The unintelligible syllables.
It is like a Roman mob,
Small, taken one by one, but my god, together!

I lay my ear to furious Latin.
I am not a Caesar.
I have simply ordered a box of maniacs.
They can be sent back.
They can die, I need feed them nothing, I am the owner.

I wonder how hungry they are.
I wonder if they would forget me
If I just undid the locks and stood back and turned into a tree.
There is a laburnum, its blond colonnades,
And the petticoats of the cherry.

They might ignore me immediately
In my moon suit and funeral veil.
I am no source of honey
So why should they turn on me?
Tomorrow I will be sweet God, I will set them free.
The box is only temporary.

10. How did the poet get a bee-box?

11. Look at your description in nº 7. Compare it to the poet's description.

12. Group all the words or expressions related to the bees and to the box:

BEES

BOX

13. Can you build a relationship between the two groups above?

14. Write down some of the expressions or descriptions you consider very unexpected:

- .....
- .....

15. Based on the relationship you have found between the bees and the box, how can you explain the last line of the poem?

Remember:

- When you read, you carry out a kind of dialogue with the text.
- The text provokes a response from you. Observe your response and try to understand what in the text has caused it.
- The text determines the nature of the discourse and in particular what freedom you have to construct your interpretation.
- You must find justification for your reaction in the language of the text.
- Different from a dialogue, you are in complete control of your reading. You can stop, go back, skip, review, etc. at any moment.
- In a literary text there must be a very delicate balance between **confirmation** and **frustration.**
- The text points forwards. It gives you clues. You should be able to identify the signs.

16. Write Evaluation Essay nº 1 and insert it in your folder.

Passage 1

Lost In A Crowd

When many faces I can see – I'm lost in multiplicity. And losing my identity I ask in terror, Where is me? The I that hides in flesh and bone — is blind and deaf when not alone.

When many voices can be heard – crescendo, rising word on word – I cannot hear the voice that calls – in solitude when silence falls ... For only there is wholeness found – beyond the range of sight and sound – the integrated self is free – io come and go, to hear and see.

The Essay

INTRODUCTION

One of the most common writing assignments is the essay. An essay is a short piece of writing on a single subject. An essay can be as short as three to five paragraphs. Sometimes you choose the subject of an essay yourself, and sometimes the subject is assigned to you.

PART 1 *Essay Types*

There are two general types of essay, informal and formal. Study the definitions of both types.

Informal essays are written from your own experience and knowledge for a general audience. They are revised to improve content, organization, and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and grammar). These essays are written in friendly, personal, everyday language and can be handwritten or typed.

Formal essays are written for an academic audience for a specific purpose. The language is formal. Like informal essays, they are revised many times to improve the content and organization and to correct errors in mechanics (spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and grammar). They might use information from other sources. They are usually typed.

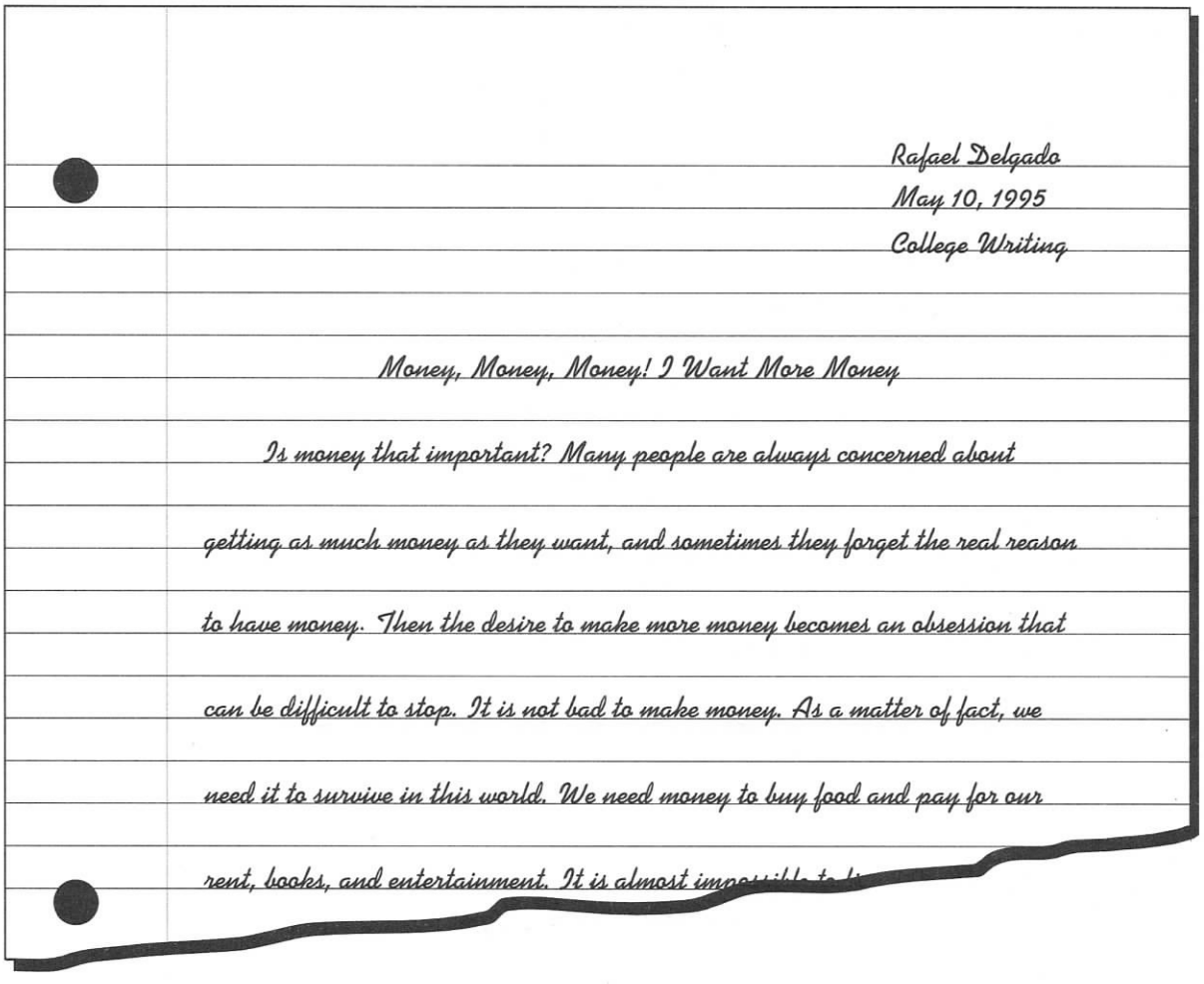
PART 2 *Essay Models*

When you prepare the final copy of an essay, you will want it to have a specific appearance. The appearance includes where you put your name, date, and class name on the paper. This information is called a heading. The appearance also includes the proper place for the title, capitalization of the title, the margins, and the font (or typewriter lettering) you use. In addition, academic papers are written or typed on only one side of a sheet of paper.

Following are handwritten and typed models of an essay called "Money, Money, Money! I Want More Money!" Look at them and identify the parts by answering these questions.

1. What information is found in the heading?
2. Where is the heading placed?
3. Where is the title? How is it capitalized?
4. How wide are the margins?
5. Why did the student skip lines in the body of the essay?

Handwritten model



Rafael Delgado
May 10, 1995
College Writing

Money, Money, Money! I Want More Money

Is money that important? Many people are always concerned about getting as much money as they want, and sometimes they forget the real reason to have money. Then the desire to make more money becomes an obsession that can be difficult to stop. It is not bad to make money. As a matter of fact, we need it to survive in this world. We need money to buy food and pay for our rent, books, and entertainment. It is almost impossible to l

Typed model

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Is money that important? Many people are always concerned about getting as much money as they want, and sometimes they forget the real reason to have money. Then the desire to make more money becomes an obsession that can be difficult to stop. It is not bad to make money. As a matter of fact, we need it to survive in this world. We need money to buy food and pay for our rent, books, and entertainment. It is almost impossible to live without money. The problem is when money is the only thing we want.

Sometimes people get this obsession for money for the wrong reasons. They think that money will bring them better status, more friends, and more happiness. The question is, are they really friends and is that real happiness? Most of the time these friends and happiness last only as long as the money lasts. Real friends and happiness have so high a price that they cannot be bought with money.

Another problem with the obsession for money is that people forget to enjoy the "way through it." For example, sometimes students have their minds set on the graduation date or the day they have their diplomas in their hands. They forget that it is better to enjoy all the way, day by day, semester by semester. In the same way, people should enjoy making money and using it always, not as a final and big goal. For example, I can enjoy making $20,000 a year, then the next year $50,000, and then a million. I do not have to wait for happiness. I can enjoy the process.

Finally, the Lord says in the *New Testament* that it is not bad to make money if we have a wise purpose or if we use it to share with the people who need it. Since I do not have money, I share my time with others who need help, and this brings me satisfaction. In the same way, people who share their money to help others will find great satisfaction. It is not bad to have money, if you use it wisely.

Money is important. People should be concerned about getting money to live, but many important parts of life do not cost money. Therefore, money is not bad unless it is the only thing we want.

PART 3 *Assignment 1: Informal Essay*

▼ Write an informal essay following the information you have just studied. You have 30 minutes.

Write on the topic "The Importance of My College Major" or "The Importance of Learning English."

PRACTICE 1

Thinking about Assignment 1

▼ After you have finished Assignment 1, discuss with your classmates how you felt about the first writing assignment and how you fulfilled the assignment. Write short answers to these questions in your notebook.

1. How did you begin? (GETTING STARTED)
   - Did you wonder why this subject was given?
   - Did you think about who would read this essay?
   - What did you think the reader would want to know?
   - What did you think of that you decided the reader wouldn't want to know?

2. What did you do to plan before you began writing? (PREWRITING)
   - Did you plan in your head or on paper?
   - Did you write down any words or sentences?
   - How did you decide the first word?

3. What happened while you were actually writing? (ORGANIZING, REVISING, EDITING)
   - Did you want to rewrite some parts?
   - Were you trying to please the reader or yourself, the writer?
   - Was it easy to divide the paragraphs?
   - Did you think of starting some sentences with a clause or a prepositional phrase?
   - Did you have trouble with vocabulary, grammar, spelling, or punctuation?

4. What were you feeling?
   - Did you think that your work would be criticized?
   - Were you afraid, nervous, frustrated, unsure?
   - Was the subject a good one? Did you like it or dislike it?
   - Did you feel pressure from the 30-minute time limit?
   - Were you happy with what you wrote or did you want to start over again?

5. How does this assignment compare to other writings you have done?
   - Who read your other papers?
   - How many 30-minute essays have you written?
   - Have you written about this subject before?
   - Does the appearance of this essay look like other English essays?

6. What could help you to be less nervous and more organized? Write your ideas.

_____

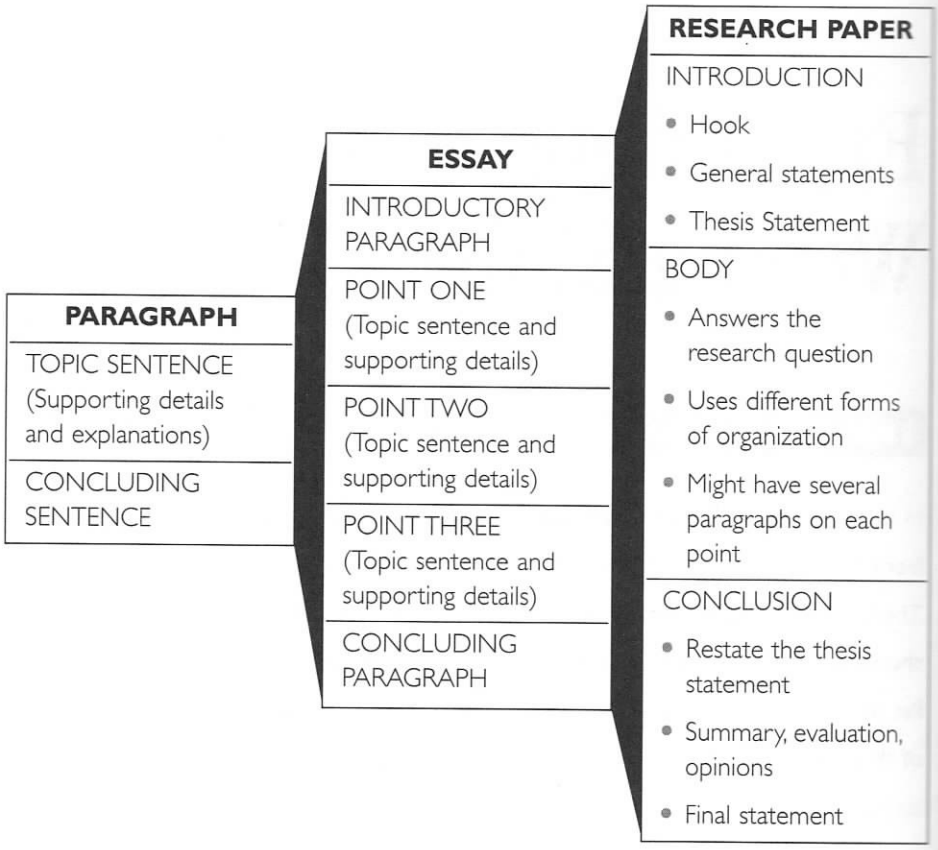
_____

_____

_____

_____

Here is a brief comparison of a paragraph, an essay, and a research paper written in expository form. As you compare the three, notice how the main parts of each are related.



CHAPTER 9

Writing an Introduction

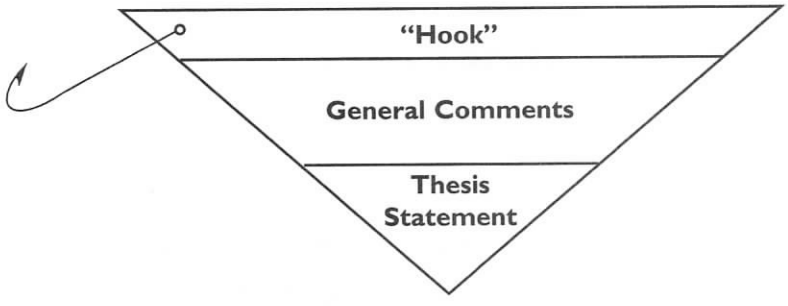
INTRODUCTION

Introductions are everywhere. Whenever you meet new people, the first thing you do is introduce yourself and ask their names. Then you may find out a little more about them, such as where they are from, why they are here, or some common likes and dislikes. Sometimes after an introduction, you will decide if you want to get to know a person better.

An introductory paragraph at the beginning of an academic paper has the same purpose. It introduces the topic to the readers.

PART 1 *The Introduction*

The introduction begins the paper. It has three parts:



1. A **"hook"** is usually the first sentence. It is an interesting or emotional comment about the topic. It is used to catch the reader's attention and interest.
2. **General comments** include several sentences that give interesting background information about the topic.
3. The **thesis statement** is the last sentence in the introduction. It is the most important sentence in the introduction. It states the specific topic of the essay.

Example:

The following paragraph is the introductory paragraph of a paper.

The "hook" is underlined.

The general comments are in normal type.

The thesis statement is **bold.**

> In the early history of the United States, it was believed that people out of work or unemployed were lazy and simply did not want to work. They were often treated badly or punished for their laziness and lack of responsibility. Today, however, people look at the unemployed differently because unemployment is often caused by outside problems. **Some of the causes of unemployment are problems of high inflation, seasonal jobs, and changes in government laws.**

The topic of this paper is the causes for unemployment.

The second paragraph will talk about high inflation.

The third paragraph will talk about seasonal jobs.

The fourth paragraph will talk about changes in government laws.

The last paragraph will be the conclusion.

PRACTICE 1
Identifying Parts of an Introduction

▼ Read each introductory paragraph.

▼ Underline the hook.

▼ Circle the thesis statement and read it carefully.

▼ Guess what parts of the topic will be discussed in the paper.

Introduction 1

Jogging

He is quiet. His heart beats quickly as he perspires profusely from his adventure. His body has experienced the fun of play and the challenge of work. He has just discovered the benefits of jogging, the quickest and most efficient way for most people to achieve physical fitness.

Guess:

_____

_____

Introduction 2

Youth Suicide

In ancient times, suicide was a heroic way of ending a life. In Japan, a person suffering a "loss of face" committed hara-kiri. In Greece, to save his honor, a warrior fell on his sword. Today, committing suicide is not so heroic. It is considered a major social problem because it is the third largest cause of death among students. What causes young adults to commit suicide and what is the effect on their peers?
Guess:

_____

_____

Introduction 3

New Solutions to Old Problems

Just about everybody has heard of the population explosion. Many experts tell us that the world will soon come to an end if we don't control the birth rate. Demographers say that there will be too many people. Economists say that there aren't enough resources. Agriculturalists say that there will be too little food. Even though most experts want to limit the number of people on earth, they do not seriously consider human creativity. In recent years, this world crisis has caused innovative scientists to discover new concepts of using space, develop new types of industries, and create more productive varieties of seeds and fertilizers.
Guess:

_____

_____

PART 2 *The Thesis Statement*

The thesis statement is usually written at the end of the introduction. The purpose of the thesis statement is to:

- give the specific topic of the paper
- point to the topic parts that will be discussed in the rest of the paper (Note: A title is NOT the thesis statement)

In the introductory paragraph about jogging, the thesis statement is:

"He has just discovered the benefits of jogging, the quickest and most efficient way for most people to achieve physical fitness."

The specific topic of the paper is "jogging."
The topic parts that will be discussed are:
Jogging is a quick way to fitness.
Jogging is efficient.

PRACTICE 2
Identifying the Parts of a Thesis Statement

Work with a partner and follow the steps below for writing a thesis statement.

Step 1:

▼ Identify the specific topic and topic parts of these thesis statements about the effect of teenagers on shopping malls.

▼ Underline the topic and circle the topic parts of each thesis statement.

Thesis statements:

1. Since a lot of customers at a mall are teenagers, the clothing stores have the latest teen styles and fads.
2. Because teenagers love malls, the restaurants at malls all offer food that teenagers like.
3. Worried parents try to help their teenagers find more productive activities, such as sports, music lessons, and clubs.
4. Thus, businesspeople decorate and design malls to please their teenage customers.

Step 2:

▼ Read the introduction.

▼ Choose one of the thesis statements above.

▼ Write your chosen thesis statement at the end of the introduction.

Introductory paragraph without a thesis statement:

Malls couldn't exist without teenagers! They flood the malls every weekend to visit with their friends. They also shop, eat, buy music, play arcade games, and go to the movies. In fact, today's teenagers spend more time and money at malls than any previous generation has.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Step 3:

▼ Determine the major divisions that will be in your paper, using the specific parts of the thesis statement that you wrote above.

▼ Use your imagination.

▼ What parts of the topic might be discussed in the paper?

▼ Write these parts as headings in the outline below. (Note: Not every paper topic needs four parts.)

I. Introduction

II. _____

III. _____

IV. _____

V. _____

VI. Conclusion

Step 4:

- ▼ Compare your outline with a classmate's outline.
- ▼ Discuss the ways in which your outline is different from your classmate's outline.
- ▼ Talk about how the thesis statements determine the direction, or major divisions, of the paper.

PART 3 *Writing a Thesis Statement*

The thesis statement is created by using the ideas in the research question. One way to write a thesis statement is to turn the research question into a sentence, rather than a question. Another way is to create a new sentence. In either case, a good thesis statement always includes the topic. In addition, it can point the reader to the main ideas you are going to include in your paper.

Sample research question:

How do conflicts about money, immaturity, and cultural differences cause divorce?

Sample thesis statement:

Divorce is caused by immaturity, cultural differences, and conflicts about money.

Thesis statements can be very specific or quite general. A general thesis statement states the topic but does not list the topic parts that will be discussed in the body of the paper. The following thesis statements are general.

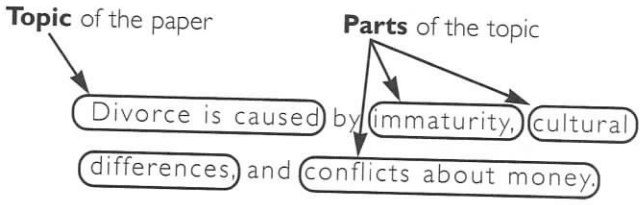
"There are three main reasons for divorce in the 20th century."

"Hurricanes cause a vast amount of damage."

"Several physiological problems can cause deafness."

Long research papers often use general thesis statements. However, because you will write short research papers in this course, you will use specific thesis statements.

A specific thesis statement not only gives the topic of the paper, but also tells the parts that will be in the paper. The more specific the thesis statement, the more the reader can tell in advance what will be in your paper. The thesis statement below is specific. Notice the topic and the parts that will be in the paper.



This specific thesis statement could be put in your planning outline like this:

Topic: Causes of divorce

Major divisions in the outline

I. Introduction
II. Immaturity
III. Cultural differences
IV. Conflicts about money
V. Conclusion

PRACTICE 3

Identifying the Topic and the Major Divisions of the Outline

▼ Read this research question.

> What are some specific details, examples, and statistics that show how becoming blind as an adult causes depression, divorce, and a change of occupation?

Here is a specific thesis statement made from that question.

Becoming blind as an adult frequently causes depression, divorce, and a change of occupation.

By looking carefully at this thesis statement, can you find the topic and the major divisions of the outline that will be discussed in the paper?

Topic: *Effects of Blindness on Adults*

Major Divisions of the Outline:

I. Introduction
II. *Depression*
III. *Divorce*
IV. *Change of Occupation*
V. Conclusion

PRACTICE 4

Finding the Topic and Major Divisions of the Outline

▼ Read each introduction.

▼ Underline the hook.

▼ Write the general topic of the paper and the major divisions in the outline.

Introduction 1

Native Americans

Native Americans have lived on the American continent for thousands of years. As their numbers grew, they divided into tribes and settled different parts of the country. When they did this, their lifestyles also became different from each other. Some lived in the mountains, while others lived on the prairies. Some tribes lived in tepees. Others lived in caves or in homes built out of mud or sticks. Two tribes in particular, the Navajo and the Cheyenne, were very different. They differed in both their histories and their lifestyles.

The topic of this paper is

_____

The major divisions are:

I. Introduction

II. _____

III. _____

IV. Conclusion

Introduction 2

Flying

While watching birds easily fly through the air, people wondered if they could do the same thing. Some tried. They tied feathers to their arms and legs and jumped off cliffs; they strapped on wings made of paper and jumped from buildings. Finally, after many years of experimenting with balloons, wings on wheels, and gliders, the Wright brothers, in 1903, attached a motor and two propellers to a two-winged glider and flew! The successful flight of the Wright brothers caused the eventual development of private planes, air-passenger carriers, and, most recently, space exploration.

The topic of this paper is

_____

The major divisions are:

I. Introduction

II. _____

III. _____

IV. Conclusion

Introduction 3

Snow

The earth is silent after the night's snowstorm. All is quiet. All is white. The snow has changed the ground from green, beige, and brown to white and black. Snow hangs from the bare trees like white beards. Slowly, the world wakes up. The snowplow roars down the street, clearing the snow and spreading salt. The bus arrives to pick up the waiting children. The streets fill up with people in cars going to work. The temperature turns cold, below freezing, and the streets become like glass. Some people never get to work because they slide off the road or bump into other cars while trying to stop. Snow is the cause of both good and bad events in our lives.

The topic of this paper is

_____

The major divisions are:

I. Introduction

II. _____

III. _____

IV. Conclusion

PRACTICE 5

Writing a Specific Thesis Statement and the Major Divisions of an Outline

Change this research question on education into a specific thesis statement.

"What are the effects of education on my life?"

Follow these steps:

- ▼ Brainstorm to create a narrower research question.
- ▼ Change the narrowed research question into a specific thesis statement.
- ▼ Write a possible outline showing only the major divisions.

PRACTICE 6
Writing an Introduction

Write an introduction for the topic in Practice 5. Follow these steps:

- Begin with a hook.
- Add general information, description, or background information.
- Write the specific thesis statement from Practice 5 at the end of the introduction.

Now you are ready to write the introduction to the research paper for this unit.

CHAPTER 10

Writing a Conclusion

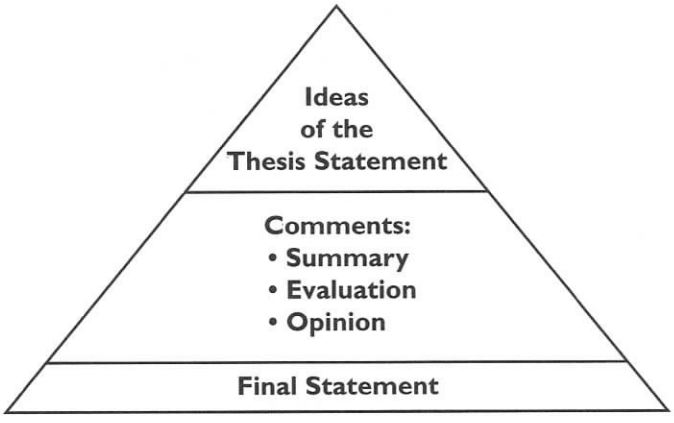
INTRODUCTION

The conclusion of a paper can be compared to saying good-bye. Often when you leave someone, you mention some important parts of your visit. You might say, "Don't forget to call me and tell me about . . . ", or "I enjoyed hearing about . . . " When you are at the end of your conversation, you probably close it in a comfortable way for everyone.

A conclusion in an academic paper has a similar purpose. It is the way to tell the reader that you have finished discussing the topic.

PART 1 *The Conclusion*

The conclusion ends the paper. It tells the reader that you have finished your essay. It has three parts:



1. The ideas of the thesis statement appear in the first sentence of the conclusion. They are in different words than those in the introduction.
2. Comments can include a summary of all the main ideas, an evaluation of the ideas, and/or the writer's opinion.

3. The final statement is a final thought that "ties up" the topic for the reader.

With your classmates, identify the three parts of a conclusion in these examples.

Conclusion 1

The Effects of Volcanoes

Summary

Volcanoes seem to have a significant effect on the climate and the soils in the areas in which they occur. The climates seem to become cooler over a long period of time after an eruption, and the soils become enriched as the volcanic lava and ash are broken down. Therefore, volcanoes are both destructive and beneficial to nature.

Conclusion 2

The Causes of Laughter

Opinion

To summarize, people laugh a good portion of their lives for various reasons. Babies laugh when something no longer is frightening to them. Adults sometimes laugh when they are trying to cover up a fear, or when they remember something in the past that at the time was frustrating, or when a behavior seems inconsistent with the situation. Laughter helps people go through hard times in life and helps them enjoy situations. It is, therefore, important that society never forget how to laugh.

PRACTICE 1

Identifying the Three Parts in a Conclusion

- ▼ Read each research question and the conclusion.
- ▼ Underline the possible thesis statement ideas.
- ▼ In the margin, write the type of comment used: summary, evaluation, and/or opinion.
- ▼ Star (*) the beginning of the "tie" or final statement.

Conclusion 1

(Research Question: "What are the effects of running?")

Run for Your Life

In summary, exercise is the way to be healthier and to live longer, and running is a great example of such exercise. Among many other benefits, running keeps calcium in the bones to protect them against osteoporosis; helps reduce the risk of heart disease; reduces problems associated with excess weight such as diabetes, gall bladder disease, gout, and certain cancers; helps muscles increase flexibility and improve strength; helps relieve stress; and even makes people become more intelligent, live longer, and feel more joy. For these, and many other reasons, people should run as a habitual activity. In essence, running means to be young forever!

(Alfredo Garnica—Mexico)

Conclusion 2:

(Research Question: "What is the real cost of nuclear energy?")

> **The Accelerating Cost of Nuclear Energy**
>
> In conclusion, the power produced by nuclear plants is neither cheap, safe, nor clean. Even though scientists can estimate the price of producing nuclear energy, they cannot predict the price that people will have to pay for living in a world full of radiation. After a few very dangerous explosions, many things have to be reevaluated. One of the people who lived close to Three Mile Island during the accident in 1979 said, "Even if only a little bit of radiation escapes from a nuclear facility, causing cancer in you or your child, you will not be comforted by the fact that it was just a little bit." There is no such thing as a one-hundred-percent safe nuclear energy plant, and there is no way to calculate the price of the life of a human being.
>
> *(Iwona Bednarczyk—Poland)*

Conclusion 3:

(Research Question: "What are the reasons to avoid abortion?")

> **Your Choice, but Not Your Life**
>
> The fight against abortion will continue in the world and people will continue to look for a real, precise, and scientific answer to the question of when life begins. Meanwhile, as we find answers, we should give the benefit of the doubt to life. For example, if we are driving a car in the night and we see a dark shadow that looks like a person, should we run through it just because we are not sure the shadow is a human being? In the same way, we should not let abortion take the lives of children just because we are not sure they are yet living human beings.
>
> *(Rafael Delgado—Costa Rica)*

PART 2 *Using Transitions in the Conclusion*

Often a writer will use a word or phrase that signals to readers that they are moving from one thought to another, or from one section of a paper to another. These words are called transitions, and they are used to link ideas together. Some common transitions used to signal conclusions are listed below. The examples show how to use these transitions and how to punctuate them correctly.

Transitions:	In short,	Thus,	In conclusion,
	In summary,	Therefore,	To conclude,
	To summarize,		

Examples:

To introduce a quick summary of the main points:

> (In short, In summary, To summarize,) there are three main ways that people should prepare themselves for employment: Study the job market . . .

Often used in the last sentence of a conclusion:

> (Thus, Therefore,) one must have the proper training and necessary skills in order to find good employment.

May be used in both of the above ways:

> To conclude, In conclusion,

PRACTICE 2
Comparing Introductions and Conclusions

As you practice writing conclusions, use conclusion transitions. See if you can identify the similarities of form in the introductions and conclusions of these student papers. Then complete the outlines.

Follow the directions.

- ▼ Underline the thesis statement in the introduction and the ideas of the thesis statement in the conclusion.
- ▼ Star (*) the beginning of the hook and the tie.
- ▼ Circle the general comments in the introduction and any opinions, evaluations, or feelings in the conclusion.
- ▼ Draw a box around any transitions.
- ▼ Use the thesis statement to help you complete the missing parts of the planning outline.

Paper 1: The Car—Good Fortune and Misfortune

Introduction

In 1885, Karl Benz, a forty-one-year-old German engineer, made the first car in the world. From that, humanity has entered the car stage. Roads the world over are crowded with cars. Cars take a person from place to place quickly. With cars, it is possible for people to work in the city and live in the countryside. Although cars are very useful, they cause noise, pollution, and serious accidents.

Conclusion

In conclusion, cars bring pleasure to millions of people, but also loud noise, pollution, and death. Since the making of the first car, cars have revolutionized our lives. Cars changed where people worked and lived. Cars changed what people did in their spare time. Cars became an important part of life, but their problems cannot be ignored. People are finding ways to deal with these problems. Someday other kinds of power will take the place of gasoline, and stricter laws will reduce the bad effects. Thus, because cars will always be with us, future cars must be noiseless and safer.

(Chening Zhang—People's Republic of China)

I. Introduction

II. _____

III. _____

IV. _____

V. _____

VI. Conclusion

Circle the type of comments in the conclusion: summary, evaluation, opinion.

Paper 2: Vulnerable Children

Introduction

Getting divorced nowadays has become as common as getting married. It is like buying wedding rings and then throwing them away. Still, for parents, it seems not to be a big problem. But for children it's more than a simple pair of rings. Children are devastated when they think they are at fault and often feel anger, loneliness, and depression, and have low self-esteem.

Conclusion

In short, children are still the most vulnerable part of the family and the effects of divorce on them are devastating. Children think they are at fault. They feel great anger, loneliness, depression, and low self-esteem. Considering what parents mean to their children and how much children need their parents, it is sad to see how divorce continues. It seems that many couples have forgotten that children are not just pretty rings.

(Rodolfo Peña—Mexico)

I. Introduction

II. _____

III. _____

IV. _____

V. _____

VI. Conclusion

Circle the type of comments in the conclusion: summary, evaluation, opinion.

Paper 3: People Should Not Smoke

Introduction

"Would you mind if I smoke?" I wanted to say, "Yes, I do mind," yet I said, "No, go ahead." Although I really hate the smell of smoke, and even seeing someone smoking, if the person politely asks my permission, I cannot say, "Do not smoke." In the past few years the bad effects of smoking have been scientifically proven. Still, there are a number of people who keep smoking. There are several good health reasons why people must not smoke.

Conclusion

People must not smoke for several reasons. Smoking causes many diseases that are serious and make people's lives shorter. For women, smoking influences the woman's child and her body. Also, the smoke from cigarettes gives even nonsmokers bad effects. Therefore, smokers should realize these awful facts and must quit smoking before they come down with a bad disease and die.

(Takako Kodani—Japan)

I. Introduction

II. _____

III. _____

IV. _____

V. Conclusion

Circle the type of comments in the conclusion: summary, evaluation, opinion.

PRACTICE 3

Writing a Conclusion

Read the following essay about homeless people.

Follow the directions and write your own conclusion on a piece of paper.

▼ Underline the thesis statement in the introduction.

▼ Underline the topic sentences in the second and third paragraphs.

▼ Write a conclusion. Remember to:

1. Restate the ideas in the thesis statement.
2. Use transitions.
3. Add comments using summary, evaluation, and/or opinion.
4. End with a final statement.

Street Beggars Are Not Always Homeless

Tom is a man who stands on a street corner with a ragged cardboard sign. "Homeless and Hungry—Please Help" is scrawled across the dirty cardboard in black Magic Marker. Tom said he is grateful for the people who give him money. "I don't force people to give me money," Tom said. "I just stand here and accept it. It's my way of making a living—this is America, the land of opportunity," he said. What drives people to stand on a street corner and beg? Some people like to beg, and others need to beg.

Some people pretend to be homeless when they really aren't. One example is Tom. He eventually admitted he has a house, but insisted he would lose his house if he did not panhandle for a living. "I need it to scrape by," Tom said. But scraping by for Tom means making $250 on really good days, and from $50 to $100 a day usually, he said. Another example is Frank, who also has a house. He is out asking people for money because he likes the freedom of his own hours and moving around whenever he wants to. Frank said he averages about $75 a day.

However, some people feel forced to beg. Ed is homeless, but he doesn't beg for money very often—only when he can't find an odd job to do. Willy lost his job in Oregon 20 years ago and has been on the road ever since. He doesn't have a job, car, or house. Brent Crane, the executive director of the Utah Valley Food and Shelter Coalition, said almost all of the needy are too proud to ask for handouts, but they will come to the shelter when they want help.

(Courtesy of The Daily Universe. *Adapted with permission.)*

Now you are ready to write a conclusion to your cause-and-effect research paper for this unit.

CHAPTER 15

Using Information from Printed Sources

INTRODUCTION

In a research paper you will use thoughts, ideas, and facts from other authors to explain your topic. This borrowed information is written within the paper in three ways: paraphrase, summary, and quotation. To paraphrase means to use your own words to write someone else's idea without changing the meaning. To summarize means to write the main idea or ideas of a paragraph, a section, or an article. To quote means to use someone else's exact words. A paraphrase, a summary, and a quotation each require a citation. Citations will be presented in Chapter 17.

PART 1 *Paraphrasing*

When you paraphrase, you use your own words to tell what someone else said or wrote without changing the original meaning or leaving out details.

You paraphrase by:

- using synonyms
- expressing the ideas in your own sentences

A paraphrase:

- is about as long as the original information
- contains all the details of the original

Example:

> **Original text:** The citizens of Ashton are complaining loudly about the problems and inefficiency of the sanitation system, because Friday the sanitation crew removed approximately half the refuse on Center Street, and it wasn't until Saturday that they returned and removed that which remained.
>
> **Paraphrase:** Garbage removal for the people of Ashton has been a problem. They are unhappy about the way the garbage collectors have done their job. For example, only half of the garbage was removed on Friday. They finally came back on Saturday to take the rest of it away.

In this example, the writer changed the word order and made these word changes:

"citizens of Ashton" → people of Ashton
"complaining loudly" → unhappy
"sanitation system" → garbage removal
"sanitation crew" → garbage collectors

What other changes do you see?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

PRACTICE 1

Paraphrasing

- ▼ Read the following paragraph with a classmate.
- ▼ Explain the paragraph to a classmate in your own words.
- ▼ Write down what you said.
- ▼ If you have included all the information, and your paragraph looks different from the original, you have written a good paraphrase.

> **Paragraph 1**
>
> Recycling can be made easy. Call your local government office and find out what can be recycled in the area and how that material will be taken to the recycling businesses. Many cities have curbside collection services for glass, newspaper, and aluminum.

_____

_____

_____

Paragraph 2

Garbage dumps in the United States are filling up fast. For this reason, many industries must pay the local governments a fee to use the dump. As a consequence, some industries are shipping the garbage out to sea and dumping it there. The problem is that often this garbage is washed up on beaches and creates an ugly, unhealthy situation.

Paragraph 3

Because "10 percent of air pollution comes from the nation's 89 million lawn mowers, garden tractors, chain saws, and other gas-powered garden equipment," the Environmental Protection Agency is thinking about putting emission standards on these machines, just as it does on automobiles. This will cause an extra financial burden on the citizens, but it might help to clean up the air in places where there is a high concentration of people.

(Courtesy of The Daily Universe)

PART 2 *Summarizing Parts of Articles*

When you summarize, you put the writer's main ideas into your own words.

You summarize:

- an entire article
- part of an article
- one paragraph

You want to summarize to:

- shorten a large amount of material
- leave out unnecessary details
- quickly state the most important ideas or facts
- make sure that the paper is in your own words

In academic writing, a summary of the independent ideas of a specific writer must have a reference to that writer.

Read the original report about garbage collection in Ashton again. Then read the following summaries.

Original text

The citizens of Ashton are complaining loudly about the problems and inefficiency of the sanitation system, because Friday the sanitation crew removed approximately half the refuse on Center Street, and it wasn't until Saturday that they returned and removed that which remained.

Summary 1

The garbage collection crew in Ashton is not working efficiently, and the people who live there are unhappy about it (Mahoney, 1993).

Summary 2

Mahoney said that the garbage collection crew in Ashton is not doing the job efficiently, and the people who live there are unhappy about it (1993).

Notice that 1 and 2 have different information in the parentheses. Do you know why?

PRACTICE 2

Summarizing Paragraphs

▼ Read these paragraphs again.

▼ Write a summary of each one.

Paragraph 1

Recycling can be made easy. All you have to do is to call your local government office and find out what can be recycled in the area and how that material will be taken to the recycling businesses. Many cities have collection services for glass, newspaper, and aluminum.

_____

_____

_____

Paragraph 2

Garbage dumps in the United States are filling up fast. For this reason, many industries must pay the local governments a fee to use the dump. As a consequence, some industries are shipping the garbage out to sea and dumping it there. The problem is that often this garbage is washed up on beaches and creates an ugly, unhealthy situation.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Paragraph 3

Because "10 percent of air pollution comes from the nation's 89 million lawn mowers, garden tractors, chain saws, and other gas-powered garden equipment," the Environmental Protection Agency is thinking about putting emission standards on these machines, just as it does on automobiles. This will cause an extra financial burden on the citizens, but it might help to clean up the air in places where there is a high concentration of people.

(Courtesy of The Daily Universe)

PRACTICE 3
Paraphrasing and Summarizing Paragraphs

Follow these steps:

1. Find a paragraph in a newspaper or magazine.
2. In your notebook, write down the name of the newspaper or magazine, the date it was published, the author of the article (if there is one), and the page number.
3. Copy the paragraph into your notebook.
4. Write a paraphrase of the paragraph.
5. Write a summary of the paragraph.
6. Have a classmate evaluate your paraphrase and summary.

PART 3 *Quotations*

When you quote, you use the author's exact words in your paper.

You quote because the author:

- wrote clear and exact words that you think are valuable
- is an authority you trust and you want to use his or her authority to explain your idea or opinion
- wrote unique words that will add interest

You will use more summaries and paraphrases and fewer quotations in an academic research paper.

1. For short quotations (fewer than 40 words):

- put quotation marks around the exact words you take from another author
- write the quotation within the paragraph

Examples:

1. "Scientists miscalculated the amount of radiation released when the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster occurred" (Adam, 1994, p. 5).
2. Jenson stated, "Nuclear reactors require strict safety codes" (1993, p. 64).
3. For long quotations (40 or more words):
   - Do not use quotation marks. Instead, indent all lines five spaces from the left margin.
   - Double space the quoted lines.
   - Put the period at the end of the quotation.
   - Then put the citation at the end of the sentence.
   - Use very few long quotations in a paper.

Example:

> Since the environment seems to be in need of protecting, one of the key ways is to recycle anything that can be used again. This will prevent the rapid decline of our nation's natural resources. To support this claim, Jones said,
>
> Recycled materials can be substituted for virgin materials (ones that come directly from the earth) and would reduce such problems as strip-mining and deforestation. Production of virgin materials also uses more fossil fuels and other resources which could be saved by recycling. (1993, p. 6)
>
> *(Courtesy of* The Daily Universe*)*

PRACTICE 4

Writing Quotations

- ▼ Read the following newspaper article about recycling.
- ▼ Find two interesting facts to quote, one short and one long.
- ▼ Write the quotations on the lines at the end of the article.
- ▼ Be sure that you have the correct punctuation.

Source: Jones, J. (Mar. 31, 1993). Utah down in dumps with recycling efforts. The Daily Universe, p. 6.

Utah Down in the Dumps with Recycling Efforts

Utah's state government must take an active part in encouraging people to preserve the environment. One of the best ways everyone can become involved is through recycling. Voluntary action by the people of Utah is currently very low, and the state must take some form of action in increasing the amount of recycling done by citizens.

What are the merits of recycling? Right now only 13 percent of all garbage is recycled. Most of the garbage ends up in overflowing landfills that contaminate

underground water. The rest is burned in high-temperature furnaces that send toxic pollutants into the air. In contrast, recycling is a safer, less costly solution to the problem of waste disposal. Recycling reduces the amount of solid waste taken to landfills and incinerators and thereby decreases the amount of water and air pollution.

One of the most important reasons for recycling is to preserve natural resources. Recycled materials can be substituted for natural materials (ones that come directly from the earth) and would reduce such problems as strip-mining and deforestation. Production of natural materials also uses more fossil fuels and other resources that could be saved by recycling.

Contrary to popular belief, recycling also saves governments and citizens money. For example, businesses and individuals can reduce their waste disposal costs by more than 70 percent by using a recycling program. Also, individuals or communities receive money from selling recyclables to recycling companies. So businesses are not only saving money, they are earning money as well.

Furthermore, production using recycled materials is usually cheaper for a company and reduces the cost of pollution control. In addition, the recycling industry provides employment for hundreds of thousands of people.

In spite of all these benefits, however, recycling in Utah is quite limited. In Provo and Orem, residents must pay a $3.00 monthly charge for pickup of recyclable materials limited only to newspapers, magazines, cardboard, aluminum, and tin. Unfortunately, the enrollment in this program is also small—2,000 households. In Salt Lake County, none of the communities has a curbside recycling plan. Salt Lake City, the major city in the county, will begin one in the near future.

Still, the state of Utah is six years behind many other states in their recycling programs and must put forth a greater effort to promote recycling. The state must become environmentally responsible. The state government must act quickly to set recycling goals and implement a recycling program.

(Courtesy of The Daily Universe)

Short quotation:

_____

_____

Long quotation:

_____

_____

_____

_____

CHAPTER 17

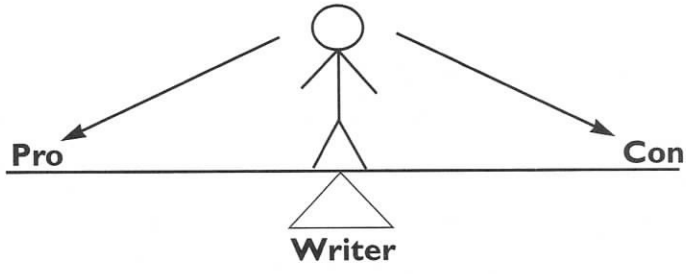
Pro-Con: Looking at Both Sides

INTRODUCTION

Pro means favoring or **supporting** an idea or an issue.
Con means being against or **opposing** an idea or an issue.

A pro-con essay or research paper gives facts supporting both sides of an issue. The writer stands in the middle, making observations and stating facts that support both sides equally. The writer does not state an opinion.

This is the position of the writer of a pro-con paper:



Examples of pro-con issues:

Abortion

Pro: Yes, a woman has the right to abort an unwanted pregnancy.

Con: No, an unborn child has the right to live.

Nuclear power

Pro: Yes, nuclear power is the energy that will preserve our natural resources.

Con: No, nuclear power is more dangerous than helpful.

Gun control

Pro: Yes, guns need to be controlled because too many people misuse them.

Con: No, American citizens have the right to own guns as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.

PART 1 *Organizing Pro-Con Papers*

There are several ways to organize the paragraphs in the main part of a pro-con paper. Two ways are shown below. Of course, the introduction and conclusion are similar to those in other papers you have written.

Read the following essay entitled "Deer Hunt: Good or Bad" and follow the directions.

- ▼ Circle the hook.
- ▼ Underline the thesis statement in the introduction.
- ▼ Underline the topic sentences in each paragraph.
- ▼ Put a minus (-) in the margin next to the *con* statements.
- ▼ Put a plus (+) in the margin next to the *pro* statements.
- ▼ Answer the questions below.

Example 1

Deer Hunt: Good or Bad?

The deer hunt is very popular in Utah. It is so popular that schools are closed on the Friday the official deer hunt begins. Although there are many people who actually go into the mountains to hunt, many do not. As well as having a fun vacation, people who hunt use it as an excuse to drink liquor, have parties, and shoot at anything that moves. As a result, each year hunters die from gun wounds. Some people wonder if this hunt is really necessary.

Some wildlife experts say that it is very necessary. During the winter, natural food for the deer is scarce. If their numbers were allowed to grow without "the hunt," many of the animals would die of starvation. So the hunt is necessary to control the numbers that must survive the harsh winters.

From another point of view, however, the deer were here before people. Not surviving the winter was nature's way of eliminating the sick and weak from the herd. Those deer that survived were the strongest, so their babies would also be strong. Therefore, there was a natural building of a strong species of deer.

It could be that the hunt is killing off the strong ones who are needed to strengthen the deer population as a whole. Perhaps the hunt is more to satisfy people's need for adventure than to save the deer. Perhaps it is part of both reasons.

1. Which paragraph is *for* the deer hunt?_____
2. Which paragraph is *against* the deer hunt?_____
3. List the transitions that the writer uses.

_____

_____

Example 2

Read the following essay entitled "Soccer at Our College" and follow the directions.

- ▼ Circle the hook.
- ▼ Underline the thesis statement in the introduction.
- ▼ Underline the topic sentences in each paragraph.
- ▼ Put a minus (-) in the margin next to the *con* statements.
- ▼ Put a plus (+) in the margin next to the *pro* statements.
- ▼ Answer the questions below.

Soccer at Our College

The most popular game, soccer, is played on every continent in the world. This game can be played almost anywhere, with little equipment. All you need are some willing contestants, a ball, and a place to play. Even though soccer is a universal sport, the athletic department of our college does not want to sponsor an official soccer team.

The biggest reason our college does not want to sponsor soccer is financial. The money in the budget is not sufficient for two teams, and to be fair there must be a team of men and a team of women. Furthermore, it costs a lot of money for teams to travel to play other colleges. The administration fears that soccer teams might spend a lot of money that is now used for other important sports programs. On the other hand, this year the men's team is making enough money to finance their own program by selling game tickets. Since several local colleges want to expand their schedules to include our college, and since our college would have two teams, there would be more games. Having more games with nearby colleges means larger crowds and more ticket sales. The soccer teams may almost be able to finance themselves.

Another big problem is providing equal opportunity for men and women in sports. So, while there is a men's team, the athletic department says women are not interested in playing college soccer. But the students think there are a lot of women who want to play soccer because the present intramural competition includes some women's teams. There are probably enough serious players on these teams to make an official college team.

In addition, playing space for additional games is difficult to find. Most observers would agree that there is no place on our college campus to have two soccer fields. However, the schedule could be arranged so that the women and men could share the present playing field. For official games they could alternate using the field on Friday and Saturday afternoons and evenings. This would use the field efficiently and no new space would be needed.

In short, the athletic department has good reasons to refuse to sponsor soccer. But there are also good reasons to support a soccer program. Only time will tell whether soccer gains enough support to be played as an official college sport at our college.

1. Fill in the following chart with the pro and con points in the soccer essay.

Pro: Yes, soccer should be official.	**Con:** No, soccer should not be official.

2. Did this article influence you to form an opinion about the problem?

   What is your opinion?

   _____

   _____

3. List the transitions that are used in this article.

   _____

   _____

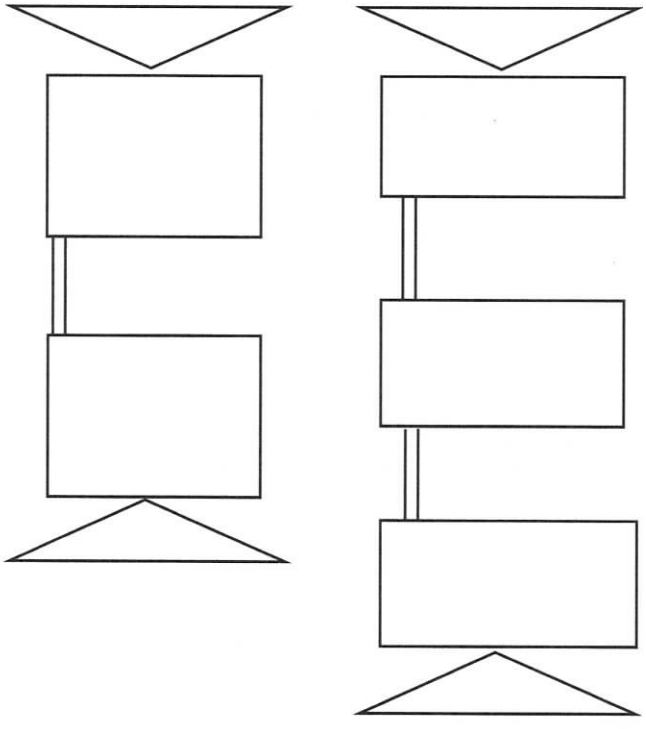
PART 2 *Pro-Con Models*

Pro-con papers use facts, logic, and opinions of experts to show both sides of an issue. Here are two possible ways to organize the main paragraphs of this kind of paper.

Model 1 was used in the "Deer Hunt: Good or Bad?" essay. After the introduction, the next paragraph talked about one side of the issue and the following paragraph talked about the other side of the issue.

Model 2 was used in the "Soccer in Our College" essay. In this form, each paragraph between the introduction and conclusion talked about both sides

of the issue. In other words, a single paragraph showed both sides of one part of the topic. This form is good for longer papers.



CHAPTER 18

Defending Your Position

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter you will expand your pro-con paper to an academic-argument paper on the same topic. You will be able to use a lot of the research you have already done on your pro-con paper, but you will not use your pro-con outline. You must reorganize the material and make a new outline to show academic argument. This academic-argument paper assignment, which is your final library research paper for this course, will also include an abstract and APA headings.

PART 1 *The Academic Argument*

An academic-argument or position paper is one that states a clear opinion of one side of an issue and supports that opinion with logical reasoning, facts, explanations, and reliable opinions of others. The audience is more interested in how convincingly you support your opinion than in the actual side you take.

The first step in writing any paper is to pick a topic. When choosing a topic for an academic-argument paper, you must be sure that:

- it has two strong opposing sides, one of which you agree with
- the defense of your position is interesting and varied, but not too complicated for a short five-page paper

Academic-argument papers use many of the organizational models you have learned in this course (summary report, cause-and-effect, comparison-and-contrast, and pro-con). In showing your side of the issue, you must use the models that will best explain your point of view. No matter what model you use, you must make a clear connection between your opinion and the facts and avoid using emotional reasoning.

Therefore, as you research and write your academic-argument paper, you must make sure that you have:

- given enough facts, reasons, and details to make your view believable
- included facts or reasons that are logical and clearly related to defending one side of the topic
- explained the details of the facts or reasons (not just listed them)
- answered the research question without getting off the actual topic

Academic-argument papers should use formal language and avoid overgeneralizing words, such as *always* and *never*. Unsupported feelings do not belong in this type of paper because facts and ideas, not emotions, prove your opinion.

Transitions become very important in an academic-argument paper. They help the reader follow your reasoning and your proof. If transitions are lacking, the reader will have a hard time seeing relationships of one idea to another in your argument. Also, transitions are an important part of the formal language necessary in an academic-argument paper.

When writing this type of paper, assume that no one knows enough about the subject to agree with your position. You must not only educate but convince the reader that your position is correct. By taking this attitude, your paper will be more effective.

Finally, a strong conclusion in an academic-argument paper is vital. If the reasoning in the body of the paper is presented in a clear, convincing order, the summary of the main points and your resulting opinion will also be strong. If the body of the paper is weak, the conclusion will be weak as well, and the reader will not be convinced or even sympathetic to your position.

PRACTICE 1

Listing What You Learned

▼ Write down ten facts that you have learned about academic-argument papers.

1. *The topic I pick must be an issue that has two strong opinions or sides.*
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

PRACTICE 2

Looking at an Argument

▼ Read the following argument essay. How does the writer try to convince you to eat dirt?

Eat Dirt!

As our lives become busier, good nutrition and money are often sacrificed. It is all too easy to stop by a vending machine or fast-food restaurant for a quick, but expensive meal. Dirt is a reasonable solution to the problem and it can be a very important part of your diet.

First, soil is easy to find and it is very inexpensive. Bucketful after bucketful can be found in your own garden or practically anywhere. In addition to being readily available, most soil is free.

Second, not only is dirt free, but it is also full of nutrients. The human body requires certain minerals that are essential for health. Among these important minerals are iron, copper, and zinc (Zimmerman, 1992). Lambert and Linch (1991) cite studies carried out by the National Soil Society in which 20-milligram soil samples taken from every state in the union showed enough traces of iron, copper, and zinc to meet or exceed the U.S.R.D.A. daily requirements.

Third, and perhaps the most important of all, many people find that soil has a pleasant taste. In a recent survey conducted by the Department of Food and Nutrition at Cook Well University, 49 out of 50 students rated traditional recipes substituting dirt for flour as tasting superior to the recipes made in the traditional way with flour. In fact, many students admitted they enjoyed eating dirt all by itself (Johnson, 1992).

In sum, dirt can be a viable option for our busy, yet poor lifestyles. It is probably faster to fill a cup full of dirt from the front yard than to go to the local McDonald's. It is certainly less expensive and probably more nutritious.

(Used by permission of Sarah Johnson)

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Johnson, S. (1993, March 2). Dirt rated number one. The Daily Blab, pp. 4,8.

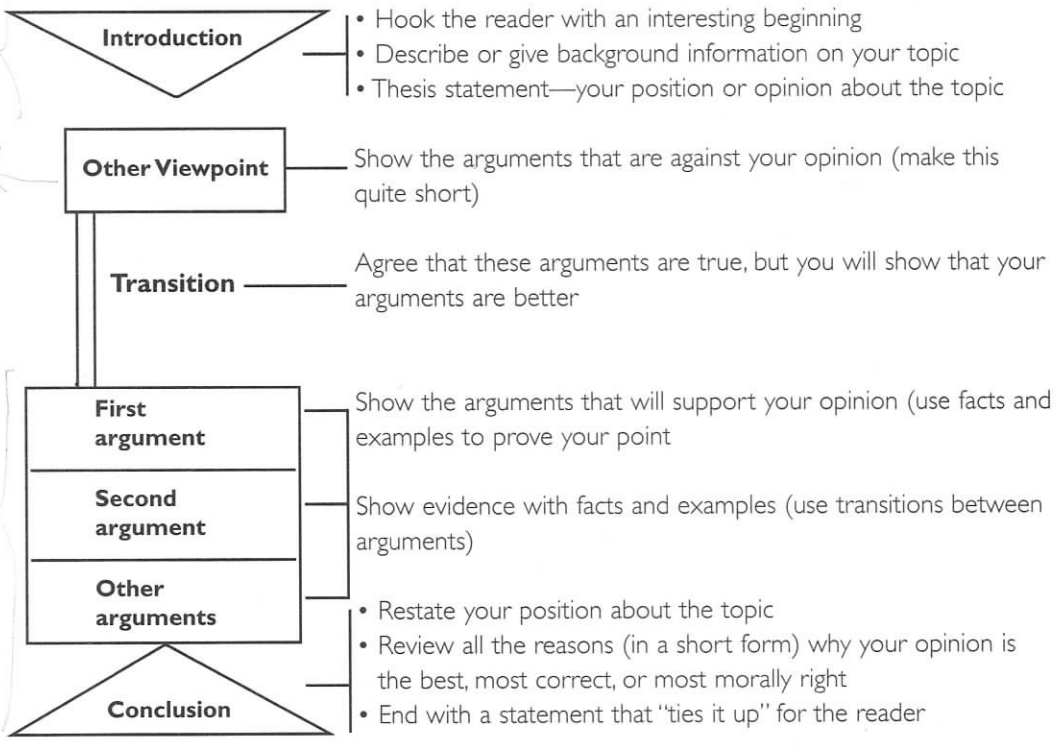
Lambert, L., & Linch, R. (1991). Mineral levels in soil samples. American Journal of Soil, 2, 22-25.

Zimmermann, K. (1992). The healthy diet. New York: Macnothing.

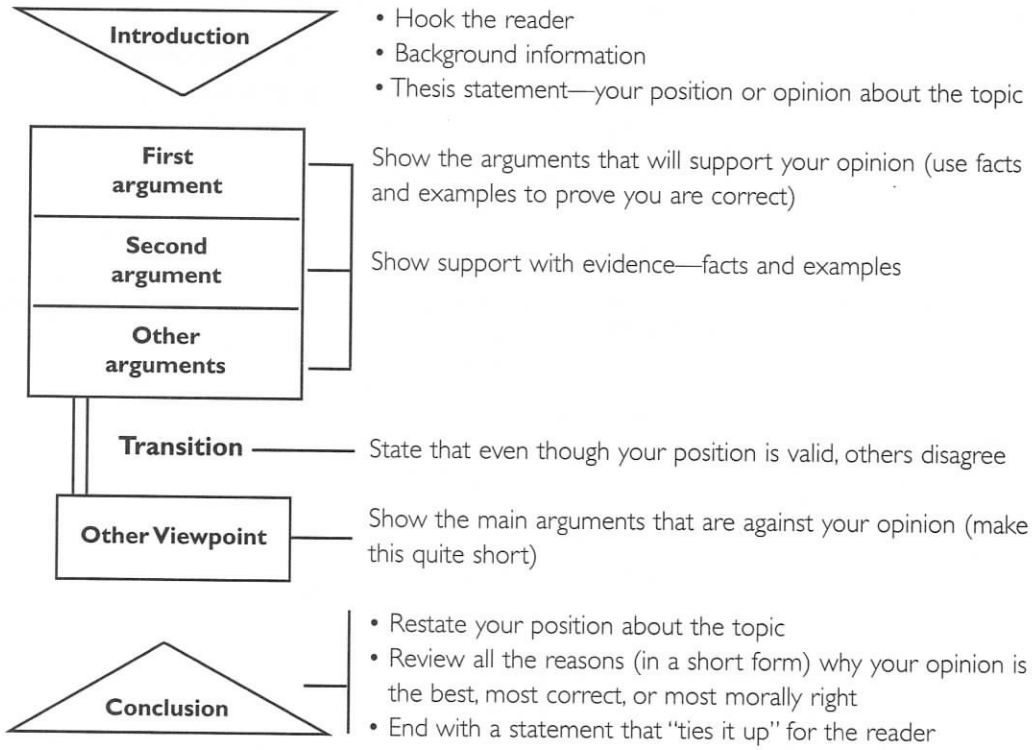
PART 2 *Academic-Argument Models*

So far you have learned about the organizational patterns for comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and pro-con. Academic-argument papers also have organizational patterns that can be illustrated with models. Some models for academic arguments are below:

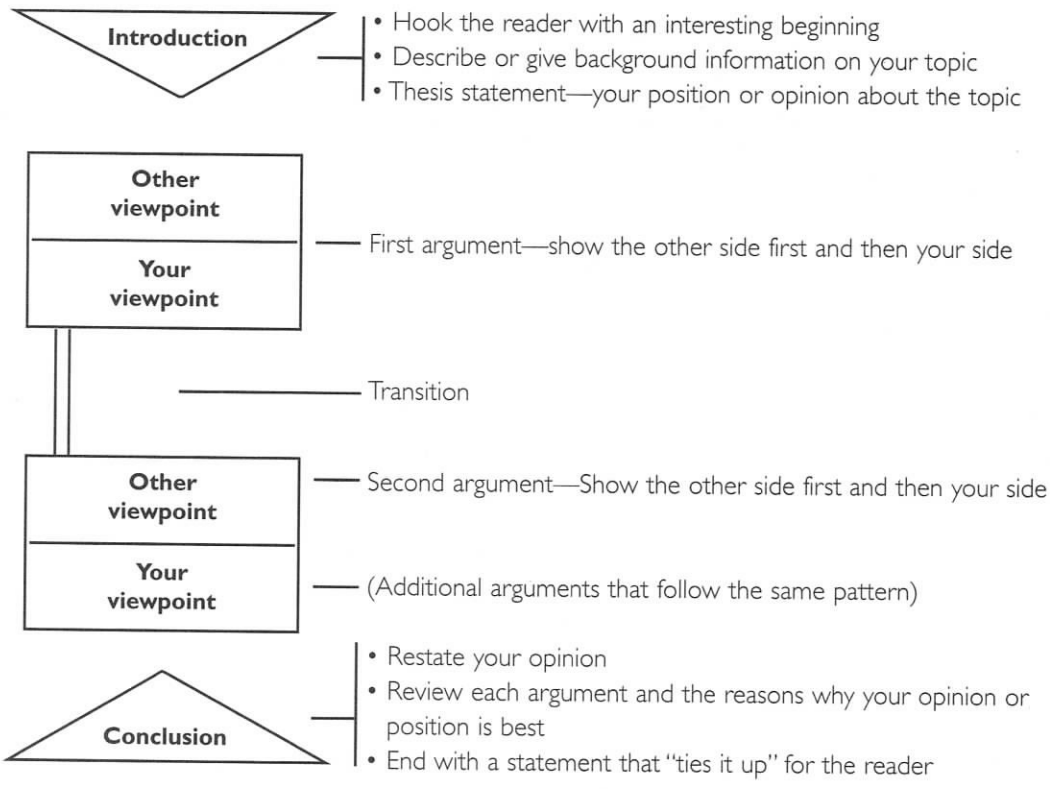
Model 1



Model 2



Model 3



PRACTICE 3

Sample Academic-Argument Essay

▼ Read the following essay and decide what model it uses.

▼ Underline all the transitions.

Early Steady Dating

Young people in the U.S. are steady-dating too early. Some even constantly date the same person from as young as 13 years old. Some people think that this trend is fine because everyone has the right to choose when to begin dating and for how long. But more and more professionals who work with teenagers are saying that early dating damages social development, causes false love, and creates early, unstable marriages.

Developing socially is a very important part of becoming a contributing member of society. Having many friends of both sexes has been seen as a vital factor in this social development. People who group-date during their teens or who date many different people before they finally get married seem to have a variety of friends during their adult life, can relate to other people in more positive and accepting ways, and have a more lasting relationship in their marriage. If a young teenager focuses socially on only one person, a type of social handicap can occur because only one person is the major stimulus for learning how to get along with others.

Usually the cause of early steady-dating is that one or both of the partners have unmet love needs; therefore, they develop a dependency that is misinterpreted as true love. Perhaps their parents were divorced or abusive, so they did not feel the love that is necessary for a healthy self-image. They find someone who fills those strong needs and they become emotionally bonded to that person to the exclusion of all others. This is a very dangerous situation because the teen years are a time of numerous emotional and physical changes. These changes may not occur in both people at the same time, or the changes in emotional needs may conflict so that one person in the couple suddenly becomes disinterested in the other. Therefore, a person who bonds with a partner early could very well be abruptly abandoned for someone else. This abandonment might cause further damage to the person's self-value, and he or she will go looking for someone else who can fill the growing and driving need for love.

There is also a danger of marrying too young and having children too soon in these early steady-dating situations. Because the emotional bond that young people feel may be misinterpreted as love, teen marriage sometimes occurs—often against the better judgment of parents and older friends and even some peers. The young people might argue, "Aren't we able to choose for ourselves? Have you forgotten what true love really is?" The arguments continue until they get their way or run away to get married.

In a marriage based on false love, the emotional entanglements become even more complex. What was thought to be a solution now becomes a complex problem. She is left at home alone with the baby while he goes off to a job he must have because they have bills to pay. He might go out with the boys in the evening, something he never did before because he was going out with only her.

Moreover, he was the only one she cared to know and associate with during high school, but now she begins thinking about the boys in her class who are preparing for a profession or vocation and wondering "How would it have been if . . . ?" Therefore, because of the false expectations before marriage and the reality of the situation after marriage, both people could feel betrayed and even more lonely and unloved. In young marriages, "growing up together" is so painful that divorce is very likely.

Although there is strong evidence against early steady-dating, those who are against any age restraints claim that they are defending a young person's right to choose. They say that establishing an age for steady-dating is damaging to the ego of young people and causes rebellion. Rather than more rules, they say that youth need more freedom so that better adult-youth relationships can develop. In other words, when adults respond to the pressure of teens to do what they want, peace will reign. These claims may have some degree of truth, but total freedom is not the answer to the problems caused by steady-dating too young.

In conclusion, early steady-dating can be detrimental to a young person's social development. Furthermore, relationships based on false love often result in early marriage, which throws young people into the raw realities of the demands of family. The marriage becomes unstable, and divorce occurs. Research and experience teach that having an age limit for steady-dating is not only wise, but highly advisable.

PART 3 *Unit Five Assignment 2: Academic-Argument Research Paper*

As you work through this assignment, you will learn to:

- ▼ Use major division and subdivision headings within your paper
- ▼ Write an abstract for your paper in place of the outline
- ▼ Use modals as you prove that your position is correct

Your assignment for this paper will be different from previous papers. This is because you did some of the important steps for an academic-argument paper when you wrote the pro-con paper. You have already finished steps I and II, Getting Started and Prewriting. Now you are ready for the steps that follow.

I. GETTING STARTED

II. PREWRITING

III. GATHERING INFORMATION

Decide which side of your pro-con paper you wish to defend. Look over all the note cards you and your partner have and select those that best support your side. You will also need a few facts to show the opposing point of view. In addition, you might need to do some

another in context, and they help explain the urgency of the poetic spokesman, who links natural life with human experience symbolically. In interpreting any literary work, you would be wise to keep asking yourself the kinds of questions illustrated above.

A SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES

Because this chapter is intended to emphasize an intellectual and analytical response to your reading in preparation for writing interpretations, it may be wise to summarize the basic attitudes, distinctions, or principles related to this approach.

1) To avoid committing the affective fallacy and to keep the proper frame of mind for analysis of a literary work, you need to maintain a high degree of objectivity and to stress evidence and logical procedures in your interpretations.

2) The suggestiveness of the literary work creates opportunities for multiple interpretation, yet you should avoid the excesses of dogmatism and unjustified in-reading. Any interpretation which you submit should be validated by the citation and analysis of adequate evidence from the text. At the same time, the opportunities of multiple interpretation should not reduce you to confusion or to a feeling of inadequacy; rather you should see them as a challenge to do your own best thinking and writing.

3) You need to comprehend the importance of technique and understand the specific means available to authors to shape their own insights. This requires knowledge of terminology and, more important, an ability to apply the knowledge to your reading.

4) Although you may begin with a literal approach to a poem, story, or play, you cannot rely solely on dictionary definitions of words, paraphrase, and summary. You need to distinguish between *denotation,* the literal approach to words, and *connotation,* the suggestive power of words and details. You must also distinguish between a paraphrase or summary and figurative reading of a literary work.

5) In order to analyze a work, you must always be aware of the context of the details which you are investigating. Analysis of context involves a logical process of relating details from which conclusions can be developed.

6) In order to read closely, you need to ask very specific questions about the details in the works which you are analyzing.

CHAPTER 2 GENRES AND PERSPECTIVE

GENRES

Fundamental to your analytical reading and writing is knowledge about the nature of imaginative literature, about terminology, and about the three basic genres—poetry, prose fiction, and drama. Since the range within each genre is vast, it is almost impossible to provide brief definitions. However, *poetry* is generally distinguished from *prose* by its compression, its emphasis on suggestive language (figures of speech, for example), and its use of musical arrangement of syllables and words. Some prose, however, is so poetic and some poetry so prosaic that the distinction can become blurred. The typography of a poem is sometimes the only reason why it is classified as poetry.

The word *fiction* means something imagined or invented. In fact, all imaginative literature is fiction in this sense. *Prose fiction,* however, embraces plots ranging in length from a paragraph to thousands of pages. A *plot* involves characters in a sequence of events arranged in any order deemed suitable by the author. Within the range suggested, three terms are used: *short story, nouvelle* or *novella* (little novel), and *novel.* The distinctions among these are primarily of length and, to some extent, of complexity. The novel is generally a more flexible form than is the short story and hence is frequently subjected to considerably more experimentation than are other categories of prose fiction. The important fact is that plot generally distinguishes prose fiction from most poetry. At the same time, most of the resources of a poet are available to a writer of prose fiction.

Drama refers to a play intended for performance by actors who assume the roles of fictional people involved in some kind of narrative. Some dramas (Shakespeare's, for example) encompass both poetry and characteristics of prose fiction. In a play like *Hamlet*

or *King Lear,* the important functions of the three genres are magnificently joined. The necessity of performance, however, makes drama unique in that the creative efforts of the dramatist are shared and frequently modified by producers, directors, and actors. The fact that a dramatist must always keep in mind the instantaneous nature of his communication with an audience also has a profound impact on his act of creation. Since his audience is not likely to have the text of his play during a performance, the dramatist has to make sure that his process of communication is both clear and effective. Of course, some contemporary playwrights attempting to portray the absurdity of modern life may deliberately create confusion to convey that absurdity.

Because drama is a performed art even to the extent of background music and variations of stage lighting, the tendency is to belittle the reading of a printed text of a play because it can never re-create the full power and vibrancy of a good performance. Yet reading plays, like reading poetry and prose fiction, can be extremely informative and pleasurable and might even be preferable to witnessing poor performances. Once we are aware of the uniqueness of drama that comes from performance, we can have better insight into how to read it. When we add this insight to our knowledge of the techniques of poetry and prose fiction, we can indeed read plays profitably without feeling that we are engaging in an inferior kind of experience. In fact, careful reading of a play can be excellent preparation for seeing it.

The tendency is to study these distinct genres separately, although there is a considerable amount of overlapping among them in terms of both content and technique. To demonstrate both the overlapping and the distinctions among genres, we shall deal in this chapter and the next four chapters with five areas important to the analysis of imaginative literature: (1) perspective, (2) setting, (3) characterization, (4) style, and (5) structure.

PERSPECTIVE

Perspective raises the following questions: "Who is the controlling spokesman in a literary work?" "Who is telling the story or unfolding the details?" "Is the author maintaining distance between himself and his created spokesman, or is the author communicating directly?" To put these questions another way, "How does the author

get his story told or what techniques does he use to communicate events, ideas, attitudes, or emotions?" The study of perspective, then, is essentially an attempt to determine, analyze, and evaluate the effects of an author's choice of communicator and his means of communication. This kind of study is extremely important because perspective can encompass almost every important approach to literary analysis.

Perspective in Fiction In the study of prose fiction the problems of perspective are usually referred to as *point of view.* Since prose fiction generally has a plot, point of view is essentially the source from which the story is being unfolded. By his choice of point of view the author establishes or masks the degree of distance between himself and his own views and those of characters whose actions he delineates. Although the subject of point of view has been the source of considerable controversy in recent years,[1] it is possible to designate two general types of point of view.

In the first, the author directly tells the story and participates actively to some degree. The participation may stem from his style, which helps create tone (irony, for example); from overt analysis and judgment of characters; from manipulation and shifting to and from several characters within one story; or from an intrusion of his own attitudes in a desire to be didactic.

Within this first major category—the author's perspective—three basic approaches are possible. First is the *omniscient author,* who chooses whatever perspective he wants at any time in the plot and who intrudes directly as much as he cares to. In "Flowering Judas" (pp. 237–247) Katherine Anne Porter tells a great deal about the backgrounds of Laura and Braggioni and reveals her attitudes toward them. Her contempt for Braggioni and his exploitation of revolutionary ideals is conveyed by elaborate, often heavy irony throughout the story. In addition to telling about Laura, Porter takes the reader into Laura's subconscious—her inner life—by means of the dream.

Second, the term *limited omnisciency* is useful to describe the point of view whereby the author tells the story but focuses on a single character, or, to use a favorite word of Henry James, a "consciousness." In this approach everything the author tells filters through the chosen consciousness, and the reactions of that character make him a reflector of what happens in the story. His responses may be based on varying degrees of awareness, ranging from the

1. See, for example, Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, 1961).

most naive to the most sophisticated. As he responds to events around him, he may arrive at a meaningful discovery about himself, other people, his environment, or his moral and spiritual relationships. Within his limited omniscience, the author may still choose to speak directly to his readers—that is, to analyze and to moralize. However, because he is confined to the single consciousness the author may be more inclined toward objective exploration of the character than if he were employing full omniscience. He may also unify his materials more effectively. A good example of limited omniscience is J. F. Powers' "Look How the Fish Live" (pp. 249–261), which concentrates almost exclusively on the reactions and thoughts of the father as he confronts nature, man, and God. In Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" (pp. 225–236) the perspective is omniscient; however, during the lurid forest scene, Hawthorne concentrates largely on the reactions and delusions of Brown. Stories by James like "The Liar" and novels like *The Ambassadors* are excellent examples of limited omniscience.

The third approach in the author perspective is the most objective of all. It is called *dramatic point of view.* Here the author of prose fiction, like the dramatist, puts his characters into action, building his plot and meaning around their dialogue. His intrusions are confined solely to the description of setting and physical actions and movements and to the designation of speakers. Such intrusions can reveal the author's attitude (tone)—for example, by the adjectives he uses—but, generally speaking, in this point of view the reader notices only the characters created by the author. An excellent example of this approach is Hemingway's famous story "The Killers." In "Look How the Fish Live" Powers develops some dramatic scenes—dialogue between the father and his children, for example—which by themselves represent the dramatic point of view. However, these are encompassed in the broader perspective of Powers' concentration on the consciousness of the father.

In the second general type of point of view the author seemingly steps aside and turns over the telling of the story to a created character, the *narrator.* Even though the narrator unfolds the plot, you should not forget that the author is always behind him; however, the author cannot comment or intrude directly. In addition, logic demands that the narrator should become aware of the events of the plot naturally. If the narrator is told about events in which he has not participated, the circumstances of his acquiring the information which he reports should be believable. Thus the narrator point of view does force an author to maintain stricter control of the degree of intrusion.

Essentially there are three ways an author can employ a narrator, who usually tells the story in the first person. First, the narrator may simply be an observer reporting events; he may or may not react to the people and events which constitute the story he tells. In this case the narrator does not generally emerge as a fully realized fictional person or character. In fact, he may simply be a front or disguise for an omniscient point of view. Second, the narrator may both observe and participate. He can thus become an important character in his own right. Although he tells someone else's story, he at the same time reveals how profoundly that other person's life has affected him and his own concepts. In Edgar Allan Poe's famous story "The Fall of the House of Usher," the narrator's response to the bizarre house and its occupants makes one question his sanity, although Usher is seemingly the one who is insane. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby,* Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men,* and Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* have narrators whose values are extremely affected by the men whose stories they tell. In the third way, the narrator may tell his own story. This perspective puts the reader in close touch with the central character of the story and is thus the most intimate of the perspectives utilizing a narrator. Here the narrator generally reveals his own character, attitudes, or philosophy fully, although he may not be aware of the implications of what he is reporting. Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn tells his story so innocently and candidly that the reader is impelled to see and judge events by his standards. Yet in Franz Kafka's "The Knock at the Manor Gate" (pp. 86–87) the narrator is so perplexed and understates the horror of his experience so much that the reader has to respond in an entirely different way. (For a full discussion of point of view in Kafka's story, see chapter 7.)

In a narrated story, especially of the second and third types mentioned above, the movement and unity of the plot depend entirely on the nature of the narrator. If his mental habits are disorderly, these may be reflected in the way he tells the story. Thus what may seem chaotic to a reader may be the deliberate strategy of the author to make the structure of the plot reflect the narrator. The way in which such a story is told, therefore, reveals a great deal about the teller. On the other hand, a narrated story can be just as unified and tightly controlled as a plot created by an omniscient author intent on making everything in the story come together into an artistic unity. At the same time, none of the points of view discussed guarantees purposeful and aesthetic structure. The only guarantee is the ability of the author, for he writes the story or novel and hence is always present in varying degrees of success.

Perspective in Drama Although drama is conveyed by a plot, the problem of perspective is indeed unique for the playwright. Of course, the discussion of the dramatic point of view in regard to prose fiction is applicable to drama. Actually the dramatist has very limited ways to impose his perspective. In terms of the three genres the playwright probably has to be the most objective and has to put the most distance between himself and his created characters. Occasionally a dramatist will create a narrator whose mind and personality may have an impact on the dramatic plot and on the other characters. Good examples of this kind of perspective are Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* and Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie.* Or the playwright will create a character who is his mouthpiece. However, if this perspective is carried too far, the character will become artificial and will seem more like a speaker on a podium than a created—but true-to-life—individual. A playwright can provide guidance to directors and actors by means of stage directions, but these are not generally available to an audience watching the play.

For the most part, perspective in a play is derived from the events, the conflicts, and the characters involved in them. All of this is conveyed by the dialogue and nonverbal actions of characters. The perspective of *Hamlet* can be analyzed largely through the complexities of Hamlet's mind and the disillusionments which color his thoughts and emotions—especially in the ultimate struggle with his "mighty opposite," Claudius. In comedies some characters are deliberately satirized or they are compared to others who serve as norms of behavior. Since *comedy* (see Glossary) is prone to exaggeration and at times artificiality, the playwright can manipulate people and events a great deal. At the same time, however, his perspective is really conveyed by the characters on stage. That is, if a character like Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* is ridiculed or his hypocrisy exposed, the agents of the ridicule and exposure are also on stage setting the trap.

Although a playwright cannot really intrude as if he were an omniscient author, his commitment to an approach and his attitude toward his material do give clues to his perspective, even though the necessity of performance and the emphasis on dialogue and dramatic scenes tend to keep him out. If, for example, he wishes to mock an old father who is duped by false daughters and who arrogantly rejects his one faithful child because she is honest, the playwright might use materials similar to those with which Shakespeare shaped *King Lear,* but the resulting tone would be quite different. In other words, the opening situation in *King Lear* could easily have led to a play which

ridicules the father, either gently or severely, and which laughs at man's stupidity and foibles. This would be a kind of comedy. Or the playwright could have simplified and sharpened the conflicts in *King Lear* and created a *melodrama,* in which the characters would be superficial and situations exaggerated and unsubtle. For example, after reunion with her father amid tears of joy, Cordelia would be rescued from imprisonment and Lear would be spared to live the rest of his years in happiness. Meanwhile, the villains would be carted off to prison, so that good and evil would become black and white, free of the gray ambiguities of Shakespeare's play.

Another alternative for the dramatist would be to use similar circumstances and explore in a thorough and serious way the problem of filial ingratitude in modern society. He would not deal with a king and kingdoms; he would not depict King Lear raging and struggling against insanity during a violent storm; he would not describe the violence of the scene in which Gloucester's eyes are torn out. He would create ordinary people in situations resembling modern experience; his characters would not hurl the verbal thunderbolts in the powerful poetry which Lear utters but would express their emotions in an idiom reasonably close to what an audience would recognize as true to life. In this approach the author would probe into the problems of conflict between generations and the various responses of children to their parents. The play just described would be called *serious* or *realistic.*

Finally, the playwright might represent Lear's encroaching insanity by distorting reality. In Lear's troubled consciousness the specter of a three-legged stool would loom large and would be reflected in the dialogue and scenery, just as the adding machine dominates Elmer Rice's play of the same name. The stool would symbolize in Lear's mind the agony that came from his attempt to divide his kingdom into three parts. In such a play the impact on Lear would be stressed and represented concretely by the symbolism of the stool, by fantasy situations reflecting the distortions within Lear, and possibly by flashback scenes recording the motivation of the psychological projection of Lear. Such a play concretely depicting the inner disturbances of a character would be called *expressionistic.*

Of course, none of these hypothetical reconstructions of one of the most powerful plays in our language would be Shakespeare's *King Lear,* a *tragedy* (see Glossary). Instead they demonstrate how a dramatist's commitment to an approach establishes his point of view and tone, even though the necessities of performance keep him out of the play.

Perspective in Poetry In the study of poetry, perspective sometimes is difficult to deal with. However, when the poet consciously creates a character who speaks and acts for himself, the perspective is akin to the various possibilities in prose fiction and even drama. For example, in dramatic monologues such as Robert Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi" or T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," an analysis of perspective will concentrate on the created characters whose words constitute the poem and reveal their own views and frustrations. The analysis would be similar to the way you might deal with a narrator telling his own story. It would be unwise to equate Eliot, the poet, with Prufrock, and then try to analyze the author rather than the character he created, even though he probably intended the character to represent the malaise of the time. In poems containing dialogue, especially if it reflects dramatic conflict as in Robert Frost's "Home Burial," the perspective is that of the created characters and their differing views or attitudes. That is, Frost's poem demonstrates an incompatibility in the husband and wife because she resents his seemingly callous response to the death of their child. In the dialogue each reveals his or her thoughts and feelings which encompass past and present and suggest a bleak future for the relationship. In long narrative poems or epics, the poet can serve functions similar to those of the omniscient author in prose fiction.

The real difficulty with perspective in poetry comes in those numerous poems which seem to communicate directly from the poet to the reader without the intrusion of a narrator, monologuist, or characters in dramatic situations. *Lyric* poetry, for example, generally expresses intense personal emotions which are most often interpreted to be the feelings of the author. This assumption, however, limits the poet's range. John Keats used the term *negative capability* to describe the poet's capacity to withhold himself so that, through his creative imagination, he can assume any guise. That is, the poet, by denying his identity, can speak as God or as a beggar. If Keats' view is valid, then, a poet known to be misanthropic could write a lyric poem on the deep emotion of brotherly love. It does not follow that he is speaking for himself. He is creating a voice or persona who espouses love.

Persona can be defined as the voice chosen by an author to serve as communicator. The voice need not be the author's. In "Loveliest of Trees" Housman may be expressing his own attitude toward the brevity of life, but he makes the poem far more effective by creating a youthful persona, one who seemingly has a long time to enjoy the beauty of the cherry blossoms. Schwartz' "The Heavy Bear" may

reveal the author's own views, but the persona is broadened and universalized; it may be man reflecting on his inner conflicts. In many Elizabethan sonnets, the spokesman is not necessarily the author but a conventionalized courtly lover. On the other hand, research has revealed that sonnet sequences by Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney are extremely autobiographical and addressed to identifiable women. Yet research on Shakespeare's renowned sonnet sequence has created enormous confusion about the persons to whom the poems are supposedly addressed and about the identity of the "dark lady." One way to resolve this confusion is through analysis of personae rather than through research. Even when the pronoun *I*, which is frequent in poetry, is certainly identified with the author, as in Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," the persona may still be considerably broader than the poet. The voice in "Song of Myself" is that of a cosmic poet—at least Whitman's concept of that poet. When you understand the persona and the vastness of the concept behind it, the pronoun *I* in "Song of Myself" is no longer indicative of rank egotism but of an expansive poet seeking to embrace the seen and the unseen in our natural and spiritual universe.

The poetry of Emily Dickinson provides a good example of the difficulty of analyzing perspective, or, more specifically, persona, in lyric poetry. In many of her poems the pronoun *I* is prominent. Critics tend to identify the *I* with Emily Dickinson because they feel that her revelations in her private poetry, most of which was unpublished in her lifetime, are intensely personal. Her love poems, for example, are the source of numerous investigations to determine the specific beloved ones in her own experience. Yet Emily Dickinson was capable of exercising "negative capability" and creating personae such as the image of a boy and his attitude toward snakes in "A narrow Fellow in the Grass."

However, research has shown that the attitude expressed in a particular poem in which Dickinson uses the pronoun *I* can be identified as her own. In her famous witty and satirical description of a train as a horse,"I like to see it lap the Miles—,"she is expressing (according to Charles Anderson[2]) her response to her father's enthusiastic interest in the Amherst-Belchertown Railroad and to the exaggerated claims about the iron horse as the great instrument of progress. In this poem Dickinson's perspective is like that of an omniscient author.

A striking example of the poet communicating directly with

2. *Emily Dickinson's Poetry: Stairway of Surprise* (New York, 1960), pp. 14–16.

readers without using the pronoun *I* is Dickinson's "What Soft—Cherubic Creatures—"

> What Soft—Cherubic Creatures—
> These Gentlewomen are—
> One would as soon assault a Plush—
> Or violate a Star—
>
> Such Dimity Convictions—
> A Horror so refined
> Of freckled Human Nature—
> Of Deity—ashamed—
>
> It's such a common—Glory
> A Fisherman's—Degree—
> Redemption—Brittle Lady—
> Be so—ashamed of Thee—

The poet literally controls the portrait of the gentlewomen by a process of contradictions and reversals. Just as Porter's choice of words and images undercuts Braggioni and revolutionary idealism (in "Flowering Judas"), so Dickinson's images condemn the ladies. They are described as both plush and brittle—an ironic contradiction. Their self-righteous convictions are described as "Dimity"—a light and dainty cotton cloth. The contradictions suggest that in the guise of their femininity (plush and dimity) the seemingly angelic ladies express the worst kind of pride—self-righteousness about the defects (freckles) in human nature. Their holier-than-thou attitude is undermined by means of the personification of Redemption, who expresses shame not of "freckled Human Nature," but of the "Brittle Lady," who is guilty of a spiritual hardness. Through the image of the Fisherman, Dickinson links Christ and his apostles to Redemption and thus establishes a Christian background for her rejection of the self-righteousness of the ladies. That is, redemption is made part of basic Christian beliefs which the supposedly Christian ladies reject. The poet's manipulation of words, images, and allusions clearly establishes her as the omniscient voice speaking directly in "What Soft—Cherubic Creatures—."

In dealing with poems directly addressing the reader, you may have difficulty determining the exact nature of the persona. However, you should not automatically assume that the poet is the spokesman. You should recognize with Keats the endless range of the creative

imagination whereby a poet can assume any speaking guise. At times you can deal more effectively with perspective if you are willing to read a large portion of a poet's work or to do research on his life—not just facts, but his inner life.

CHAPTER 5 STYLE

Style pertains to an author's choice of words and their arrangement in patterns of syntax, imagery, and rhythm. These arrangements of words constitute the author's imaginative rendering of whatever thoughts, emotions, situations, or characters he chooses to create and communicate. Thus style is related to and, in fact, shapes all of the technical explorations of literature discussed in this book. For example, in regard to perspective, a first-person narrator's way of relating his or someone else's story constitutes the style of the work and at the same time reveals a great deal about him and other characters. Discussion of setting is largely based on descriptive words and images. The way a character in a story, poem, or play speaks is pertinent to analysis of characterization. Structure (see chapter 6) is frequently dependent on the author's linking of words or details throughout a literary work. The author's choices in all these areas ultimately fashion his style, which, of course, can vary from work to work, especially if the author prefers to experiment in the stylistic shaping of his material.

A close study of style in both prose and poetry involves numerous factors:

1) Diction—the author's vocabulary or choice of words. You can determine whether the author's usage is vague or concrete, vivid and vigorous or turgid and dull, denotative or connotative, conversational or formal, archaic, artificial and/or ornate (see Glossary).

2) Sentence patterns—the arrangement of words into sentences. This covers such things as the simplicity or complexity of sentences, the balance of the parts, parallelism, syntax, periodic and loose sentences.

3) Use of sense impressions, description, and figures of speech; that is, imagery.

4) Fluency—the smooth movement from one sentence and one paragraph to another, or from line to line in poetry, guiding the reader gently by means of transitions. Sometimes, of course, an author will be deliberately incoherent, especially if he is depicting the inner confusions of a character, or his transitions may be abrupt to

show quickly changing action, for example.

5) Economy or expansiveness in use of words and details. You should remember that compression is generally characteristic of poetry.

6) Tone—the author's attitude which is apparent because of his choice of words or his arrangement of details. Involved are such attitudes as the ironic, satiric, objective, pessimistic, cynical, optimistic, comic, or tragic.

7) Use of dialogue—you can determine whether the dialogue is stilted or artificial, natural, or witty, and whether it is appropriate to the characters who speak.

8) Sound or musical quality—although sound is an important part of poetry, style in prose fiction can also involve a study of sounds.

THE RICHNESS OF POETIC STYLE

To elaborate upon some of these approaches to the analysis of style, we will begin the discussion with poetry, which of all the genres probably stimulates the greatest sensitivity to words, images, and syntactical problems. You have already observed the relationships of syntax to style in "The Heavy Bear." Schwartz' poetic sentences lumber like the bear; those in Dickinson's "What Soft—Cherubic Creatures—" are tightly concentrated and at times *elliptical* (words or syntactical elements are omitted).

Although most poems are not as compressed as Dickinson's, conciseness is a general characteristic of the style of many poems. In a relatively few lines, Poe in "To Helen" (p. 154) conveys a rapturous idealization and spiritualization of beauty. Philip Booth packs into his short poem "Cold-Water Flat," a depressing sense of loneliness and alienation in an urban environment. In both poems the compression is partly conveyed by *allusions*, references to someone, some event, or something in the Bible, history, literature, *myth* (see Glossary), or any phase of our cultural heritage. By using allusions the poet invokes the details or meaning involved in the reference and adapts them to his own purposes. Poe's Helen begins as the classical figure whose beauty caused the Trojan War. She is linked to both Greek and Roman culture. The reference to Psyche fuses the Homeric myth of Helen of Troy with that of Psyche, who loved Cupid devotedly and who is a traditional symbol of the soul. The word *Holy-Land* seems to

add a Christian spirituality to Poe's own process of myth-making. The basis of "Cold-Water Flat" is the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. The success of Theseus in finding his way out of the maze is contrasted with the failure of Theseus from Dubuque to conquer the bewildering catacombs of urban life. By invoking and adapting these myths the poets communicate considerable meaning within a brief space. Similarly, Prufrock in Eliot's poem reveals a great deal about his own inadequacies when he compares himself to the biblical and literary figures of John the Baptist, Lazarus, and Hamlet.

As figures of speech, allusions evoke images from the cultural storehouse available to the poet. The term *imagery* is vital to the study of poetic style and should be used to include both images and figures of speech. An *image* is generally a sense impression created by a direct or recognizable sense appeal in words. Such an appeal should present a description so graphic or clear that the reader can relate it to his own senses or his own experience. When in Sonnet 73 (see p. 112) Shakespeare refers to "yellow leaves, or none, or few" that hang upon the boughs of the trees, any reader who has experienced late autumn can picture the scene. The sunset fading in the west and the expiring fire are also definite visual images. Although these are directly descriptive, they also in context suggest figurative meaning.

Figures of speech are images that are often intentionally indirect; they generally depend on a process of association, the deliberate linking of two elements. Among the possible kinds of figures of speech, five are worth considering in terms of poetic style: *allusion* (see above), *simile*, *personification*, *metaphor*, and *symbol*. Although the simile and personification are not especially difficult to recognize, each evokes images and broadens meaning by a process of comparison, direct or implied. A *simile* makes a direct comparison between two elements and is usually introduced by *like* or *as*. Helen's beauty, for example, is "Like those Nicean barks" which gently convey the "weary, way-worn wanderer" home. Although there is considerable disagreement about the allusion to Nicean, the comparison of Helen to a comforting journey by boat to a safe harbor underscores the effect of her beauty upon the persona. In Keats' "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" (p. 116) the last six lines, or sestet, contain two comparisons—similes—that expand the depth of feeling Keats felt on his discovery of Chapman's translation of Homer. In "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" similes effectively depict the persona's state of mind. When he describes the evening as "spread out against the sky/ Like a patient etherized upon a table," Prufrock in effect reveals his own inertia. Or when he describes streets "that follow like a tedious argument/ Of insidious intent/ To lead you to an

overwhelming question," he foreshadows the many questions in the poem that reflect his own confusion and timidity. The comparisons in these similes thus provide you with insight into the psychological state of the central figure of the poem.

Personification means giving human characteristics or shape to an inanimate object, to an emotion or instinct, to a moral quality or spiritual concept, to an event like death, or to an invisible essence like the soul. The coupling of inanimate or abstract forces or concepts with human behavior evokes images that generally would not be expected. In "What Soft—Cherubic Creatures—" the theological concept of Redemption is personified to convey the human feeling of compassion for sin in contrast with the self-righteousness of the ladies. In another poem, "Because I could not stop for Death—," Dickinson portrays Death as an urbane gentleman caller who conveys the persona in a funeral carriage toward immortality. Another excellent example can be found in Sir Walter Raleigh's "The Lie," where the soul is personified as the spokesman protecting the poet's reputation. This is the first stanza:

Go, soul, the body's guest,
  Upon a thankless arrant [errand];
Fear not to touch the best;
  The truth shall be thy warrant.
    Go, since I needs must die,
    And give the world the lie.

A *metaphor* is a direct or indirect substitution of one element for another. The substitution leads you to the process of association. A passage from *Macbeth* (Act V, scene v) demonstrates strikingly the importance of metaphor to poetic style. After Macbeth learns of his wife's death, he utters the famous passage:

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

In this passage life is directly related to at least four elements

which in effect substitute for life and graphically describe it: the "brief candle," "a walking shadow," "a poor player" with his hour upon the stage, and "a tale told by an idiot." The implications of the flickering and snuffing out of the candle refer to the brevity of man's existence. The metaphor of the "walking shadow" has a double implication because the word *shadow* looks back to the candle which casts its shadow, and the word *walking* looks forward to the strutting player. The metaphor of the player is linked to the candle by the brevity of his performance—the brevity of life. By implication the player's acting ("strutting and fretting") is man's span of life. The stage then becomes the context of living. When the metaphor shifts to equate life with a tale, the connection with the stage metaphors is clear. The play, one would infer, has a story or plot and hence is a tale. But the story or tale of man's life is told by an idiot. Although there is much sound and fury in his incoherent babbling, there is no worth-while result. Through this series of closely knit metaphors, most of which are the direct association of two elements, Shakespeare portrays Macbeth's utter disillusionment about the brevity and noisy emptiness of life.

Throughout the passage there is a vast image of time—an implied metaphor whereby all phases of time are equated with life. A close reader gets a distinct image of time—man's living within the framework of time—being narrowed down to the terminal point of death and nothingness. Starting with words like *time* and *hereafter* connoting indefiniteness and vastness, the reader comes to the more definite units of time measured in days—the tomorrows (the future), the days (the present), the yesterdays (the past), and the "day to day" (a continuing movement). From these the reader goes to the four direct metaphors referred to. Time narrows down to the brevity of the existence of the candle and to the one hour upon the stage of life. Finally it comes to the nothingness of both life and death—Macbeth's destiny.

Similes and metaphors—as well as other figures of speech—frequently fall into patterns which dominate the style or meaning of a poem. Or a single metaphor in a short poem can be extended to such a point that the entire meaning of the poet is conveyed by the process of association inherent in the figure of speech.

The original meaning of the word *symbol* is a throwing together, a violent fusion, or the act of association. Indeed a symbol is a stylistic process of fusing two elements. The symbol itself usually begins with some concrete form—a physical condition, an object (animate or inanimate), or an event. In the context of a literary work, the concrete element suggests an abstract concept or meaning. Thus through a

careful study of the tangible manifestation you are led to an understanding of the idea or meaning fused to it. That is, the symbol ultimately encompasses both the concrete and the abstract.

Although symbols vary in complexity, you have to concentrate on the means whereby you can discover the concept suggested by the concrete element. Sometimes there will be a direct equation because the author labels his symbol or because the symbol has a generally accepted meaning (olive branch equals peace). Sometimes the symbol or network of symbols depends on the use of an allusion which dominates the poem (as in "To Helen" and "Cold-Water Flat").

Frequently symbolism grows out of the context of the work. In Schwartz' poem, as we have already observed, the bear becomes symbolic in terms of specific activities and associations depicted within the poem. At times you will encounter a personal symbol created by a poet such as Blake or Yeats. For example, the word *gyre* in Yeats' poetry symbolizes the movement of cycles of civilization. In order to discover this, you would have to do some research. Still another kind of symbol requires analysis from different points of view—the symbol of sliding or multiple perspective. That is, differing perspectives may look upon the same concrete objects and project separate meanings into them; the white whale in *Moby Dick* is a symbol of this type. (See *Symbol* in the Glossary for guidelines in recognizing symbols.)

Finally, a persistent pattern of metaphors and similes (a pattern of imagery) can become symbolic by the process of cumulative effect. In these cases careful relating of the images in their contexts would be the means of analysis. In *Macbeth* there are so many images of blood and sleep or lack of sleep that they accumulate symbolic value in terms of understanding both Macbeth and his wife. In *Oedipus the King* there are so many references to seeing and blindness that an ironic pattern of imagery is created. Seeing, in effect, becomes symbolic of mental blindness, and physical blindness becomes a symbol of knowledge or awareness.

Figures of speech, it should be clear by now, are basic to poetic style. In some poetry, even if figures of speech are not important, it is possible to look at the entire poem as a metaphor. That is, the literal surface of a poem free of images can operate the same way a metaphor does and suggest the possibility of substitution, a process of association whereby figurative meaning is discovered. This concept of the poem as metaphor was espoused by Robert Frost and illustrated in such a poem as "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."

Poetic style includes more than conciseness and imagery. Most

poetry depends heavily on patterns of sound or musical qualities. The music and language of poetry are inseparable, for the poet's choice and arrangement of words create the sound of his poem. Although prose may have rhythm and a musical quality (*euphony*), it is the poet's concentration on the devices of sound which generally distinguishes his genre from that of prose. The study of the metrical structure of poems is called *prosody* (sometimes referred to as *versification*).

The study of prosody is too complex and controversial to be explained fully here. However, the traditional approach emphasizes *meter*, the arrangement of accented and unaccented syllables into various patterns. *Scansion* is the name given to the act of identifying and marking the metrical development of a poem. Although many consider scansion an uninspiring exercise, it can help you to understand the dominant beat of a poem. When combined with an investigation of meaning or purpose in a poem, scansion can also be helpful. For example, the syllables and words which have the strongest stress frequently direct your attention to key words and images which suggest basic meaning. (See *Caesura* and *Stress* in the Glossary; also *Meter* for definitions of metrical feet.)

Because of the many possibilities of metrical patterns and variations on traditional meters, you must also give attention to rhythm. *Rhythm* includes meter, yet it is larger than the metrical pattern. This occurs because the alternating pulsations or beats of a poem's music can be conditioned by oral delivery, especially by the length of pauses, the speed of delivery, the volume of sound, and the intonations of voice. In addition, the poet's grouping of words, creation of images, and syntax of his poetic sentences can influence rhythm considerably. One of the most musical of all poets writing in English, Gerard Manley Hopkins, did not approve of conventional metrical patterns based on syllables and preferred to use the term *sprung rhythm* to describe his prosody. Although very complex, sprung rhythm emphasizes accented words or syllables regardless of the number of unstressed quantities intervening. In Hopkins' poetry the strong accents, not the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, create the rhythm.

Many other poets do not follow established traditions of meter and rhyme. Some of these write *free verse*, which cannot be scanned in terms of patterns of iambs and trochees, even though the poet may employ these. Yet free verse can be very rhythmical because of unconventional patterns of stress, varying lengths of lines, relationships of images and word groupings to sound, unconventional typography used to direct proper oral reading of poems, and altera-

tion or omission of standard practices of punctuation. Thus free verse is extremely flexible and defies exact labels. Yet its very flexibility can lead to poetry that is highly inflated or loosely organized. If free verse lacks a sense of rhythm, it can become prose masquerading as poetry.

To achieve musical effects, the poet can draw upon numerous other devices. Chief among these is *rhyme*, the use of matching sounds, generally accented vowels, at the end of two lines or more of poetry. If the rhyme between two or more words is perfect, it is called *full* (or *perfect*) *rhyme. Sight* (or *eye*) *rhyme* occurs when two words look alike but do not sound alike, such as *save* and *have. Slant* (or *half*) *rhyme* takes place when an author avoids perfect rhyme and creates only partial correspondence of the matched sounds. *Internal rhyme* occurs when words within one line of poetry rhyme or when the sound of nonterminal words within two lines matches. Rhyme may fall into patterns and help establish *stanzas*, a sequence of two or more lines grouped purposefully by the poet. To determine and designate the pattern of rhyme in a poem, it is customary to use lower case letters of the alphabet starting with *a* and changing the letter for each new rhyme. Generally speaking, the repetition of sounds through rhyme contributes significantly to the musical quality of a poem and sometimes to its meaning by calling attention to important pairings of words.

On the other hand, the poet can establish values of sound and meaning by repeating important words or phrases without being concerned about rhyme. For example, *parallelism*, which involves the repetition of a pattern of syntax or of words at the beginning of lines of poetry, can be very effective. A more intricate form of parallelism is *incremental repetition:* here the poet not only repeats words, phrases, or clauses, but also adds details with each repetition. Although generally considered a characteristic of ballads, incremental repetition can add to the music and meaning of any poem in which it is used.

Four other musical devices should be mentioned. *Alliteration* is generally considered the repetition of initial vowel or consonant sounds of nearby words, although in most instances the poet will use consonants for alliteration. Frequently, alliteration is complemented by *consonance,* the repetition of internal and/or terminal consonant sounds. On the other hand, *assonance* refers to the reiteration of internal vowel sounds. *Onomatopoeia* is the use of a word or words which actually capture or imitate the sound they stand for. Some students of poetry argue that onomatopoeia is more meaningful if a group of lines or even an entire poem establishes a sound and effect commensurate to what the poet is describing in his poem. All of these

devices may occur in the same poem and hence complement one another in creating the music of poetry. (See Glossary for full definitions.)

The study of the music of poetry can become highly technical and abstract—almost like solving a complex mathematical problem. However, such study is most useful when it yields insight into the moods, emotions, or attitudes which the poet wishes to convey and the meaning he attempts to communicate. Thus you should never divorce your analysis of the sound of a poem from your investigation of its meaning. To say that two poets use blank verse is meaningless. The crucial questions are, "How do they use blank verse and for what purposes?" and "How do the two examples differ?"

One way to answer such questions and to appreciate the individual musical quality of each poem is to read poetry aloud. Although the eye can scan a line of poetry, the ear must hear its sound. If you unite the eye, the ear, and the reasoning capacity of your mind, you will be better able to engage in *oral interpretation,* the name given to the art of reading poetry aloud effectively and meaningfully.

To demonstrate the importance of sound to poetic style, we can refer again to Macbeth's famous speech. You will note how the meter is deliberately slowed down in the line "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow." This movement is based on repetition of the same word, which is twice linked by the conjunction *and;* in addition, the punctuation contributes to the slowing. The line is thus a perfect introduction of the first word in the next line—*Creeps*—and, of course, suggests Macbeth's own weariness with life and time. Key phrases are practically underlined by alliteration: "petty pace," "day to day," "dusty death," and "poor player." These alliterations pertain to the movement of time wherein man, the poor player, ends in death. The ultimate absence of value in life, however, is conveyed by the very harsh sounds of the *n*'s and *g*'s in "Signifying nothing." Thus Shakespeare has skillfully linked devices of sound and attitudes and meanings projected by Macbeth.

A poet's choice of words—referred to as *poetic diction*—has profound impact on conciseness, imagery, and sound. At times, for example, a rhyme scheme chosen by a poet will affect his diction. A poet adhering to a metrical pattern will consider words in terms of their stressed and unstressed syllables. Or the poet intent upon conciseness will allow key words to bear the heavy weight of the process of communication. In Dickinson's "What Soft—Cherubic Creatures—," the one word *freckled* is a masterful choice to communicate the idea of the fallibility of human nature which the

self-righteous ladies resent. Or when Stephen Crane refers to war as *kind*, he immediately establishes the powerful irony of his poem.

Poetic diction also has historical significance in that the time in which an author writes conditions his vocabulary. That is, no one should expect Allen Ginsberg to employ the formal and classical kind of vocabulary used by Alexander Pope. Word choices which may seem dated or artificial to a present-day reader may have been fresh and vital at the time the poet wrote. Thus occasionally you may have to do some research to deal with poetic diction of certain periods—for example, in reading Chaucer and Shakespeare. Even footnotes and glossaries may be inadequate for you to get the full flavor and importance of the language used by these and other authors.

Implicit in the discussion of poetic style is the study of tone. *Tone* may be defined as the author's or persona's attitude toward the people, situations, emotions, and/or ideas presented in the poem. Tone also includes the poet's attitude toward his audience, whenever that is detectable. Since countless attitudes are available to any author, tone can vary considerably. For example, it can be formal or informal, serious or playful, objective or highly emotional, ironic or straightforward, pessimistic or optimistic, comic or tragic—with numerous shades of variation between these opposites.

The study of tone will involve you in many aspects of analysis of style. *Mood*, for example, is related to tone and is generally considered the feeling created by the verbal structure and music of a poem, or the effect of the atmosphere established in the poem. *Irony* (see Glossary) helps establish tone in that it suggests opposite meanings or reversals of expected action or meaning. *Verbal irony* is the term used to describe the implication of meaning opposite to the direct or literal meaning of words in statements. Through the use of contrast, a poet can juxtapose opposites ironically. *Paradox*, a form of irony, is the linking of ideas or feelings which are seemingly contradictory, but which actually express a basic truth when they are put together and the implications are deduced.

In satire, a poet frequently employs irony. *Satire* designates criticism of a person, human nature, events, social and political phenomena, or institutions. It may range from gentle needling to fierce bludgeoning of the target. In a satirical poem the poet can also employ exaggeration (*hyperbole*), ridicule, sarcasm, or *reductio ad absurdum* (reduction to absurdity).

Whereas the satirist tends to exaggerate, a poet can achieve a strong effect by using understatement. *Understatement* is the deliberate underplaying of an emotion, a thought, a judgment, or the

implications of a situation. The understatement implies that the emotion is too vast to express; hence the reader detects the ironic difference between what the poet actually says and what the circumstances would really allow him to state.

Although in many poems, especially short ones, the tone remains consistent, a poet may use *tonal variation*, purposeful alteration of the dominant tone. For example, in an *elegy*, a poem lamenting the death of someone, the poet may move from a state of mourning to some kind of faith or to a triumphant recognition of the immortality of the deceased one and of man. The poem that creates comic effects for a serious purpose may also contain tonal variation.

Perspective, like point of view in fiction, is also related to tone. Keats' "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" directly communicates the poet's own experience of awe and wonder in his discovery. In "Cold-Water Flat," the poet even speaks directly to Theseus from Dubuque in the last stanza. By using *rhetorical questions* (questions with built-in answers), Booth emphasizes the helplessness of the modern Theseus' plight and in fact seems to mock him gently. In other poems reprinted in this book, the persona establishes the tone, although the poet may be in accord with it. In Sonnet 73, Shakespeare's persona creates a paradoxical tone by linking death and departure from the loved one with an intensification of love. The spokesman in "The Heavy Bear" communicates a tone of pessimism and frustration—a feeling of powerlessness against the animal urges. The persona created in Poe's "To Helen" offers a comforting tone by idealizing and spiritualizing the mythical figure. In "What Soft—Cherubic Creatures—" the tone is shaped either by the poet or a persona to produce an effective ironic and satirical undercutting of the self-righteous Christian ladies. Eliot's Prufrock offers a different kind of perspective—the monologue in which the created character reveals himself and ultimately suggests a tone of inertia and death-in-life.

POETRY AND FICTION: STYLISTIC SIMILARITIES

Much of this lengthy discussion of poetic style is applicable to both prose fiction and drama. Even some of the conventional distinctions between prose and poetry (separate lines in poetry and para-

graphs in prose) are disappearing. Poets like Karl Shapiro have written poems in paragraph form, and novelists like Thomas Wolfe have imbedded in their stories passages that are extremely poetic. Thus the distinctions because of typography are not necessarily meaningful.

It is erroneous to assume that prose fiction lacks conciseness. Novels, of course, can range freely and expansively, yet many novelists (Jane Austen, for example) impose upon themselves the same kind of discipline that a sonneteer must employ. The short story almost automatically has to be condensed. Although the language does not seem poetic in Kafka's "The Knock at the Manor Gate" (pp. 86–87), the story is extremely compressed and concise. It is fair to say, however, that because prose fiction depends largely on the development of plots and characters, it is likely to be more expansive stylistically than poetry. That is, if Katherine Anne Porter were to write a poem expressing her attitude toward Laura, the poem would probably be much more compressed than the story she wrote about her.

Although the author of prose fiction is likely not to employ imagery to the same degree a poet does, he nevertheless has access to the same stylistic devices discussed above. To demonstrate that prose writers also use figures of speech, we can cite several similes pertaining to Laura in "Flowering Judas." Laura's fear of Braggioni stifles her desire to flee "into the street where the houses lean together like conspirators under a single mottled lamp." Her real feelings suppressed, "she looks at Braggioni, frankly and clearly, like a good child who understands the rules of behavior." The two similes are appropriate, for in the conspiratorial environment of the revolution dominated by Braggioni, Laura is indeed a child who cannot exercise her will. Laura's response to the youth who courted her is also conveyed by a simile in the midst of a poetic passage:

> The moonlight spread a wash of gauzy silver over the clear spaces of the garden, and the shadows were cobalt blue. The scarlet blossoms of the Judas tree were dull purple, and the names of the colors repeated themselves automatically in her mind, while she watched not the boy, but his shadow, fallen like a dark garment across the fountain rim, trailing in the water.

The dark garment blankets the romantic colors of the scene and represents the failure of the youth's passionate courting. The futility of his love has earlier been described in the simile of his singing "like a lost soul." Ironically, the simile is also applicable to Laura, who wanders "like a lost soul" in the cynical maze of the revolution.

In a passage in which she indicates that Braggioni will never die of his professional and profitable love of humanity, Porter says, "He will live to see himself kicked out from his feeding trough by other hungry world-saviours." Although she is writing about human beings, the metaphors equate man and animals without directly associating them. With her emphasis on the verb *kicked out* and on the hunger of the other *world-saviours,* and especially with her use of the unpleasant *feeding trough,* Porter effectively establishes the bitter struggle for power among revolutionists in terms of the activities of animals, probably pigs. The metaphor reveals her ironic contempt for the professional and fraudulent revolutionist and demonstrates how a stylistic device can help establish tone.

Porter is also aware of the stylistic function of symbolism. In one passage she actually labels a symbol: "The gluttonous bulk of Braggioni has become a symbol of her [Laura's] many disillusions . . . ." More subtle is her deployment of the Judas tree, which by allusion calls forth the story of Christ's betrayer and is applicable to Braggioni and Laura, especially in her dream. The tree ultimately becomes the symbol to explain how Braggioni has betrayed the ideals of the Mexican revolution. Hawthorne also uses symbols in "Young Goodman Brown": the forest with all of its sights and sounds reflects the deterioration of Brown's mind, and the pink ribbon is the spectral evidence whereby Brown indicts his wife, Faith (a name which suggests a process of personification). In "Look How the Fish Live," the house conveys the symbolism of man's potential for self-destruction.

Tone is also important to the style of prose fiction. The irony, as has been suggested, is extremely heavy in "Flowering Judas," but in Powers' story the tone is almost matter-of-fact and amounts to understatement, which in the totality of the story really magnifies the devastating implications. The brief last paragraph of "Young Goodman Brown" has important tonal suggestions about Brown's complete alienation. Perhaps the most frightful is the indication that he fathered his children in hatred, not in love of his wife. The paragraph forcefully and directly depicts a life wasted in isolation from family and fellowmen. Hawthorne's attitude toward the result of Brown's experience in the forest could not be stated more strongly than it is in this paragraph which rapidly sums up a large portion of Brown's life.

Authors of prose fiction use many of the devices of sound available to poets. Prose is not likely to be as metrically exact as blank verse nor is it likely to rhyme, but it can certainly convey rhythm. In fact, the beat and pace of prose as it is read aloud is a means of distinguishing one style from another. That is, the euphony of the styles of the stories reprinted in this book is not likely to be homogeneous.

The following paragraph from "Flowering Judas" demonstrates how an author of prose fiction can use sound effectively:

> Braggioni loves himself with such tenderness and amplitude and eternal charity that his followers—for he is a leader of men, a skilled revolutionist, and his skin has been punctured in honorable warfare—warm themselves in the reflected glow, and say to each other: "He has a real nobility, a love of humanity raised above mere personal affections." The excess of this self-love has flowed out, inconveniently for her, over Laura, who, with so many others, owes her comfortable situation and her salary to him. When he is in a very good humor, he tells her, "I am tempted to forgive you for being a *gringa. Gringita!*" and Laura, burning, imagines herself leaning forward suddenly, and with a sound back-handed slap wiping the suety smile from his face. If he notices her eyes at these moments he gives no sign.

At the beginning of the passage you encounter open and pleasant vowel sounds in words reflecting the idealism of a revolutionist. However, these words convey Braggioni's image of himself and the views of his followers who are reduced to sycophancy. In addition, Porter further undercuts the high-sounding idealism by unpleasant *s* sounds in phrases like *excess of self-love* and *suety smile*. The *s* sounds also dominate the description of Laura's desire to slap him soundly and to wipe the "suety smile" from his face. In the context of meaning and sound, the comforting open vowels reflecting abstract ideals are basically ironic. Sound devices allow Porter to make a sharp distinction between true love of humanity and self-love.

DRAMATIC STYLE AND DIALOGUE

Prose fiction, of course, can contain dramatic scenes and hence dialogue. In this way the study of style links both prose fiction and drama. When you study poetic drama, you should apply everything you have learned about the style of poetry. It would be inconceivable to analyze *King Lear* without any awareness of its poetry. To understand the play, you would have to study the numerous patterns of imagery (as Robert Heilman has done in his book *This Great Stage*). To understand the characterization of Lear, you would have to detect and evaluate the various shifts in the poetic rhetoric of his speeches, ranging from vengeful bombast to utter cynicism to lyrical acceptance of his plight and finally to poignant self-deception.

Essentially the study of style in drama must concentrate on dialogue. The dialogue spoken by the actors represents the playwright's style created to suit the particular people and circumstances

of his play. In studying the dialogue of a play—or of any other literary work—you should consider the following:

1) The relationship of dialogue to plot—for example, how well it reveals essential background information (exposition).
2) The relationship of dialogue to the people speaking it. The dialogue may be close to natural speech or highly artificial, but, unless the author has a particular purpose in mind or is following the modes of his day, dialogue should be appropriate to the character of the speaker. Dialogue can establish distinctions among characters and reveal a great deal about traits, occupation, or social status.
3) The atmosphere created by the dialogue.
4) The pace of the dialogue—the length and complexity of individual speeches or of the interplay of conversation. The pace can be swift and coherent or extremely slow and involved. Whatever the pace, it should be suitable to the characters, actions, and purpose of the play.
5) The individual characteristics of the style of the dialogue—for example, prosaic, exalted, emotional, poetic, witty, and so on.

In some plays (Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, for example) soliloquies follow scenes of dialogue. The poetic style in these soliloquies provides considerable insight into Hamlet's mind and emotions and reveals clearly his view of the court life around him, as well as his attitudes toward himself, his mother, his father, and his adversary (Claudius). The poetry in the soliloquies can and should be related to the scenes of dialogue in which Hamlet participates.

As you have seen in chapter 2 in the discussion of perspective, a dramatist's commitment to an approach to his materials conditions the tone of his play. The dialogue which he writes to develop the approach is important to style and hence to tone. Of the many approaches and variations of tone available to a playwright, two have been commented on many times—the comic and the tragic (for full discussions, see the Glossary).

To demonstrate the relationships of the style of dramatic lines to tone, compare these passages from a tragedy—Shakespeare's *Othello*—and a comedy—Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*.

In a scene in *Othello* (Act III, scene iii), in which Iago arouses sexual jealousy in Othello and undermines his faith in the virtuous Desdemona, the Moor utters these highly rhetorical words:

> . . . O, now for ever
> Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
> Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars
> That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!

Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And O you mortal engines whose rude throats
Th' immortal Jove's dread clamors counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

All of the values which have guided his life and in which he has taken immense pride are stressed in this speech: tranquillity, content, virtue, and the glory of war. The emotional rhetoric and the heavy emphasis on abstract words in the midst of the exciting sight and sound images of war are appropriate to the growing disturbance which will destroy Othello and everything he values most—his prowess in war and his wife. That is, the passage is appropriate to the inexorable march of Othello toward tragedy.

In Sheridan's play, Lady Teazle (an appropriate name) delivers the Epilogue and expresses her disappointment in her marriage to an older man, in the failure of her designs on Charles Surface, and in her loss of the gay life of London. Part of her seeming lament is a *parody* (an imitation which for comic purpose exaggerates or distorts the original) of Othello's speech:

The transient hour of fashion too soon spent,
Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content!
Farewell the plumèd head, the cushion'd tête,
That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
That spirit-stirring drum!—card drums I mean,
Spadille—odd trick—pam—basto—king and queen!
And you, ye knockers, that with brazen throat,
The welcome visitors' approach denote;
Farewell all quality of high renown,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious town!
Farewell! your revels I partake no more,
And Lady Teazle's occupation's o'er!
All this I told our bard; he smiled, and said 'twas clear,
I ought to play deep tragedy next year.

Since Lady Teazle's values are shallow and her losses empty, her words are suitably comic. Parody and irony combine to reduce her to absurdity.

The style of a play when it is performed can be influenced by numerous factors which would not be available to a reader of the same play. Lighting and staging can contribute significantly to moods and atmosphere. Actors may interpret the same passages differently so that it is impossible to conceive of a single style in the portrayal of a character like Hamlet. For some plays lighting, staging, and acting are

deliberately *stylized* (that is, made unnatural or unreal and even artificial) in order to reflect the author's purpose or dramatic conventions which influenced his style.

The best way to deal with the style of a drama is to combine reading it with watching a performance (preferably several performances). If it is impossible to see performances, there are available recordings of dramatic presentations of numerous plays. Whether you read or watch or do both, you can still apply the knowledge about style which you have gained from this discussion.

CHAPTER 6 STRUCTURE

Structure refers to the basic organization or arrangement of events, details, words, images, or parts (chapter, stanza, or scene, for example) in a literary work. Perspective, setting, characterization, and style can have profound influence on how an author arranges or organizes his imaginative rendering of human experience. Note how perspective and setting influence the organization of two novels like Henry James' *The Ambassadors* and Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn.* In James' novel we observe a limited omnisciency which focuses on the consciousness of Lambert Strether. Two places—Woolett, Massachusetts, and Paris—have conflicting impacts on Strether's consciousness and serve as organizational focal points for the entire novel. In Twain's book the river provides a unifying setting for the episodes which Huck relates as he moves from one experience to another, either on the river or at numerous places along it. Although Huck's way of telling his story seems haphazard and unstructured, his responses to the various kinds of experience provide a central consciousness—a perspective—just as Strether's reactions to Woolett and Paris do. The difference lies in the level of sophistication of the consciousness of the two created characters. This difference, in turn, influences the degree of complexity of structure: that is, analysis of the structure of *The Ambassadors* would be a far more difficult task than examination of the organization of *Huckleberry Finn* would be.

In drama similar factors—as well as the purpose of the playwright and the kind of stage for which he is writing—influence structure. A brief comparison of two very different plays, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* can serve to show these forces at work. Because Shakespeare is interested in representing human passion against the backdrop of a titanic struggle for power, his drama ranges through many scenes, some of them remarkably brief, and encompasses vast geographical spaces (settings in Egypt and Rome). However, Ibsen's purpose is the psychological portrayal of a woman profoundly influenced by a confining environment. Thus

the play is confined to the Tesman household and is carefully (at times, almost mechanically) organized to focus with mounting intensity on Ibsen's central character. Whereas *Antony and Cleopatra,* with its rapid change of scenes and locales, seems loosely structured, the magnitude of the struggle for empire and of the love of Antony and Cleopatra could not have been presented in a structure as sparse and as "well-made" as that in *Hedda Gabler.*

Similar differences in complexity of structure can be observed in analyzing Keats' "La Belle Dame" and Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." The former is carefully and intricately organized in its choice of words and images, and, in fact, the organization of the poem leads readers in a circular pattern. That is, the poem ends at exactly the same spot where it begins—the cold hillside. Prufrock's monologue, on the other hand, seems to be disconnected in that Prufrock's mind moves rapidly from point to point and image to image in a psychological pattern of free association which reveals his frustrations. The seemingly disjointed organization fits exceedingly well the psychological purposes of the poem.

FICTIONAL PLOT STRUCTURE

Many of the elements of structure pertaining to poetry (discussed below) are equally relevant to prose fiction—for example, the repetition of key words, image patterns, symbols, or a dominant tone. Plot, however, is more important to fiction than to poetry; hence it is necessary to understand more fully some of the characteristics of the structure of plot. Plot structure, like the structure of poetry, encompasses every means which an author uses to arrange and unify his materials. Thus, the study of the structure of a plot in effect must include analysis of setting, point of view, and characterization.

Since plot is the arrangement of a sequence of events, *chronology* is a means of organization of actions. In the least complicated plot structure the author will relate events in the order in which they naturally occur without any interruption of the movement of time.

Many stories, particularly those written before the twentieth century, follow such an arrangement of time, though occasionally with minor variations. In these stories the structure can be analyzed in terms of exposition, rising action, climax, and denouement. *Exposition,* which often comes at the beginning, provides the necessary background material for a reader. It establishes the setting, creates the basic atmosphere, provides information about the pasts of characters, and delineates vital contexts for the events which will soon begin to unfold. In some stories ("Flowering Judas," for example) exposition is present throughout the narrative and not concentrated in one segment or block.

Rising action encompasses that part of the story from the first event of the plot to the climax. Here the author will indicate the development of his basic situation, suggest any important conflicts, and develop his characters. Another term for rising action is *complication,* suggesting the relationship of the sequential happenings and the meaning derived from them.

Climax is defined as the highest and most important point toward which the chain of events in the rising action has been moving. It can be the point at which issues and conflicts in the plot are fully and clearly resolved, or it can establish the final action which leads the author to explain or unravel what has happened up to the climax. A climax in a story may be a moment of disaster, of joyous discovery, or of sober recognition of a truth previously unknown to the character—just to mention a few possibilities. Sometimes a story may seem to have more than one high point in the plot development, and at times there may be disagreement among readers about the exact event or passage in the story which constitutes the climax. Actually, such disagreement is desirable, unless one simply wishes to reduce a plot to an exact graph or chart, as if it were a problem in geometry or trigonometry.

The word *denouement* is used to describe that part of the story in which an author explains or unravels what has happened up to the climax. For mystery stories the denouement is usually of especial importance, for there the clarification of all the events and evidence which have accumulated during the story occurs. Sometimes the last chapter in a novel serves to relate what ultimately happens to each of the characters, as in *The Scarlet Letter.* However, in some stories the author may deliberately omit the denouement and end his story at the climax. This procedure may provide a definite conclusion of both structure and meaning in the story. On the other hand, the author can create a climax which leaves the work open to various interpretations and speculations. In this way he can achieve effective ambiguity, as in Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," although here a brief denouement does occur after the climactic confrontation scene.

Even in the traditional kind of plot structure described above, the author can interrupt the sequential flow of events. For example, he can use the *flashback,* a deliberate movement to events or scenes of

an earlier time. In the earlier scene the sequence of events might begin at a definite point and progress chronologically to another point, sometimes back to the present from which the departure to time past occurred. When an author employs the flashback, he has to have some sensible and artistic means of transition to and from the earlier events: even if the transition is not explicitly stated, it should at least be implicit. Although a flashback may provide details of exposition, in some stories it offers insight into motives of characters and extremely important commentary on actions in the present. In this sense the flashback is a vital part of the structure of the story.

Another way to interrupt the sequence of a plot line is to include a *subplot*, a different sequence of events involving other characters. This should in some way relate to or comment upon the main plot. It is possible then to set up a pattern of alternation from main plot to subplot and in fact merge the two plots through theme or through a character who serves as a link between them. It is also possible to deal with and merge two equally important lines of plot development.

Sometimes a plot derives its structure from the psychological makeup of a central character. For example, the reason for a flashback may stem from the character's psychological need—perhaps a need to retreat to childhood. It is in a stream-of-consciousness story, however, that the psychology of a character has greatest impact on plot movement. Since the human mind does not generally operate in an inexorably straight line from exposition to climax, an author employing stream-of-consciousness will allow his plot structure to reflect the emotions, impulses, and subconscious fears which stimulate mental and emotional patterns. If, for example, a character associates the odor of a certain kind of perfume with a childhood experience, his mind will turn to that experience, which in turn may evoke a different experience, feeling, or thought. Although this example is considerably simplified, stream-of-consciousness can lead to extremely complicated patterns of structure which are far removed from the traditional forms. Stream-of-consciousness will affect not only the structure of scenes but even the structure of a sentence or paragraph, depending, of course, on the psychological insight into character which the author tries to convey. Furthermore, in a stream-of-consciousness story, an author can use a symbol or a network of symbols very effectively to represent the innermost, even hidden, feelings and thoughts of a character. The detailed working out of these symbols helps provide a unity in a kind of plot structure which at first may seem to be chaotic but which in its own way may be just as logical as a plot that moves in a strict chronological sequence. James Joyce and William Faulkner are two of the best-known authors who use stream-of-consciousness in much of their work.

It is clear then that an author of prose fiction need not use traditional chronology or sequence as the basis of his plot structure. Even in works which are not essentially psychological or developed by stream-of-consciousness, the author may deliberately disrupt and distort chronology. In other words, his structural principle is derived from some entirely different purpose, though, of course, he is likely to convey some sense of the movement of time.

No matter how he communicates to the reader an awareness of the movement of time, the author will probably use *suspense* to keep his reader's interest during the progression of events. When suspense operates effectively, the reader keeps wanting to know what will happen next or what the results of events that occurred will be. To maintain suspense, an author may make his characters so compelling that the reader grows anxious about the outcome of their experiences; he may construct his plot so that the final resolution or climax is withheld until the end of the story; he may suggest an outcome subtly and at the same time keep his readers curious and anxious; or he may provide a surprise ending contrary to the expectations of the reader, who nevertheless recognizes it as a logical culmination of preceding events. Sometimes an outcome is perfectly clear to the reader, yet the events leading to it are so fascinating that suspense is developed anyway. Some students of literature consider *dramatic irony* a form of suspense. Such irony occurs when a character operates or moves toward a catastrophe without the awareness that the reader has of his plight or of his limited knowledge. When the disaster occurs, the character may be surprised and overwhelmed by the experience, but the reader is not. The suspense for the reader in such works comes from the desire to determine when the knowledge he has about the character's destiny will be fulfilled.

Foreshadowing, the establishment in the course of a story of subtle or unsubtle hints about the outcome of events, can contribute to suspense. On the other hand, some details which foreshadow may have no effect on maintaining suspense in the development of a plot; but when the reader begins to see their relationships to other details or events which occur later, they may contribute considerably to the meaning of the story. Often only by a second reading of a story can you determine the full effect and thematic purpose of foreshadowing. Because foreshadowing has to link elements in different parts of a story, it does help establish unity of structure.

Among other technical devices available to an author for unifying

his plots, two more need to be mentioned. As in poetry, *contrast*, the juxtaposition of opposites, can be a source of structural control. An author can also employ the *motif*, a repeated word, phrase, or action, or variation of these. For example, a character's mannerisms of speech or a habitual action can become a motif. Motifs usually contribute to both content and structure because they are meaningful threads which run through a story or novel and help unify it.

Another characteristic of the structure of prose fiction, especially the short story, derives from the need of an author to limit and select the details and actions of his story because of the limitation of space inherent in the genre or in his purpose. He therefore has to choose those situations which deserve to be more fully portrayed. These are usually scenes. *Scenes* may be almost entirely dramatic—based on dialogue—or they may combine dialogue, description, authorial comment, or some summary. A story, in fact, may consist of only one scene. Other, less important actions which nevertheless contribute to both the development and meaning of the story can be summarized or *foreshortened.* Thus the author can put scenes back-to-back or alternate between scenes and foreshortened passages or combine the two. Frequently the success of the story or novel will depend on how well the author has selected and related his scenes and how well he has handled the passages which summarize action.

The study of the structure of a work of prose fiction is not an artificial and abstract exercise in analysis of technique. In fact, it is one of the best ways to capture the totality of the work—both its content and technical achievement. For example, only by seeing the connections between the small and large parts in its organization can you fully understand the meaning as intended by the author.

"Young Goodman Brown" is an excellent example of a carefully structured story in which a physical detail (the pink ribbons) is an important unifying device. The tale consists of three parts: (1) Brown's departure from home and Faith; (2) his forest journey, which is one of the longest temptation scenes that Hawthorne ever wrote; and (3) Brown's return to Faith and Salem Village. The first and third parts, relatively short and almost exactly equal, serve as a framing device for the long sequence of temptation. During the second part Brown loses trust in his forebears, in his respected contemporaries, and in his wife Faith. Ultimately, in the lurid light surrounding the baptismal font at the witch meeting his doubts envelop all humanity.

In the opening part, the ribbons, referred to three times, are identified with Faith. Brown's last glimpse of Faith emphasizes both the ribbons and a human response in her to his departure: " . . . he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons."

In the long temptation scene, in which Hawthorne is concerned chiefly with Brown's consciousness, Faith never really appears clearly as a human being. However, the ribbon, so pointedly identified with Faith in the first section, flutters down into Brown's hands as spectral assurance of her venture into witchcraft. In the baptismal scene the ribbon does not appear, but a specter of Faith is present, or so Brown believes. Since he has already accepted the falling ribbon as evidence of her guilt, it is not surprising that the appearance of her specter completes the process of conviction in his credulous mind.

In the final portion of the tale the real ribbons, as depicted in the early half of the frame, reappear. On Brown's return to Salem Village, he does not hold the ribbon in his hand, even though he was supposed to have seized it. On the contrary, the ribbons are still in Faith's cap as she welcomes him. This fact underscores the spectral nature of Brown's experience in the forest.

In this analysis of the structure, the ribbons emphasize Brown's psychological experience and at the same time provide important links in the construction of the story.

THE UNITY OF DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

The discussions on the structure of poetry and fiction in this chapter are for the most part also applicable to a study of how the events and details of a play are put together or shaped. For example, Robert Heilman has argued effectively in *This Great Stage* that the metaphorical structure of a play (the patterns of recurrent images in *King Lear*) is all-important. In some plays a symbol may serve as a focal point of unity, for example, the ominous sea in Synge's *Riders to the Sea* or Laura's glass animals in Williams' *The Glass Menagerie.* In *King Lear* the storm symbolically parallels the raging within Lear as he struggles against insanity. At the same time, some of the facets of structure in fiction are also relevant to drama. Just as in a story or novel, so in a play a character can dominate the plot. The author's concentration on the characterization of his fictional person becomes the means of shaping the development and arrangement of his plot. Conflict, which by its nature suggests contrast, is important to fiction, but even more vital to drama. Some critics maintain that drama cannot exist without conflict or a contest or vying, as in comedy. Thus

a central conflict which may in turn stir up other struggles can become the basis of the playwright's organization of his play. A drama, like a work of fiction, especially a novel, may also have a subplot which complements the main plot and at the same time provides considerable insight into it, as in *King Lear.* A setting, particularly in a short story, can give the author a means of unity. Likewise, the playwright who has to use only one setting because of the demands of performance may also keep action and the development of characters confined to that limited locale. In such stories and plays, the authors are forced to choose actions and situations which can logically stem from the settings selected.

Poets and authors of fiction use motifs, but a playwright has unusual opportunities to employ them. For example, a mannerism of speech can take on far more significance during performance than it can on a printed page. In addition, many props establish the effect of a motif or symbol, and yet they are a part of the playwright's attempt to make the illusion of a drama seem real.

Conventions—traditional practices involving both technique and content which accumulate as a literary form develops—also have impact on the structure of a play. For example, the duration of performance, usually confined to two or three hours, imposes a limitation on the number of scenes and hence upon the nature of the scenes which the playwright can represent. The conventions of the so-called unities of time, place, and action are also important to the structure of some plays. Aristotle, who many believe is the originator of these unities, actually stressed unity of action only. The others were imposed upon his *Poetics* by playwrights who conceived of structure as extremely tight and unified. In Greek plays, the convention of a chorus and chorus leader obviously affects the formal structure, as an examination of the arrangement of the parts in *Antigone* would reveal. Even the choral odes follow a set pattern.

Yet in several ways the uniqueness of drama as a performed literary art has profound impact on structure. Actually the playwright's dialogue is the basic source of his structure. The dialogue is not merely a record of human utterance, but from it action develops. As actions accrue, plot unfolds; that is, one creates another and in a structural sense relates to another and to the fictional beings whose words constitute action. Whereas in fiction the plot is told, in drama it develops before the eyes and ears of an audience with a sense of "now-ness."

The dialogue in a play serves a vital function which in much fiction is taken care of by a narrator or omniscient author: the exposition—the vital information necessary for basic understanding

of the characters and their past and present actions—must come from the dialogue. Generally the first scene in a play is used to provide exposition, but, as in prose fiction, the exposition need not be confined solely to that scene. The immediacy of drama, however, forces the playwright to reveal expository information early in his play, usually through dialogue.

Other demands of stage production also affect the structure of a play. The necessity for intermissions provides in turn the rationale for scenes and acts, which have become a convention. These are necessary not only to accommodate a live audience, but also to handle the shifts of scenery and/or changes of time. Except for stages such as the theater-in-the-round, where there is no need for a curtain, the physical manifestation of the end of a scene or act is the descent of the curtain. Although Shakespeare was not concerned with curtains and did not designate scenes and acts as we now have them in printed texts of his plays, he no doubt thought in terms of shifts of locale and time. Whereas editors have designated scenes and acts in Shakespeare's plays, the modern playwright almost automatically responds to the demands for divisions. Therefore he tends to emphasize the conclusion of a scene or act; the curtain falls on a significant speech or action which in many instances is climactic. Thus a play's structure may consist of a series of climaxes, although in a technical sense one main climax may result from the rising action and from the climactic touches at the conclusions of scenes and acts. Of course, the plot of a play may move in a straight line, but the emphasis on a climax at curtain can make the movement more jagged and more tense than that in a traditional story. The important point is that the playwright constructs his plot with regard to scene and act divisions.

In addition, the playwright has to concern himself with entrances and exits of characters. Although the author of fiction can use this approach too, he certainly need not be aware of the physical demands of getting an actor on and off stage. This need stemming from performance also affects plot structure in that it obviously regulates arrangements and groupings of characters and the actions arising from these. Thus in a play a scene or act may consist of numerous smaller scenes which are controlled by exits and entrances. This emphasis in drama on acts, scenes, and grouping of characters according to entrances and exits is termed *scenic construction.*

Scenic construction as a necessity of performance creates another characteristic which drama exhibits more than any other literary form—that is, *tonal relief,* the relaxation of the tension built during

the viewing of a play. An author of fiction may also employ tonal relief; however, a dramatist is forced to use it lest he exhaust his audience emotionally and psychologically. The words *comic relief* have been used to describe scenes in Shakespeare's tragedies, for example, which relieve the overwhelming buildup of tragic tension. However, some of the scenes so labeled—such as the Gravediggers' scene in *Hamlet*—really comment ironically on the tragic implications of the plot and thematic development and hence add a significant dimension to tone and meaning. In *King Lear* the Fool's role is technically comic, and when he speaks, all seems topsy-turvy; yet his commentaries on Lear's plight are pointed and wise. Thus the Fool's seemingly disruptive moments on stage are quite important. Occasionally, however, a dramatist will create a scene for the sake of showmanship or for deliberate tonal relief. He may thus intrude a scene which is directed at his audience but contributes nothing to the structure of his plot and in fact may mar it. In general, then, because of his audience the playwright may tend to alternate and balance scenes much more than a short-story writer or novelist would. Yet he, like other authors, usually seeks to relate clearly and meaningfully the small and large, the serious and comic, parts of his play.

A structural device unique to drama is the *play within a play*, the meaningful use of a small-scale dramatic performance as a part of the plot. A good example is the scene in *Hamlet* in which, by means of a play performed before Claudius, Hamlet reassures himself of his uncle's guilt. A story may refer to a play and even describe a performance (as in Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*), but this cannot be considered a play within a play because the story is not a play to begin with.

Another device used by playwrights to develop thematic, tonal, or structural unity is the interruption of the illusion created by the drama in which an actor steps out of character and speaks directly to the audience and in effect comments on the play. This procedure is really a double illusion because the character who drops his role is still a created personality, especially when we realize that the playwright's script asks the character to break the illusion only to create another one. This device may seem disruptive, but in a play like Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* it reinforces the exploration of the complex and ambiguous relationships between reality and illusion. In *The Skin of Our Teeth* both Sabina's frequent comments on the play (as herself and as "Miss Somerset") and the interruption to supply substitute actors represent a less complicated example and add to the comedy. In Pirandello's drama, however, the disruptive actions of the six characters become firmly and meaningfully merged with the play which they are supposedly performing.

CONVENTIONS AND DEVICES IN POETIC STRUCTURE

Although analysis of the structure of poems is sometimes confined to a study of metrical patterns and rhyme schemes, *structure* in poetry is more suitably defined as the basic organization or arrangement of all the words, details, images, and parts of a poem.

As in drama, sometimes the structure of a poem reflects the use of conventions. *Blank verse,* for example, represents a metrical convention: although it frees the poet from the strictures of rhyme and is found in styles ranging from the most conversational to the most dignified, it at the same time confines the poet to a dominant meter. The *couplet*—a pair of rhyming lines, sometimes in separate stanzas—is an example of a convention which affects the rhyme structure of a poem. The *sonnet,* a poem of fourteen lines, also demonstrates the impact of conventions on both structure and content. There are two basic forms. The *Italian* (or *Petrarchan*) *sonnet* is divided into an *octave,* an eight-line unit, and a *sestet,* a six-line unit. The octave rhymes *abba abba,* and the sestet rhymes *cde cde* or in some slight variation. In this form the poet will sometimes use the octave to present a question or to pose a problem or point of view. The sestet then answers the question or offers an alternative, resolution, or rebuttal to the attitude expressed in the octave. On the other hand, the *Elizabethan* (or *Shakespearean*) *sonnet* consists of three groups of four lines each (*quatrains*) and one couplet, with a rhyme scheme of *abab cdcd efef gg.* In this type of sonnet the couplet often serves as a resolution of the idea or emotion developed earlier in the poem and sometimes provides a surprising or paradoxical conclusion.

In the history of the English sonnet there have been many variations of the basic Petrarchan and Shakespearean forms, including George Meredith's experiment with the sixteen-line sonnet. Another significant variation has been in subject matter. The earlier sonneteers wrote predominantly love lyrics; other poets, like Milton, Wordsworth, and Keats, used the conventional forms of the sonnet but expanded the range of content to include subjects other than love, many of them personal or autobiographical.

Another example of the impact of conventions upon structure and content is to be found in the *pastoral elegy,* a lament in which the

events are placed in a rural setting. This kind of elegy has numerous conventions, such as shepherds and nymphs, a procession of mourners, and nature personified and involved in the lament. (In "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," Whitman uses some of the conventions of the pastoral elegy to mourn the death of Lincoln.) Like most elegies, the pastoral is also affected by the convention which leads the poet or persona from a state of mourning to a recognition of immortality. In accordance with this and other conventions, both the content and structure of such poems are considerably influenced.

A knowledge of poetic conventions allows you to recognize how an author develops meaning and structure by following traditions and also to determine whether an author is deviating from practices of the past. It is always necessary, that is, to put your knowledge of conventions in the context of the particular poem being studied.

Indeed, analysis of the structure of a poem always demands close attention to the internal dynamics of the individual work. For, in addition to the impact of conventions on meter, rhyme, structural parts, and content, you must explore other ways whereby a poet can arrange the materials of his poem. Some of these devices and modes have been discussed in other sections of this book without, however, specific attention to structure. These are some of the devices that must be considered in their relation to structure:

1) For narrative poems, the progression and connection of scenes and details which constitute the plot.
2) Key words or repeated sentence patterns serving as meaningful threads.
3) Dominant symbols, patterns of imagery, or allusions.
4) Stanzaic progression: the relationship of each stanza to the others.
5) Logical progression: for example, cause-and-effect, question-and-answer, or the two parts of an analogy.
6) A dominant theme or idea.
7) A dominant emotion or mood.
8) The author's tone.
9) The typography of the page: the poet's deliberate arrangement of words or even syllables and letters of his poem into separate lines.
10) The imitation of something nonpoetic such as the jazz medium imposed on poetic structure.
11) A psychological pattern, such as sometimes occurs in a dramatic monologue.

Although all of these means of shaping structure will not occur in any single poem, you must realize that some of them can operate in a complementary fashion within the same poem. Only by knowing the many possibilities that a poet has for arranging his words and lines can you fully explore the subtleties and complexities of poetic structure.

Conrad Aiken's "And If We Kiss" is a good example of how an old conventional pattern can influence the structure and meaning of a modern poem:

> And if we kiss, remember too how time
> so many fools with flattering tongue has kissed—
> so many kings and kingdoms praised in rhyme,
> whose names no more now than the rhymes are missed.
> What mountains has he not undone to dust!
> What rivers rendered into sea! What space
> not changed, obscured, and withered, with his lust,
> which, like a hot breath, blasts the beloved face!
> My love, what comfort in this dereliction,
> for us, who know the ruin which we build—
> we, the creative and created fiction,
> this fiction by ourselves both willed and killed—
> except to know, and in the knowing cherish,
> that we, the loved and loving, must both perish.

"And If We Kiss" is a sonnet in the Shakespearean tradition. Its rhyme scheme is *abab cdcd efef gg;* in turn, the rhyme pattern establishes the smaller units of structure: three quatrains and a couplet. Furthermore, the theme or content of Aiken's poem derives from Shakespeare's emphasis in some of his sonnets upon the impact or ravages of time on man and the struggles of the creative imagination to surmount the mortality of time and establish immortality.

Within the conventional pattern described above, images and related key words also weave strands of structure. The personified image of time and its power dominates Aiken's sonnet either directly or indirectly. In the first six lines the destructive force of time affects both man (fools and kings) and elements of nature (mountains and rivers). In line six the word *space* considerably broadens the area covered by time's power. Then by means of a metaphor of lust, the poet describes time as blasting "the beloved face." Conveying the force of these images is a series of related and connotative words: the names of kings are no more *missed;* the mountains are *undone* and the rivers *rendered.* In line seven Aiken piles up active verbs

in the series *changed, obscured, and withered.* All of these words connoting destruction reach a climax in the terrifying word *blasts.* Thus in the first eight lines the structure of the poem is based upon related images which are sustained by key words.

The link between the first two quatrains and the third is the reference to the "beloved face," which is immediately followed with a very personal reference by the poet to "My love." Thus the more general description of the ravaging power of time now focuses on the beloved one.

The words connoting destruction in the first eight lines are also linked to the rest of the poem—to the lovers—by the words like *dereliction, ruin, killed,* and the climactic *perish,* which fulfills the effect of the verb *blasts* in line eight. Everything referred to thus far suggests a consistent tone of the utter finality of man's span of life.

In Shakespeare's sonnet sequence this grim awareness of mortality is frequently counteracted by the recognition of the immortal power of the poet's verse. In this way Shakespeare expresses a note of triumph in the paradoxical mingling of mortality and immortality.

Although in Aiken's poem creativity is just as prominent as it is in some of Shakespeare's sonnets, the ultimate tone of "And If We Kiss" is not positive. To emphasize creativity, Aiken uses the structural device of balancing the first four lines against the last four so that the couplet in lines thirteen and fourteen is an integral part of the third quatrain in terms of syntax and meaning.

In the opening lines the imagery ironically depicts time as a creative artist. The lines also draw a sharp distinction between time and the lovers by means of the images of kissing, which juxtapose love and flattery. For time has a "flattering tongue," whose rhymes do not make fools and kings immortal.

In the last four lines the admonition "And if we kiss, remember too how time" destroys, turns more specifically and more poignantly to the poetic spokesman and his beloved one. In these lines the creativity seems to merge both life and art. The creativity is extremely paradoxical in that it couples building and ruins, as well as willing and killing. Although the lovers can will certain genuine and artistic experiences of life, the ultimate result is doom. Thus there is little difference between the rhymes of time and the fiction of the lovers' lives; there is little difference between fools and pompous kings and the lovers. The knowledge of love—a highly creative human experience—exhilarates the poet, yet this is counteracted by the knowledge that time toys with man and art and lustfully obliterates both.

PART TWO WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

✧ ✧ ✧

Alice Walker
(b. 1944)

Everyday Use

Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning epistolary novel *The Color Purple* (1982) and its 1985 film version have made her the most famous black woman writer in contemporary America, perhaps the most widely read of any American woman of color. A native of Eatonton, Georgia, Walker was the eighth child of an impoverished farm couple. She attended Spelman College in Atlanta and Sarah Lawrence College in New York on scholarships, graduating in 1965. Walker began her literary career as a poet, eventually publishing six volumes of poetry. Her short story collections and novels, including *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989) and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992), which takes as its subject the controversial practice of female circumcision among African tribes, continue to reach large audiences and have solidified her reputation as one of the major figures in contemporary literature. Walker has coined the term "womanist" to stand for the black feminist concerns of much of her fiction. "Everyday Use," a story from the early 1970s, is simultaneously a satisfying piece of realistic social commentary and a subtly satirical variation on the ancient fable of the city mouse and the country mouse.

For your grandmama

I will wait for her in the yard that Maggie and I made so clean and wavy yesterday afternoon. A yard like this is more comfortable than most people know. It is not just a yard. It is like an extended living room. When the hard clay is swept clean as a floor and the fine sand around the edges lined with tiny,

irregular grooves anyone can come and sit and look up into the elm tree and wait for the breezes that never come inside the house.

2 Maggie will be nervous until after her sister goes: she will stand hopelessly in corners homely and ashamed of the burn scars down her arms and legs, eyeing her sister with a mixture of envy and awe. She thinks her sister has held life always in the palm of one hand, that "no" is a word the world never learned to say to her.

3 You've no doubt seen those TV shows where the child who has "made it" is confronted, as a surprise, by her own mother and father, tottering in weakly from backstage. (A pleasant surprise, of course: What would they do if parent and child came on the show only to curse out and insult each other?) On TV mother and child embrace and smile into each other's faces. Sometimes the mother and father weep, the child wraps them in her arms and leans across the table to tell how she would not have made it without their help. I have seen these programs.

4 Sometimes I dream a dream in which Dee and I are suddenly brought together on a TV program of this sort. Out of a dark and soft-seated limousine I am ushered into a bright room filled with many people. There I meet a smiling, gray, sporty man like Johnny Carson who shakes my hand and tells me what a fine girl I have. Then we are on the stage and Dee is embracing me with tears in her eyes. She pins on my dress a large orchid, even though she has told me once that she thinks orchids are tacky flowers.

5 In real life I am a large, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands. In the winter I wear flannel nightgowns to bed and overalls during the day. I can kill and clean a hog as mercilessly as a man. My fat keeps me hot in zero weather. I can work outside all day, breaking ice to get water for washing. I can eat pork liver cooked over the open fire minutes after it comes steaming from the hog. One winter I knocked a bull calf straight in the brain between the eyes with a sledge hammer and had the meat hung up to chill before nightfall. But of course all this does not show on television. I am the way my daughter would want me to be: a hundred pounds lighter, my skin like an uncooked barley pancake. My hair glistens in the hot bright lights. Johnny Carson has much to do to keep up with my quick and witty tongue.

6 But that is a mistake. I know even before I wake up. Who ever knew a Johnson with a quick tongue? Who can even imagine me looking a strange white man in the eye? It seems to me I have talked to them always with one foot raised in flight, with my head turned in whichever way is farthest from them. Dee, though. She would always look anyone in the eye. Hesitation was no part of her nature.

7 "How do I look, Mama?" Maggie says, showing just enough of her thin body enveloped in pink skirt and red blouse for me to know she's there, almost hidden by the door.

8 "Come out into the yard," I say.

9 Have you ever seen a lame animal, perhaps a dog run over by some careless person rich enough to own a car, sidle up to someone who is ignorant enough to be kind to him? That is the way my Maggie walks. She has been like this, chin on chest, eyes on ground, feet in shuffle, ever since the fire that burned the other house to the ground.

10 Dee is lighter than Maggie, with nicer hair and a fuller figure. She's a woman now, though sometimes I forget. How long ago was it that the other house burned? Ten, twelve years? Sometimes I can still hear the flames and feel Maggie's arms sticking to me, her hair smoking and her dress falling off her in little black papery flakes. Her eyes seemed stretched open, blazed open by the flames reflected in them. And Dee. I see her standing off under the sweet gum tree she used to dig gum out of; a look of concentration on her face as she watched the last dingy gray board of the house fall in toward the red-hot brick chimney. Why don't you do a dance around the ashes? I'd wanted to ask her. She had hated the house that much.

11 I used to think she hated Maggie, too. But that was before we raised the money, the church and me, to send her to Augusta to school. She used to read to us without pity; forcing words, lies, other folks' habits, whole lives upon us two, sitting trapped and ignorant underneath her voice. She washed us in a river of make-believe, burned us with a lot of knowledge we didn't necessarily need to know. Pressed us to her with the serious way she read, to shove us away at just the moment, like dimwits, we seemed about to understand.

12 Dee wanted nice things. A yellow organdy dress to wear to her graduation from high school; black pumps to match a green suit she'd made from an old suit somebody gave me. She was determined to stare down any disaster in her efforts. Her eyelids would not flicker for minutes at a time. Often I fought off the temptation to shake her. At sixteen she had a style of her own: and knew what style was.

13 I never had an education myself. After second grade the school was closed down. Don't ask me why: in 1927 colored asked fewer questions than they do now. Sometimes Maggie reads to me. She stumbles along good-naturedly but can't see well. She knows she is not bright. Like good looks and money, quickness passed her by. She will marry John Thomas (who has mossy teeth in an earnest face) and then I'll be free to sit here and I guess just sing church songs to myself. Although I never was a good singer. Never could carry a tune. I was always better at a man's job. I used to love to milk till I was hoofed in the side

in '49. Cows are soothing and slow and don't bother you, unless you try to milk them the wrong way.

14 I have deliberately turned my back on the house. It is three rooms, just like the one that burned, except the roof is tin; they don't make shingle roofs any more. There are no real windows, just some holes cut in the sides, like the portholes in a ship, but not round and not square, with rawhide holding the shutters up on the outside. This house is in a pasture, too, like the other one. No doubt when Dee sees it she will want to tear it down. She wrote me once that no matter where we "choose" to live, she will manage to come see us. But she will never bring her friends. Maggie and I thought about this and Maggie asked me, "Mama, when did Dee ever *have* any friends?"

15 She had a few. Furtive boys in pink shirts hanging about on washday after school. Nervous girls who never laughed. Impressed with her they worshiped the well-turned phrase, the cute shape, the scalding humor that erupted like bubbles in lye. She read to them.

16 When she was courting Jimmy T she didn't have much time to pay to us, but turned all her faultfinding power on him. He *flew* to marry a cheap gal from a family of ignorant flashy people. She hardly had time to recompose herself.

17 When she comes I will meet—but there they are!

18 Maggie attempts to make a dash for the house, in her shuffling way, but I stay her with my hand. "Come back here," I say. And she stops and tries to dig a well in the sand with her toe.

19 It is hard to see them clearly through the strong sun. But even the first glimpse of leg out of the car tells me it is Dee. Her feet were always neat-looking, as if God himself had shaped them with a certain style. From the other side of the car comes a short, stocky man. Hair is all over his head a foot long and hanging from his chin like a kinky mule tail. I hear Maggie suck in her breath. "Uhnnnh," is what it sounds like. Like when you see the wriggling end of a snake just in front of your foot on the road. "Uhnnnh."

20 Dee next. A dress down to the ground, in this hot weather. A dress so loud it hurts my eyes. There are yellows and oranges enough to throw back the light of the sun. I feel my whole face warming from the heat waves it throws out. Earrings, too, gold and hanging down to her shoulders. Bracelets dangling and making noises when she moves her arm up to shake the folds of the dress out of her armpits. The dress is loose and flows, and as she walks closer, I like it. I hear Maggie go "Uhnnnh" again. It is her sister's hair. It stands straight up like the wool on a sheep. It is black as night and around the edges are two long pigtails that rope about like small lizards disappearing behind her ears.

21 "Wa-su-zo-Tean-o!" she says, coming on in that gliding way the dress makes her move. The short stocky fellow with the hair to his navel is all

grinning and he follows up with "Asalamalakim, my mother and sister!" He moves to hug Maggie but she falls back, right up against the back of my chair. I feel her trembling there and when I look up I see the perspiration falling off her chin.

22 "Don't get up," says Dee. Since I am stout it takes something of a push. You can see me trying to move a second or two before I make it. She turns, showing white heels through her sandals, and goes back to the car. Out she peeks next with a Polaroid. She stoops down quickly and lines up picture after picture of me sitting there in front of the house with Maggie cowering behind me. She never takes a shot without making sure the house is included. When a cow comes nibbling around the edge of the yard she snaps it and me and Maggie and the house. Then she puts the Polaroid in the back seat of the car, and comes up and kisses me on the forehead.

23 Meanwhile Asalamalakim is going through the motions with Maggie's hand. Maggie's hand is as limp as a fish, and probably as cold, despite the sweat, and she keeps trying to pull it back. It looks like Asalamalakim wants to shake hands but wants to do it fancy. Or maybe he don't know how people shake hands. Anyhow, he soon gives up on Maggie.

24 "Well," I say. "Dee."

25 "No, Mama," she says. "Not 'Dee,' Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo!"

26 "What happened to 'Dee'?" I wanted to know.

27 "She's dead," Wangero said. "I couldn't bear it any longer being named after the people who oppress me."

28 "You know as well as me you was named after your aunt Dicie," I said. Dicie is my sister. She named Dee. We called her "Big Dee" after Dee was born.

29 "But who was *she* named after?" asked Wangero.

30 "I guess after Grandma Dee," I said.

31 "And who was she named after?" asked Wangero.

32 "Her mother," I said, and saw Wangero was getting tired. "That's about as far back as I can trace it," I said. Though, in fact, I probably could have carried it back beyond the Civil War through the branches.

33 "Well," said Asalamalakim, "there you are."

34 "Uhnnnh," I heard Maggie say.

35 "There I was not," I said, "before 'Dicie' cropped up in our family, so why should I try to trace it that far back?"

36 He just stood there grinning, looking down on me like somebody inspecting a Model A car. Every once in a while he and Wangero sent eye signals over my head.

37 "How do you pronounce this name?" I asked.

38 "You don't have to call me by it if you don't want to," said Wangero.

39 "Why shouldn't I?" I asked. "If that's what you want us to call you, we'll call you."

40 "I know it might sound awkward at first," said Wangero.

41 "I'll get used to it," I said. "Ream it out again."

42 Well, soon we got the name out of the way. Asalamalakim had a name twice as long and three times as hard. After I tripped over it two or three times he told me to just to call him Hakim-a-barber. I wanted to ask him was he a barber, but I didn't really think he was, so I didn't ask.

43 "You must belong to those beef-cattle peoples down the road," I said. They said "Asalamalakim" when they met you, too, but they didn't shake hands. Always too busy: feeding the cattle, fixing the fences, putting up salt-lick shelters, throwing down hay. When the white folks poisoned some of the herd the men stayed up all night with rifles in their hands. I walked a mile and a half just to see the sight.

44 Hakim-a-barber said, "I accept some of their doctrines, but farming and raising cattle is not my style." (They didn't tell me, and I didn't ask, whether Wangero [Dee] had really gone and married him.)

45 We sat down to eat and right away he said he didn't eat collards and pork was unclean. Wangero, though, went on through the chitlins and corn bread, the greens and everything else. She talked a blue streak over the sweet potatoes. Everything delighted her. Even the fact that we still used the benches her daddy made for the table when we couldn't afford to buy chairs.

46 "Oh, Mama!" she cried. Then turned to Hakim-a-barber. "I never knew how lovely these benches are. You can feel the rump prints," she said, running her hands underneath her and along the bench. Then she gave a sigh and her hand closed over Grandma Dee's butter dish. "That's it!" she said. "I knew there was something I wanted to ask you if I could have." She jumped up from the table and went over in the corner where the churn stood, the milk in it clabber by now. She looked at the churn and looked at it.

47 "This churn top is what I need," she said. "Didn't Uncle Buddy whittle it out of a tree you all used to have?"

48 "Yes," I said.

49 "Uh huh," she said happily. "And I want the dasher, too."

50 "Uncle Buddy whittle that, too?" asked the barber.

51 Dee (Wangero) looked up at me.

52 "Aunt Dee's first husband whittled the dash," said Maggie so low you almost couldn't hear her. "His name was Henry, but they called him Stash."

53 "Maggie's brain is like an elephant's," Wangero said, laughing. "I can use the churn top as a centerpiece for the alcove table," she said, sliding a plate over the churn, "and I'll think of something artistic to do with the dasher."

54 When she finished wrapping the dasher the handle stuck out. I took it for a moment in my hands. You didn't even have to look close to see where hands pushing the dasher up and down to make butter had left a kind of sink in the wood. In fact, there were a lot of small sinks; you could see where thumbs and

fingers had sunk into the wood. It was beautiful light yellow wood, from a tree that grew in the yard where Big Dee and Stash had lived.

55 After dinner Dee (Wangero) went to the trunk at the foot of my bed and started rifling through it. Maggie hung back in the kitchen over the dishpan. Out came Wangero with two quilts. They had been pieced by Grandma Dee and then Big Dee and me had hung them on the quilt frames on the front porch and quilted them. One was in the Lone Star pattern. The other was Walk Around the Mountain. In both of them were scraps of dresses Grandma Dee had worn fifty and more years ago. Bits and pieces of Grandpa Jarrell's paisley shirts. And one teeny faded blue piece, about the piece of a penny matchbox, that was from Great Grandpa Ezra's uniform that he wore in the Civil War.

56 "Mama," Wangero said sweet as a bird. "Can I have these old quilts?"

57 I heard something fall in the kitchen, and a minute later the kitchen door slammed.

58 "Why don't you take one or two of the others?" I asked. "These old things was just done by me and Big Dee from some tops your grandma pieced before she died."

59 "No," said Wangero. "I don't want those. They are stitched around the borders by machine."

60 "That's make them last better," I said.

61 "That's not the point," said Wangero. "These are all pieces of dresses Grandma used to wear. She did all this stitching by hand. Imagine!" She held the quilts securely in her arms, stroking them.

62 "Some of the pieces, like those lavender ones, come from old clothes her mother handed down to her," I said, moving up to touch the quilts. Dee (Wangero) moved back just enough so that I couldn't reach the quilts. They already belonged to her.

63 "Imagine!" she breathed again, clutching them closely to her bosom.

64 "The truth is," I said, "I promised to give them quilts to Maggie, for when she marries John Thomas."

65 She gasped like a bee had stung her.

66 "Maggie can't appreciate these quilts!" she said. "She'd probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use."

67 "I reckon she would," I said. "God knows I been saving 'em for long enough with nobody using 'em. I hope she will!" I didn't want to bring up how I had offered Dee (Wangero) a quilt when she went away to college. Then she had told me they were old-fashioned, out of style.

68 "But they're *priceless!*" she was saying now, furiously; for she has a temper. "Maggie would put them on the bed and in five years they'd be in rags. Less than that!"

69 "She can always make some more," I said. "Maggie knows how to quilt."

70 Dee (Wangero) looked at me with hatred. "You just will not understand. The point is these quilts, *these* quilts!"

71 "Well," I said, stumped. "What would *you* do with them?"

72 "Hang them," she said. As if that was the only thing you *could* do with quilts.

73 Maggie by now was standing in the door. I could almost hear the sound her feet made as they scraped over each other.

74 "She can have them, Mama," she said, like somebody used to never winning anything, or having anything reserved for her. "I can 'member Grandma Dee without the quilts."

75 I looked at her hard. She had filled her bottom lip with checkerberry snuff and it gave her face a kind of dopey, hangdog look. It was Grandma Dee and Big Dee who taught her how to quilt herself. She stood there with her scarred hands hidden in the folds of her skirt. She looked at her sister with something like fear but she wasn't mad at her. This was Maggie's portion. This was the way she knew God to work.

76 When I looked at her like that something hit me in the top of my head and ran down to the soles of my feet. Just like when I'm in church and the spirit of God touches me and I get happy and shout. I did something I never had done before: hugged Maggie to me, then dragged her on into the room, snatched the quilts out of Miss Wangero's hands and dumped them into Maggie's lap. Maggie just sat there on my bed with her mouth open.

77 "Take one or two of the others," I said to Dee.

78 But she turned without a word and went out to Hakim-a-barber.

79 "You just don't understand," she said, as Maggie and I came out to the car.

80 "What don't I understand?" I wanted to know.

81 "Your heritage," she said. And then she turned to Maggie, kissed her, and said, "You ought to try to make something of yourself, too, Maggie. It's really a new day for us. But from the way you and Mama still live you'd never know it."

82 She put on some sunglasses that hid everything above the tip of her nose and her chin.

83 Maggie smiled; maybe at the sunglasses. But a real smile, not scared. After we watched the car dust settle I asked Maggie to bring me a dip of snuff. And then the two of us sat there just enjoying, until it was time to go in the house and go to bed.

—1973

World Trade Center Burning, Peter Morgan, September 11, 2001

"A screaming comes across the sky." This opening sentence of Thomas Pynchon's 1973 novel *Gravity's Rainbow* had for decades impressed readers with the terrors of modern warfare, in which military technologies at the far edge of human inventiveness were turned against people at home. That Pynchon's scene was London, under attack from German V-2 rockets near the end of World War II, may have allayed readers' most personal fears. Yet on September 11, 2001, another such screaming awoke not just the United States but the whole world to the reality that wholesale destruction was an ever-present possibility. After half a century of Cold War rhetoric that had made such catastrophes unthinkable, the ners were crashed into the twin towers of New York's nessed within minutes by television viewers all over s collapsed, the whole world was watching. What in ovel or a scene in a movie was now most horribly real.

Screenshot from *The Silent History*, by Eli Horowitz, Kevin Moffett, and Matthew Derby, with app design by Russell Quinn, 2012

The Silent History, the first novel built fully into a mobile app, was released in daily installments to subscribers in 2012 and was thereafter sold as a complete novel through the Apple App Store. A paper version was published in 2014. In the original app format, parts of the novel called "Field Reports" are available only in specific geographic locations tracked by a mobile device's GPS. Horowitz's vision was to create a novel you could "explore" in a physical sense, blending the imaginative world of the story with the reader's presence in real-world locations. *The Silent History* demonstrates how formal innovations in contemporary literature arise as as the novel, migrate into ever-changing electronic

quent desirability of long-term commitments, has been occasioned by the steadily growing importance of complex machinery, in virtually all kinds of operations; as this tendency increases, more and more people will turn, in bewildered inadequacy, to solutions for which the balloon may stand as a prototype, or "rough draft."

I met you under the balloon, on the occasion of your return from Norway; you asked if it was mine; I said it was. The balloon, I said, is a spontaneous autobiographical disclosure, having to do with the unease I felt at your absence, and with sexual deprivation, but now that your visit to Bergen has been terminated, it is no longer necessary or appropriate. Removal of the balloon was easy; trailer trucks carried away the depleted fabric, which is now stored in West Virginia, awaiting some other time of unhappiness, sometime, perhaps, when we are angry with one another.

1968

TONI MORRISON

b. 1931

The 1993 Nobel Laureate in literature, Toni Morrison is a novelist of great importance in her own right and has been the central figure in putting fiction by and about African American women at the forefront of the late-twentieth-century literary canon. Whereas the legacy of slavery had obscured a usable tradition, and critical stereotypes at times restricted such writers' range, Morrison's fiction serves as a model for reconstructing a culturally empowering past. She joins the great American tradition of self-invention: her example and her editorial work have figured importantly in the careers of other writers, such as Toni Cade Bambara (included in this volume) and Gayl Jones.

Morrison was born in Lorain, Ohio, where much of her fiction is set (a departure from earlier African American narratives typically located in the rural South or urban North). Having earned a B.A. from Howard University with a major in English and a minor in classics, and an M.A. from Cornell University (with a thesis on suicide in the novels of Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner), Morrison began a teaching career in 1955 that reached from Texas Southern University back to Howard, where her students included the future activist Stokeley Carmichael and the future critic Houston A. Baker Jr. At this time she married Harold Morrison, a Jamaican architect, with whom she had two children before ending their marriage in 1964. Already writing, she took a job with the publishing firm Random House and eventually settled in New York City, where she worked until 1983. During these same years she held visiting teaching appointments at institutions including Yale University and Bard College.

As a first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970) is uncommonly mature for its confident use of various narrative voices. Throughout her career Morrison has been dedicated to constructing a practical cultural identity of a race and a gender whose self-images have been obscured or denied by dominating forces, and in *The Bluest Eye* she already shows that narrative strategy is an important element in such construction. A girl's need to be loved generates the novel's action, action that involves displaced

and alienated affections (and eventually incestuous rape); the family's inability to produce a style of existence in which love can be born and thrive leads to just such a devastating fate for Morrison's protagonist. Love is also denied in *Sula* (1974), in which relationships extend in two directions: between contemporaries (Sula and her friend Nel) and with previous generations.

With *Song of Solomon* (1977) Morrison seeks a more positive redemption of her characters. Turning away from his parents' loveless marriage, Milkman Dead makes a physical and mental journey to his ancestral roots. Here he discovers a more useful legacy in communal tales about Grandmother and Great-Grandfather, each long dead but infusing the local culture with emotionally sustaining lore. Milkman uses this lore to learn how the spiritual guidance offered by his aunt Pilate eclipses the material concerns of his parents' world.

Allegory becomes an important strategy in *Tar Baby* (1981), drawing on the strong folk culture of Haiti, where two contrasting persons form a troubled relationship based on their distinct searches for and rejections of a heritage. Yet it is in a rebuilding of history, rather than allegory or myth, that Morrison achieved her great strength as a novelist in *Beloved* (1987), the winner of her first major award, the Pulitzer Prize. Set in the middle 1870s, when race relations in America were at their most crucial juncture (slavery having ended and the course of the South's Reconstruction not yet fully determined), this novel shows a mother (Sethe) being haunted and eventually destroyed by the ghost of a daughter (Beloved) whom she had killed eighteen years earlier rather than allow to be taken by a vicious slavemaster. This novel is central to Morrison's canon because it involves so many important themes and techniques, from love and guilt to history's role in clarifying the past's influence on the present, all told in an experimental style of magical realism that draws upon techniques from both oral storytelling and modernist fiction.

Paradise (1988) takes a nineteenth-century utopia and reexamines its ideals in the face of 1970s realities—a reminder of how neither past nor present can be insulated from the other. *Jazz* (1992) finds Morrison modeling her narrative voice on the progression of a jazz solo to demonstrate how improvisation with detail can change the nature of what is expressed. Present and past weave together in her characters' lives as the narrative seeks to understand the jealousies of love and the sometimes macabre manifestations of hatred. *Love* (2003), with its murder, arson, pedophilia, and several rapes punctuating a narrative in which arguments over a legacy dislodge awkward elements of the past, is a reminder of how disturbing Morrison's fiction can be. *A Mercy* (2008) explores the contradictions between American and pastoral ideals, and the realities of Native American extermination and African American slavery. Her most recent novel is *God Help the Child* (2015).

Presently serving as the prestigious Goheen Professor of the Humanities at Princeton University, Morrison has moved easily into the role of spokesperson for literary issues. Together with her Nobel lecture, her essays collected as *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992) challenge stereotypes in white critical thinking about black literature. Her short story "Recitatif," written for *Confirmation*, the 1983 anthology edited by Amiri and Amina Baraka, directly addresses the issues of individual and family, past and present, and race and its effacements that motivate the larger sense of her work. A "recitatif" is a vocal performance in which a narrative is not stated but sung. In her work Morrison's voice sings proudly of a past that in the artistic nature of its reconstruction puts all Americans in touch with a more positively usable heritage.

The following text is from *Confirmation*.

Recitatif

My mother danced all night and Roberta's was sic
to St. Bonny's. People want to put their arms aro
you were in a shelter, but it really wasn't bad. No
ded beds like Bellevue.[1] There were four to a ro
me came, there was a shortage of state kids,
assigned to 406 and could go from bed to be
wanted to, too. We changed beds every night an
we were there we never picked one out as our o

It didn't start out that way. The minute I w
introduced us, I got sick to my stomach. It was
your own bed early in the morning—it was son
strange place with a girl from a whole other
mother, she was right. Every now and then s
enough to tell me something important and or
that they never washed their hair and they
did. Smell funny, I mean. So when the Big B
Mrs. Itkin, just like nobody ever said St. Bo
"Twyla, this is Roberta. Roberta, this is Twyla
I said, "My mother won't like you putting me

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steak—even jello with fruit cocktail in it,

1. Bellevue Hospital in New York City is known for its psychiatric ward. St. Bonaventure's offers the services of a youth shelter and school.

2. T
book
(185

ually incestuous rape); the family's inability to
h love can be born and thrive leads to just such
otagonist. Love is also denied in *Sula* (1974), in
directions: between contemporaries (Sula and
enerations.
rrison seeks a more positive redemption of her
arents' loveless marriage, Milkman Dead makes
s ancestral roots. Here he discovers a more use-
ıt Grandmother and Great-Grandfather, each
ture with emotionally sustaining lore. Milkman
ual guidance offered by his aunt Pilate eclipses
s' world.
rategy in *Tar Baby* (1981), drawing on the strong
ntrasting persons form a troubled relationship
ınd rejections of a heritage. Yet it is in a rebuild-
myth, that Morrison achieved her great strength
inner of her first major award, the Pulitzer Prize.
relations in America were at their most crucial
he course of the South's Reconstruction not yet
a mother (Sethe) being haunted and eventually
r (Beloved) whom she had killed eighteen years
n by a vicious slavemaster. This novel is central
ves so many important themes and techniques,
in clarifying the past's influence on the present,
f magical realism that draws upon techniques
lernist fiction.
th-century utopia and reexamines its ideals in
der of how neither past nor present can be insu-
ds Morrison modeling her narrative voice on the
strate how improvisation with detail can change
esent and past weave together in her characters'
rstand the jealousies of love and the sometimes
Love (2003), with its murder, arson, pedophilia,
rative in which arguments over a legacy dislodge
reminder of how disturbing Morrison's fiction
contradictions between American and pastoral
American extermination and African American
d Help the Child (2015).
s Goheen Professor of the Humanities at Prince-
l easily into the role of spokesperson for literary
ture, her essays collected as *Playing in the Dark:*
tion (1992) challenge stereotypes in white criti-
Her short story "Recitatif," written for *Confirma-*
Amiri and Amina Baraka, directly addresses the
t and present, and race and its effacements that
rk. A "recitatif" is a vocal performance in which
In her work Morrison's voice sings proudly of a
its reconstruction puts all Americans in touch
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mation.

Recitatif

My mother danced all night and Roberta's was sick. That's why we were taken to St. Bonny's. People want to put their arms around you when you tell them you were in a shelter, but it really wasn't bad. No big long room with one hundred beds like Bellevue.[1] There were four to a room, and when Roberta and me came, there was a shortage of state kids, so we were the only ones assigned to 406 and could go from bed to bed if we wanted to. And we wanted to, too. We changed beds every night and for the whole four months we were there we never picked one out as our own permanent bed.

It didn't start out that way. The minute I walked in and the Big Bozo introduced us, I got sick to my stomach. It was one thing to be taken out of your own bed early in the morning—it was something else to be stuck in a strange place with a girl from a whole other race. And Mary, that's my mother, she was right. Every now and then she would stop dancing long enough to tell me something important and one of the things she said was that they never washed their hair and they smelled funny. Roberta sure did. Smell funny, I mean. So when the Big Bozo (nobody ever called her Mrs. Itkin, just like nobody ever said St. Bonaventure)—when she said, "Twyla, this is Roberta. Roberta, this is Twyla. Make each other welcome." I said, "My mother won't like you putting me in here."

"Good," said Bozo. "Maybe then she'll come and take you home."

How's that for mean? If Roberta had laughed I would have killed her, but she didn't. She just walked over to the window and stood with her back to us.

"Turn around," said the Bozo. "Don't be rude. Now Twyla. Roberta. When you hear a loud buzzer, that's the call for dinner. Come down to the first floor. Any fights and no movie." And then, just to make sure we knew what we would be missing, *"The Wizard of Oz."*[2]

Roberta must have thought I meant that my mother would be mad about my being put in the shelter. Not about rooming with her, because as soon as Bozo left she came over to me and said, "Is your mother sick too?"

"No," I said. "She just likes to dance all night."

"Oh," she nodded her head and I liked the way she understood things so fast. So for the moment it didn't matter that we looked like salt and pepper standing there and that's what the other kids called us sometimes. We were eight years old and got F's all the time. Me because I couldn't remember what I read or what the teacher said. And Roberta because she couldn't read at all and didn't even listen to the teacher. She wasn't good at anything except jacks, at which she was a killer: pow scoop pow scoop pow scoop.

We didn't like each other all that much at first, but nobody else wanted to play with us because we weren't real orphans with beautiful dead parents in the sky. We were dumped. Even the New York City Puerto Ricans and the upstate Indians ignored us. All kinds of kids were in there, black ones, white ones, even two Koreans. The food was good, though. At least I thought so. Roberta hated it and left whole pieces of things on her plate: Spam, Salisbury steak—even jello with fruit cocktail in it, and she didn't care if I ate what

1. Bellevue Hospital in New York City is known for its psychiatric ward. St. Bonaventure's offers the services of a youth shelter and school.

2. The 1939 film based on the 1900 children's book by the American writer L. Frank Baum (1856–1919).

she wouldn't. Mary's idea of supper was popcorn and a can of Yoo-Hoo.[3] Hot mashed potatoes and two weenies was like Thanksgiving for me.

It really wasn't bad, St. Bonny's. The big girls on the second floor pushed us around now and then. But that was all. They wore lipstick and eyebrow pencil and wobbled their knees while they watched TV. Fifteen, sixteen, even, some of them were. They were put-out girls, scared runaways most of them. Poor little girls who fought their uncles off but looked tough to us, and mean. God did they look mean. The staff tried to keep them separate from the younger children, but sometimes they caught us watching them in the orchard where they played radios and danced with each other. They'd light out after us and pull our hair or twist our arms. We were scared of them, Roberta and me, but neither of us wanted the other one to know it. So we got a good list of dirty names we could shout back when we ran from them through the orchard. I used to dream a lot and almost always the orchard was there. Two acres, four maybe, of these little apple trees. Hundreds of them. Empty and crooked like beggar women when I first came to St. Bonny's but fat with flowers when I left. I don't know why I dreamt about that orchard so much. Nothing really happened there. Nothing all that important, I mean. Just the big girls dancing and playing the radio. Roberta and me watching. Maggie fell down there once. The kitchen woman with legs like parentheses. And the big girls laughed at her. We should have helped her up, I know, but we were scared of those girls with lipstick and eyebrow pencil. Maggie couldn't talk. The kids said she had her tongue cut out, but I think she was just born that way: mute. She was old and sandy-colored and she worked in the kitchen. I don't know if she was nice or not. I just remember her legs like parentheses and how she rocked when she walked. She worked from early in the morning till two o'clock, and if she was late, if she had too much cleaning and didn't get out till two-fifteen or so, she'd cut through the orchard so she wouldn't miss her bus and have to wait another hour. She wore this really stupid little hat—a kid's hat with ear flaps—and she wasn't much taller than we were. A really awful little hat. Even for a mute, it was dumb—dressing like a kid and never saying anything at all.

"But what about if somebody tries to kill her?" I used to wonder about that. "Or what if she wants to cry? Can she cry?"

"Sure," Roberta said. "But just tears. No sounds come out."

"She can't scream?"

"Nope. Nothing."

"Can she hear?"

"I guess."

"Let's call her," I said. And we did.

"Dummy! Dummy!" She never turned her head.

"Bow legs! Bow legs!" Nothing. She just rocked on, the chin straps of her baby-boy hat swaying from side to side. I think we were wrong. I think she could hear and didn't let on. And it shames me even now to think there was somebody in there after all who heard us call her those names and couldn't tell on us.

We got along all right, Roberta and me. Changed beds every night, got F's in civics and communication skills and gym. The Bozo was disappointed in us, she said. Out of 130 of us state cases, 90 were under twelve. Almost all were real orphans with beautiful dead pa only ones dumped and the only ones with gym. So we got along—what with her leaving plate and being nice about not asking questic

I think it was the day before Maggie fell dow ers were coming to visit us on the same Sund twenty-eight days (Roberta twenty-eight and visit with us. Our mothers would come at t then lunch with us in the teachers' lounge. I met her sick mother it might be good for her. mother would get a big bang out of a dancir and curled each other's hair. After breakfast road from the window. Roberta's socks were night before and put them on the radiator t them on anyway because their tops were so f of us had a purple construction-paper basket Mine had a yellow crayon rabbit on it. Robe of color. Inside were cellophane grass and j eaten the two marshmallow eggs they gave u get us. Smiling she told us we looked very ni were so surprised by the smile we'd never se

"Don't you want to see your mommies?"

I stood up first and spilled the jelly beans disappeared while we scrambled to get the c back in the grass.

She escorted us downstairs to the first floo ing up to file into the chapel. A bunch of grc ers mostly. The old biddies who wanted ser company looking for children they might w grandmother. Almost never anybody young scare you in the night. Because if any of the they wouldn't be real orphans. I saw Mary ri slacks I hated and hated even more now b going to chapel? And that fur jacket with the to pull to get her hands out of them. But h and she smiled and waved like she was the li not me.

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all were real orphans with beautiful dead parents in the sky. We were the only ones dumped and the only ones with F's in three classes including gym. So we got along—what with her leaving whole pieces of things on her plate and being nice about not asking questions.

I think it was the day before Maggie fell down that we found out our mothers were coming to visit us on the same Sunday. We had been at the shelter twenty-eight days (Roberta twenty-eight and a half) and this was their first visit with us. Our mothers would come at ten o'clock in time for chapel, then lunch with us in the teachers' lounge. I thought if my dancing mother met her sick mother it might be good for her. And Roberta thought her sick mother would get a big bang out of a dancing one. We got excited about it and curled each other's hair. After breakfast we sat on the bed watching the road from the window. Roberta's socks were still wet. She washed them the night before and put them on the radiator to dry. They hadn't, but she put them on anyway because their tops were so pretty—scalloped in pink. Each of us had a purple construction-paper basket that we had made in craft class. Mine had a yellow crayon rabbit on it. Roberta's had eggs with wiggly lines of color. Inside were cellophane grass and just the jelly beans because I'd eaten the two marshmallow eggs they gave us. The Big Bozo came herself to get us. Smiling she told us we looked very nice and to come downstairs. We were so surprised by the smile we'd never seen before, neither of us moved.

"Don't you want to see your mommies?"

I stood up first and spilled the jelly beans all over the floor. Bozo's smile disappeared while we scrambled to get the candy up off the floor and put it back in the grass.

She escorted us downstairs to the first floor, where the other girls were lining up to file into the chapel. A bunch of grown-ups stood to one side. Viewers mostly. The old biddies who wanted servants and the fags who wanted company looking for children they might want to adopt. Once in a while a grandmother. Almost never anybody young or anybody whose face wouldn't scare you in the night. Because if any of the real orphans had young relatives they wouldn't be real orphans. I saw Mary right away. She had on those green slacks I hated and hated even more now because didn't she know we were going to chapel? And that fur jacket with the pocket linings so ripped she had to pull to get her hands out of them. But her face was pretty—like always, and she smiled and waved like she was the little girl looking for her mother—not me.

I walked slowly, trying not to drop the jelly beans and hoping the paper handle would hold. I had to use my last Chiclet because by the time I finished cutting everything out, all the Elmer's was gone. I am left-handed and the scissors never worked for me. It didn't matter, though; I might just as well have chewed the gum. Mary dropped to her knees and grabbed me, mashing the basket, the jelly beans, and the grass into her ratty fur jacket.

"Twyla, baby. Twyla, baby!"

I could have killed her. Already I heard the big girls in the orchard the next time saying, "Twyyyyyla, baby!" But I couldn't stay mad at Mary while she was smiling and hugging me and smelling of Lady Esther dusting powder. I wanted to stay buried in her fur all day.

To tell the truth I forgot about Roberta. Mary and I got in line for the traipse into chapel and I was feeling proud because she looked so beautiful even in those ugly green slacks that made her behind stick out. A pretty

mother on earth is better than a beautiful dead one in the sky even if she did leave you all alone to go dancing.

I felt a tap on my shoulder, turned, and saw Roberta smiling. I smiled back, but not too much lest somebody think this visit was the biggest thing that ever happened in my life. Then Roberta said, "Mother, I want you to meet my roommate, Twyla. And that's Twyla's mother."

I looked up it seemed for miles. She was big. Bigger than any man and on her chest was the biggest cross I'd ever seen. I swear it was six inches long each way. And in the crook of her arm was the biggest Bible ever made.

Mary, simple-minded as ever, grinned and tried to yank her hand out of the pocket with the raggedy lining—to shake hands, I guess. Roberta's mother looked down at me and then looked down at Mary too. She didn't say anything, just grabbed Roberta with her Bible-free hand and stepped out of line, walking quickly to the rear of it. Mary was still grinning because she's not too swift when it comes to what's really going on. Then this light bulb goes off in her head and she says "That bitch!" really loud and us almost in the chapel now. Organ music whining; the Bonny Angels singing sweetly. Everybody in the world turned around to look. And Mary would have kept it up—kept calling names if I hadn't squeezed her hand as hard as I could. That helped a little, but she still twitched and crossed and uncrossed her legs all through service. Even groaned a couple of times. Why did I think she would come there and act right? Slacks. No hat like the grandmothers and viewers, and groaning all the while. When we stood for hymns she kept her mouth shut. Wouldn't even look at the words on the page. She actually reached in her purse for a mirror to check her lipstick. All I could think of was that she really needed to be killed. The sermon lasted a year, and I knew the real orphans were looking smug again.

We were supposed to have lunch in the teachers' lounge, but Mary didn't bring anything, so we picked fur and cellophane grass off the mashed jelly beans and ate them. I could have killed her. I sneaked a look at Roberta. Her mother had brought chicken legs and ham sandwiches and oranges and a whole box of chocolate-covered grahams. Roberta drank milk from a thermos while her mother read the Bible to her.

Things are not right. The wrong food is always with the wrong people. Maybe that's why I got into waitress work later—to match up the right people with the right food. Roberta just let those chicken legs sit there, but she did bring a stack of grahams up to me later when the visit was over. I think she was sorry that her mother would not shake my mother's hand. And I liked that and I liked the fact that she didn't say a word about Mary groaning all the way through the service and not bringing any lunch.

Roberta left in May when the apple trees were heavy and white. On her last day we went to the orchard to watch the big girls smoke and dance by the radio. It didn't matter that they said, "Twyyyyyla, baby." We sat on the ground and breathed. Lady Esther. Apple blossoms. I still go soft when I smell one or the other. Roberta was going home. The big cross and the big Bible was coming to get her and she seemed sort of glad and sort of not. I thought I would die in that room of four beds without her and I knew Bozo had plans to move some other dumped kid in there with me. Roberta promised to write every day, which was really sweet of her because she couldn't read a lick so how could she write anybody. I would have drawn pictures and sent them to her but she never gave me her ad
Her wet socks with the pink scalloped top
eyes—that's all I could catch when I tried to

I was working behind the counter at the H
way just before the Kingston exit. Not a bad
Newburgh,[4] but okay once I got there. Mine
eleven to seven. Very light until a Greyho
around six-thirty. At that hour the sun was
behind the restaurant. The place looked bette
but I loved it when the sun broke in, even if i
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It was August and a bus crowd was just
around a long while: going to the john, and
sale machines, reluctant to sit down so soon.
the coffee pots and get them all situated on
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in head and facial hair. Her own hair was so
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blue halter and shorts outfit and earrings t
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they got up to leave before that. My replace
so I counted and stacked my receipts as f
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Or even if she wanted to remember me. Mayl
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I put my hands in my apron pockets and
booth facing them.

"Roberta? Roberta Fisk?"

She looked up. "Yeah?"

"Twyla."

She squinted for a second and then said

"Remember me?"

"Sure. Hey. Wow."

"It's been a while," I said, and gave a sm

"Yeah. Wow. You work here?"

"Yeah," I said. "I live in Newburgh."

"Newburgh? No kidding?" She laughed t
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4. A city beside the Hudson River, located eighty miles

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sent them to her but she never gave me her address. Little by little she faded. Her wet socks with the pink scalloped tops and her big serious-looking eyes—that's all I could catch when I tried to bring her to mind.

I was working behind the counter at the Howard Johnson's on the Thruway just before the Kingston exit. Not a bad job. Kind of a long ride from Newburgh,[4] but okay once I got there. Mine was the second night shift—eleven to seven. Very light until a Greyhound checked in for breakfast around six-thirty. At that hour the sun was all the way clear of the hills behind the restaurant. The place looked better at night—more like shelter—but I loved it when the sun broke in, even if it did show all the cracks in the vinyl and the speckled floor looked dirty no matter what the mop boy did.

It was August and a bus crowd was just unloading. They would stand around a long while: going to the john, and looking at gifts and junk-for-sale machines, reluctant to sit down so soon. Even to eat. I was trying to fill the coffee pots and get them all situated on the electric burners when I saw her. She was sitting in a booth smoking a cigarette with two guys smothered in head and facial hair. Her own hair was so big and wild I could hardly see her face. But the eyes. I would know them anywhere. She had on a powder-blue halter and shorts outfit and earrings the size of bracelets. Talk about lipstick and eyebrow pencil. She made the big girls look like nuns. I couldn't get off the counter until seven o'clock, but I kept watching the booth in case they got up to leave before that. My replacement was on time for a change, so I counted and stacked my receipts as fast as I could and signed off. I walked over to the booth, smiling and wondering if she would remember me. Or even if she wanted to remember me. Maybe she didn't want to be reminded of St. Bonny's or to have anybody know she was ever there. I know I never talked about it to anybody.

I put my hands in my apron pockets and leaned against the back of the booth facing them.

"Roberta? Roberta Fisk?"

She looked up. "Yeah?"

"Twyla."

She squinted for a second and then said, "Wow."

"Remember me?"

"Sure. Hey. Wow."

"It's been a while," I said, and gave a smile to the two hairy guys.

"Yeah. Wow. You work here?"

"Yeah," I said. "I live in Newburgh."

"Newburgh? No kidding?" She laughed then a private laugh that included the guys but only the guys, and they laughed with her. What could I do but laugh too and wonder why I was standing there with my knees showing out from under that uniform. Without looking I could see the blue and white triangle on my head, my hair shapeless in a net, my ankles thick in white oxfords. Nothing could have been less sheer than my stockings. There was this silence that came down right after I laughed. A silence it was her turn to fill up. With introductions, maybe, to her boyfriends or an invitation to sit down and have a Coke. Instead she lit a cigarette off the one she'd just

4. A city beside the Hudson River, located eighty miles north of New York City.

finished and said, "We're on our way to the Coast. He's got an appointment with Hendrix."[5] She gestured casually toward the boy next to her.

"Hendrix? Fantastic," I said. "Really fantastic. What's she doing now?"

Roberta coughed on her cigarette and the two guys rolled their eyes up at the ceiling.

"Hendrix. Jimi Hendrix, asshole. He's only the biggest—Oh, wow. Forget it."

I was dismissed without anyone saying goodbye, so I thought I would do it for her.

"How's your mother?" I asked. Her grin cracked her whole face. She swallowed. "Fine," she said. "How's yours?"

"Pretty as a picture," I said and turned away. The backs of my knees were damp. Howard Johnson's really was a dump in the sunlight.

James is as comfortable as a house slipper. He liked my cooking and I liked his big loud family. They have lived in Newburgh all of their lives and talk about it the way people do who have always known a home. His grandmother is a porch swing older than his father and when they talk about streets and avenues and buildings they call them names they no longer have. They still call the A & P[6] Rico's because it stands on property once a mom and pop store owned by Mr. Rico. And they call the new community college Town Hall because it once was. My mother-in-law puts up jelly and cucumbers and buys butter wrapped in cloth from a dairy. James and his father talk about fishing and baseball and I can see them all together on the Hudson in a raggedy skiff. Half the population of Newburgh is on welfare now, but to my husband's family it was still some upstate paradise of a time long past. A time of ice houses and vegetable wagons, coal furnaces and children weeding gardens. When our son was born my mother-in-law gave me the crib blanket that had been hers.

But the town they remembered had changed. Something quick was in the air. Magnificent old houses, so ruined they had become shelter for squatters and rent risks, were bought and renovated. Smart IBM people[7] moved out of their suburbs back into the city and put shutters up and herb gardens in their backyards. A brochure came in the mail announcing the opening of a Food Emporium. Gourmet food it said—and listed items the rich IBM crowd would want. It was located in a new mall at the edge of town and I drove out to shop there one day—just to see. It was late in June. After the tulips were gone and the Queen Elizabeth roses were open everywhere. I trailed my cart along the aisle tossing in smoked oysters and Robert's sauce and things I knew would sit in my cupboard for years. Only when I found some Klondike ice cream bars did I feel less guilty about spending James's fireman's salary so foolishly. My father-in-law ate them with the same gusto little Joseph did.

Waiting in the check-out line I heard a voice say, "Twyla!"

The classical music piped over the aisles had affected me and the woman leaning toward me was dressed to kill. Diamonds on her hand, a smart white summer dress. "I'm Mrs. Benson," I said.

5. Jimi Hendrix (1942–1970), African American musician and rock star.
6. Supermarket, part of a national chain once called the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company.
7. High-salaried employees of the International Business Machine Corporation, headquartered in the suburbs north of New York City.

"Ho. Ho. The Big Bozo," she sang.

For a split second I didn't know what she was bunch of asparagus and two cartons of fancy wat

"Roberta!"

"Right."

"For heaven's sake. Roberta."

"You look great," she said.

"So do you. Where are you? Here? In Newburg

"Yes. Over in Annandale."

I was opening my mouth to say more when th tion to her empty counter.

"Meet you outside." Roberta pointed her finge line.

I placed the groceries and kept myself from Roberta's progress. I remembered Howard Johnso to speak only to be greeted with a stingy "wow." and her huge hair was sleek now, smooth arou head. Shoes, dress, everything lovely and summ know what happened to her, how she got from J a neighborhood full of doctors and IBM executi thing is so easy for them. They think they own t

"How long," I asked her. "How long have you

"A year. I got married to a man who lives here. right? Benson, you said."

"Yeah. James Benson."

"And is he nice?"

"Oh, is he nice?"

"Well, is he?" Roberta's eyes were steady as t question and wanted an answer.

"He's wonderful, Roberta. Wonderful."

"So you're happy."

"Very."

"That's good," she said and nodded her hea happy. Any kids? I know you have kids."

"One. A boy. How about you?"

"Four."

"Four?"

She laughed. "Step kids. He's a widower."

"Oh."

"Got a minute? Let's have a coffee."

I thought about the Klondikes melting and t the way to my car and putting the bags in th buying all that stuff I didn't need. Roberta wa

"Put them in my car. It's right here."

And then I saw the dark blue limousine.

"You married a Chinaman?"

"No," she laughed. "He's the driver."

"Oh, my. If the Big Bozo could see you now

We both giggled. Really giggled. Suddenly years disappeared and all of it came rushing called gar girls—Roberta's misheard word for

"Ho. Ho. The Big Bozo," she sang.

For a split second I didn't know what she was talking about. She had a bunch of asparagus and two cartons of fancy water.

"Roberta!"

"Right."

"For heaven's sake. Roberta."

"You look great," she said.

"So do you. Where are you? Here? In Newburgh?"

"Yes. Over in Annandale."

I was opening my mouth to say more when the cashier called my attention to her empty counter.

"Meet you outside." Roberta pointed her finger and went into the express line.

I placed the groceries and kept myself from glancing around to check Roberta's progress. I remembered Howard Johnson's and looking for a chance to speak only to be greeted with a stingy "wow." But she was waiting for me and her huge hair was sleek now, smooth around a small, nicely shaped head. Shoes, dress, everything lovely and summery and rich. I was dying to know what happened to her, how she got from Jimi Hendrix to Annandale, a neighborhood full of doctors and IBM executives. Easy, I thought. Everything is so easy for them. They think they own the world.

"How long," I asked her. "How long have you been here?"

"A year. I got married to a man who lives here. And you, you're married too, right? Benson, you said."

"Yeah. James Benson."

"And is he nice?"

"Oh, is he nice?"

"Well, is he?" Roberta's eyes were steady as though she really meant the question and wanted an answer.

"He's wonderful, Roberta. Wonderful."

"So you're happy."

"Very."

"That's good," she said and nodded her head. "I always hoped you'd be happy. Any kids? I know you have kids."

"One. A boy. How about you?"

"Four."

"Four?"

She laughed. "Step kids. He's a widower."

"Oh."

"Got a minute? Let's have a coffee."

I thought about the Klondikes melting and the inconvenience of going all the way to my car and putting the bags in the trunk. Served me right for buying all that stuff I didn't need. Roberta was ahead of me.

"Put them in my car. It's right here."

And then I saw the dark blue limousine.

"You married a Chinaman?"

"No," she laughed. "He's the driver."

"Oh, my. If the Big Bozo could see you now."

We both giggled. Really giggled. Suddenly, in just a pulse beat, twenty years disappeared and all of it came rushing back. The big girls (whom we called gar girls—Roberta's misheard word for the evil stone faces described

in a civics class) there dancing in the orchard, the ploppy mashed potatoes, the double weenies, the Spam with pineapple. We went into the coffee shop holding on to one another and I tried to think why we were glad to see each other this time and not before. Once, twelve years ago, we passed like strangers. A black girl and a white girl meeting in a Howard Johnson's on the road and having nothing to say. One in a blue and white triangle waitress hat—the other on her way to see Hendrix. Now we were behaving like sisters separated for much too long. Those four short months were nothing in time. Maybe it was the thing itself. Just being there, together. Two little girls who knew what nobody else in the world knew—how not to ask questions. How to believe what had to be believed. There was politeness in that reluctance and generosity as well. Is your mother sick too? No, she dances all night. Oh—and an understanding nod.

We sat in a booth by the window and fell into recollection like veterans.

"Did you ever learn to read?"

"Watch." She picked up the menu. "Special of the day. Cream of corn soup. Entrées. Two dots and a wriggly line. Quiche. Chef salad, scallops . . ."

I was laughing and applauding when the waitress came up.

"Remember the Easter baskets?"

"And how we tried to *introduce* them?"

"Your mother with that cross like two telephone poles."

"And yours with those tight slacks."

We laughed so loudly heads turned and made the laughter harder to suppress.

"What happened to the Jimi Hendrix date?"

Roberta made a blow-out sound with her lips.

"When he died I thought about you."

"Oh, you heard about him finally?"

"Finally. Come on, I was a small-town country waitress."

"And I was a small-town country dropout. God, were we wild. I still don't know how I got out of there alive."

"But you did."

"I did. I really did. Now I'm Mrs. Kenneth Norton."

"Sounds like a mouthful."

"It is."

"Servants and all?"

Roberta held up two fingers.

"Ow! What does he do?"

"Computers and stuff. What do I know?"

"I don't remember a hell of a lot from those days, but Lord, St. Bonny's is as clear as daylight. Remember Maggie? The day she fell down and those gar girls laughed at her?"

Roberta looked up from her salad and stared at me. "Maggie didn't fall," she said.

"Yes, she did. You remember."

"No, Twyla. They knocked her down. Those girls pushed her down and tore her clothes. In the orchard."

"I don't—that's not what happened."

"Sure it is. In the orchard. Remember how scared we were?"

"Wait a minute. I don't remember any of that."

"And Bozo was fired."

"You're crazy. She was there when I left.

"I went back. You weren't there when the

"What?"

"Twice. Once for a year when I was abo
when I was fourteen. That's when I ran aw

"You ran away from St. Bonny's?"

"I had to. What do you want? Me dancin

"Are you sure about Maggie?"

"Of course I'm sure. You've blocked it,
had behavior problems, you know."

"Didn't they, though. But why can't I ren

"Believe me. It happened. And we were t

"Who did you room with when you went
know her. The Maggie thing was troubling

"Creeps. They tickled themselves in the

My ears were itching and I wanted to go
well but she couldn't just comb her hair, v
thing was hunky-dory. After the Howard
Nothing.

"Were you on dope or what that time
make my voice sound friendlier than I felt

"Maybe, a little. I never did drugs much

"I don't know; you acted sort of like you

"Oh, Twyla, you know how it was in the
how everything was."

But I didn't know. I thought it was just
and whites came into Howard Johnson's
then: students, musicians, lovers, protest
Howard Johnson's and blacks were very fi
But sitting there with nothing on my pl
wondering about the melting Klondikes
the slight. We went to her car, and with t
into my station wagon.

"We'll keep in touch this time," she sai

"Sure," I said. "Sure. Give me a call."

"I will," she said, and then just as I was s
into the window. "By the way. Your mother

I shook my head. "No. Never."

Roberta nodded.

"And yours? Did she ever get well?"

She smiled a tiny sad smile. "No. She

"Okay," I said, but I knew I wouldn't.
somehow with that business about Maggie
Would I?

Strife came to us that fall. At least that
Racial strife. The word made me think of
1,000,000,000 B.C. Flapping its wings
always bearing down on you. All day it sc

"And Bozo was fired."

"You're crazy. She was there when I left. You left before me."

"I went back. You weren't there when they fired Bozo."

"What?"

"Twice. Once for a year when I was about ten, another for two months when I was fourteen. That's when I ran away."

"You ran away from St. Bonny's?"

"I had to. What do you want? Me dancing in that orchard?"

"Are you sure about Maggie?"

"Of course I'm sure. You've blocked it, Twyla. It happened. Those girls had behavior problems, you know."

"Didn't they, though. But why can't I remember the Maggie thing?"

"Believe me. It happened. And we were there."

"Who did you room with when you went back?" I asked her as if I would know her. The Maggie thing was troubling me.

"Creeps. They tickled themselves in the night."

My ears were itching and I wanted to go home suddenly. This was all very well but she couldn't just comb her hair, wash her face and pretend everything was hunky-dory. After the Howard Johnson's snub. And no apology. Nothing.

"Were you on dope or what that time at Howard Johnson's?" I tried to make my voice sound friendlier than I felt.

"Maybe, a little. I never did drugs much. Why?"

"I don't know; you acted sort of like you didn't want to know me then."

"Oh, Twyla, you know how it was in those days: black—white. You know how everything was."

But I didn't know. I thought it was just the opposite. Busloads of blacks and whites came into Howard Johnson's together. They roamed together then: students, musicians, lovers, protesters. You got to see everything at Howard Johnson's and blacks were very friendly with whites in those days. But sitting there with nothing on my plate but two hard tomato wedges wondering about the melting Klondikes it seemed childish remembering the slight. We went to her car, and with the help of the driver, got my stuff into my station wagon.

"We'll keep in touch this time," she said.

"Sure," I said. "Sure. Give me a call."

"I will," she said, and then just as I was sliding behind the wheel, she leaned into the window. "By the way. Your mother. Did she ever stop dancing?"

I shook my head. "No. Never."

Roberta nodded.

"And yours? Did she ever get well?"

She smiled a tiny sad smile. "No. She never did. Look, call me, okay?"

"Okay," I said, but I knew I wouldn't. Roberta had messed up my past somehow with that business about Maggie. I wouldn't forget a thing like that. Would I?

Strife came to us that fall. At least that's what the paper called it. Strife. Racial strife. The word made me think of a bird—a big shrieking bird out of 1,000,000,000 B.C. Flapping its wings and cawing. Its eye with no lid always bearing down on you. All day it screeched and at night it slept on the

rooftops. It woke you in the morning and from the *Today* show to the eleven o'clock news it kept you an awful company. I couldn't figure it out from one day to the next. I knew I was supposed to feel something strong, but I didn't know what, and James wasn't any help. Joseph was on the list of kids to be transferred from the junior high school to another one at some far-out-of-the-way place and I thought it was a good thing until I heard it was a bad thing. I mean I didn't know. All the schools seemed dumps to me, and the fact that one was nicer looking didn't hold much weight. But the papers were full of it and then the kids began to get jumpy. In August, mind you. Schools weren't even open yet. I thought Joseph might be frightened to go over there, but he didn't seem scared so I forgot about it, until I found myself driving along Hudson Street out there by the school they were trying to integrate and saw a line of women marching. And who do you suppose was in line, big as life, holding a sign in front of her bigger than her mother's cross? MOTHERS HAVE RIGHTS TOO! it said.

I drove on, and then changed my mind. I circled the block, slowed down, and honked my horn.

Roberta looked over and when she saw me she waved. I didn't wave back, but I didn't move either. She handed her sign to another woman and came over to where I was parked.

"Hi."

"What are you doing?"

"Picketing. What's it look like?"

"What for?"

"What do you mean 'What for?' They want to take my kids and send them out of the neighborhood. They don't want to go."

"So what if they go to another school? My boy's being bussed too, and I don't mind. Why should you?"

"It's not about us, Twyla. Me and you. It's about our kids."

"What's more *us* than that?"

"Well, it is a free country."

"Not yet, but it will be."

"What the hell does that mean? I'm not doing anything to you."

"You really think that?"

"I know it."

"I wonder what made me think you were different."

"I wonder what made me think you were different."

"Look at them," I said. "Just look. Who do they think they are? Swarming all over the place like they own it. And now they think they can decide where my child goes to school. Look at them, Roberta. They're Bozos."

Roberta turned around and looked at the women. Almost all of them were standing still now, waiting. Some were even edging toward us. Roberta looked at me out of some refrigerator behind her eyes. "No, they're not. They're just mothers."

"And what am I? Swiss cheese?"

"I used to curl your hair."

"I hated your hands in my hair."

The women were moving. Our faces looked mean to them of course and they looked as though they could not wait to throw themselves in front of a police car, or better yet, into my car and drag me away by my ankles. Now they surrounded my car and gently, gently began and forth like a sideways yo-yo. Automatically I the old days in the orchard when they saw us wa get out of there, and if one of us fell the other pu was caught the other stayed to kick and scratc the other behind. My arm shot out of the car wi was there. Roberta was looking at me sway fron her face was still. My purse slid from the car board. The four policemen who had been drink got the message and strolled over, forcing the Quietly, firmly they spoke. "Okay, ladies. Back

Some of them went away willingly; others ha car doors and the hood. Roberta didn't move. me. I was fumbling to turn on the ignition, w the gearshift was still in drive. The seats of the swaying had thrown my grocery coupons al sprawled on the floor.

"Maybe I am different now, Twyla. But you state kid who kicked a poor old black lady ground. You kicked a black lady and you have

The coupons were everywhere and the gu under the dashboard. What was she saying? I

"She wasn't black," I said.

"Like hell she wasn't, and you kicked her. W lady who couldn't even scream."

"Liar!"

"You're the liar! Why don't you just go on h

She turned away and I skidded away from

The next morning I went into the garage ar our portable TV had come in. It wasn't nearly had a decent sign: red spray-painted letters o DO CHILDREN * * * *. I meant just to go dow somewhere so those cows on the picket line a when I got there, some ten or so others had the cows across the street. Police permits a we strutted in time on our side while Rob That first day we were all dignified, preten The second day there was name calling ar about all. People changed signs from time and neither did I. Actually my sign didn't "And so do children what?" one of the wo rights, I said, as though it was obvious.

Roberta didn't acknowledge my presence maybe she didn't know I was there. I bega tling people one minute and lagging behin reach the end of our respective lines at th moment in our turn when we would face whether she saw me and knew my sign was

8. A diet soda.

they surrounded my car and gently, gently began to rock it. I swayed back and forth like a sideways yo-yo. Automatically I reached for Roberta, like the old days in the orchard when they saw us watching them and we had to get out of there, and if one of us fell the other pulled her up and if one of us was caught the other stayed to kick and scratch, and neither would leave the other behind. My arm shot out of the car window but no receiving hand was there. Roberta was looking at me sway from side to side in the car and her face was still. My purse slid from the car seat down under the dashboard. The four policemen who had been drinking Tab[8] in their car finally got the message and strolled over, forcing their way through the women. Quietly, firmly they spoke. "Okay, ladies. Back in line or off the streets."

Some of them went away willingly; others had to be urged away from the car doors and the hood. Roberta didn't move. She was looking steadily at me. I was fumbling to turn on the ignition, which wouldn't catch because the gearshift was still in drive. The seats of the car were a mess because the swaying had thrown my grocery coupons all over it and my purse was sprawled on the floor.

"Maybe I am different now, Twyla. But you're not. You're the same little state kid who kicked a poor old black lady when she was down on the ground. You kicked a black lady and you have the nerve to call me a bigot."

The coupons were everywhere and the guts of my purse were bunched under the dashboard. What was she saying? Black? Maggie wasn't black.

"She wasn't black," I said.

"Like hell she wasn't, and you kicked her. We both did. You kicked a black lady who couldn't even scream."

"Liar!"

"You're the liar! Why don't you just go on home and leave us alone, huh?"

She turned away and I skidded away from the curb.

The next morning I went into the garage and cut the side out of the carton our portable TV had come in. It wasn't nearly big enough, but after a while I had a decent sign: red spray-painted letters on a white background—AND SO DO CHILDREN * * * *. I meant just to go down to the school and tack it up somewhere so those cows on the picket line across the street could see it, but when I got there, some ten or so others had already assembled—protesting the cows across the street. Police permits and everything. I got in line and we strutted in time on our side while Roberta's group strutted on theirs. That first day we were all dignified, pretending the other side didn't exist. The second day there was name calling and finger gestures. But that was about all. People changed signs from time to time, but Roberta never did and neither did I. Actually my sign didn't make sense without Roberta's. "And so do children what?" one of the women on my side asked me. Have rights, I said, as though it was obvious.

Roberta didn't acknowledge my presence in any way and I got to thinking maybe she didn't know I was there. I began to pace myself in the line, jostling people one minute and lagging behind the next, so Roberta and I could reach the end of our respective lines at the same time and there would be a moment in our turn when we would face each other. Still, I couldn't tell whether she saw me and knew my sign was for her. The next day I went early

8. A diet soda.

before we were scheduled to assemble. I waited until she got there before I exposed my new creation. As soon as she hoisted her MOTHERS HAVE RIGHTS TOO I began to wave my new one, which said, HOW WOULD YOU KNOW? I know she saw that one, but I had gotten addicted now. My signs got crazier each day, and the women on my side decided that I was a kook. They couldn't make heads or tails out of my brilliant screaming posters.

I brought a painted sign in queenly red with huge black letters that said, IS YOUR MOTHER WELL? Roberta took her lunch break and didn't come back for the rest of the day or any day after. Two days later I stopped going too and couldn't have been missed because nobody understood my signs anyway.

It was a nasty six weeks. Classes were suspended and Joseph didn't go to anybody's school until October. The children—everybody's children—soon got bored with that extended vacation they thought was going to be so great. They looked at TV until their eyes flattened. I spent a couple of mornings tutoring my son, as the other mothers said we should. Twice I opened a text from last year that he had never turned in. Twice he yawned in my face. Other mothers organized living room sessions so the kids would keep up. None of the kids could concentrate so they drifted back to *The Price Is Right* and *The Brady Bunch.*[9] When the school finally opened there were fights once or twice and some sirens roared through the streets every once in a while. There were a lot of photographers from Albany. And just when ABC was about to send up a news crew, the kids settled down like nothing in the world had happened. Joseph hung my HOW WOULD YOU KNOW? sign in his bedroom. I don't know what became of AND SO DO CHILDREN * * * *. I think my father-in-law cleaned some fish on it. He was always puttering around in our garage. Each of his five children lived in Newburgh and he acted as though he had five extra homes.

I couldn't help looking for Roberta when Joseph graduated from high school, but I didn't see her. It didn't trouble me much what she had said to me in the car. I mean the kicking part. I know I didn't do that, I couldn't do that. But I was puzzled by her telling me Maggie was black. When I thought about it I actually couldn't be certain. She wasn't pitch-black, I knew, or I would have remembered that. What I remember was the kiddie hat, and the semicircle legs. I tried to reassure myself about the race thing for a long time until it dawned on me that the truth was already there, and Roberta knew it. I didn't kick her; I didn't join in with the gar girls and kick that lady, but I sure did want to. We watched and never tried to help her and never called for help. Maggie was my dancing mother. Deaf, I thought, and dumb. Nobody inside. Nobody who would hear you if you cried in the night. Nobody who could tell you anything important that you could use. Rocking, dancing, swaying as she walked. And when the gar girls pushed her down, and started roughhousing, I knew she wouldn't scream, couldn't—just like me—and I was glad about that.

We decided not to have a tree, because Christmas would be at my mother-in-law's house, so why have a tree at both places? Joseph was at SUNY New Paltz[1] and we had to economize, we said. But at the last minute, I changed

9. Popular television programs of the 1970s; respectively, a game show and a situation comedy.

1. A campus in the State University of New York system, located 70 miles north of New York City.

my mind. Nothing could be that bad. So I rus
a tree, something small but wide. By the time
ing and very late. I dawdled like it was the mo
world and the tree man was fed up with me. F
tied onto the trunk of the car. I drove away sl
were not out yet and the streets could be m
snowfall. Downtown the streets were wide a
cluster of people coming out of the Newburgh
that wasn't built out of cardboard and Plexigla
huddled in the snow were dressed in tails and
things glittered from underneath their coats
them. Tired, tired, tired. On the next corner
and loops of paper bells in the window. I stop
for a cup of coffee and twenty minutes of p
tried to finish everything before Christmas E

"Twyla?"

There she was. In a silvery evening gown
another woman were with her, the man fum
cigarette machine. The woman was hummir
with her fingernails. They all looked a little h

"Well. It's you."

"How are you?"

I shrugged. "Pretty good. Frazzled. Christ

"Regular?" called the woman from the cou

"Fine," Roberta called back and then, "W

She slipped into the booth beside me.
Twyla. I made up my mind if I ever saw you

"I'd just as soon not hear anything, R
anyway."

"No," she said. "Not about that."

"Don't be long," said the woman. She car
man peeled his cigarette pack as they left.

"It's about St. Bonny's and Maggie."

"Oh, please."

"Listen to me. I really did think she was
really thought so. But now I can't be sure
old. And because she couldn't talk—well
crazy. She'd been brought up in an institut
I thought I would be too. And you were rig
gar girls. Only them. But, well, I wanted to.
I said we did it, too. You and me, but that
to carry that around. It was just that I w
wanting to is doing it."

Her eyes were watery from the drinks sl
way with me. One glass of wine and I star

"We were kids, Roberta."

"Yeah. Yeah. I know, just kids."

"Eight."

"Eight."

"And lonely."

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as she hoisted her MOTHERS HAVE RIGHTS
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1. A campus in the State University of New York system, located 70 miles north of New York City.

my mind. Nothing could be that bad. So I rushed around town looking for a tree, something small but wide. By the time I found a place, it was snowing and very late. I dawdled like it was the most important purchase in the world and the tree man was fed up with me. Finally I chose one and had it tied onto the trunk of the car. I drove away slowly because the sand trucks were not out yet and the streets could be murder at the beginning of a snowfall. Downtown the streets were wide and rather empty except for a cluster of people coming out of the Newburgh Hotel. The one hotel in town that wasn't built out of cardboard and Plexiglas. A party, probably. The men huddled in the snow were dressed in tails and the women had on furs. Shiny things glittered from underneath their coats. It made me tired to look at them. Tired, tired, tired. On the next corner was a small diner with loops and loops of paper bells in the window. I stopped the car and went in. Just for a cup of coffee and twenty minutes of peace before I went home and tried to finish everything before Christmas Eve.

"Twyla?"

There she was. In a silvery evening gown and dark fur coat. A man and another woman were with her, the man fumbling for change to put in the cigarette machine. The woman was humming and tapping on the counter with her fingernails. They all looked a little bit drunk.

"Well. It's you."

"How are you?"

I shrugged. "Pretty good. Frazzled. Christmas and all."

"Regular?" called the woman from the counter.

"Fine," Roberta called back and then, "Wait for me in the car."

She slipped into the booth beside me. "I have to tell you something, Twyla. I made up my mind if I ever saw you again, I'd tell you."

"I'd just as soon not hear anything, Roberta. It doesn't matter now, anyway."

"No," she said. "Not about that."

"Don't be long," said the woman. She carried two regulars to go and the man peeled his cigarette pack as they left.

"It's about St. Bonny's and Maggie."

"Oh, please."

"Listen to me. I really did think she was black. I didn't make that up. I really thought so. But now I can't be sure. I just remember her as old, so old. And because she couldn't talk—well, you know, I thought she was crazy. She'd been brought up in an institution like my mother was and like I thought I would be too. And you were right. We didn't kick her. It was the gar girls. Only them. But, well, I wanted to. I really wanted them to hurt her. I said we did it, too. You and me, but that's not true. And I don't want you to carry that around. It was just that I wanted to do it so bad that day—wanting to is doing it."

Her eyes were watery from the drinks she'd had, I guess. I know it's that way with me. One glass of wine and I start bawling over the littlest thing.

"We were kids, Roberta."

"Yeah. Yeah. I know, just kids."

"Eight."

"Eight."

"And lonely."

"Scared, too."

She wiped her cheeks with the heel of her hand and smiled. "Well, that's all I wanted to say."

I nodded and couldn't think of any way to fill the silence that went from the diner past the paper bells on out into the snow. It was heavy now. I thought I'd better wait for the sand trucks before starting home.

"Thanks, Roberta."

"Sure."

"Did I tell you? My mother, she never did stop dancing."

"Yes. You told me. And mine, she never got well." Roberta lifted her hands from the tabletop and covered her face with her palms. When she took them away she really was crying. "Oh shit, Twyla. Shit, shit, shit. What the hell happened to Maggie?"

1983

SYLVIA PLATH
1932–1963

n an introduction to Sylvia Plath's *Ariel* (1965), published two years after her suicide in London, Robert Lowell wrote: "In these poems . . . Sylvia Plath becomes herself, becomes something imaginary, newly, wildly, and subtly created— . . . one of those super-real, hypnotic great classical heroines." Lowell had first met Plath in 1958, during her regular visits to his poetry seminar at Boston University, where he remembered her "air of maddening docility." Later, writing his introduction, he recognized her astonishing creation of a poetic self. The poems of *Ariel* were written at white heat, two or three a day, in the last months of Plath's life, but there is nothing hurried in their language or structure. When they are taken together with the poems posthumously published in *Crossing the Water* (1971) and *Winter Trees* (1972), a coherent persona emerges: larger than life, operatic in feeling. Although this focus on the self often excludes attention to the larger world, it generates the dynamic energy of her work. Plath appropriates a centrally American tradition, the heroic ego confronting the sublime, but she brilliantly revises this tradition by turning what the American Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson called the "great and crescive self" into a heroine instead of a hero. Seizing a mythic power, the Plath of the poems transmutes the domestic and the ordinary into the hallucinatory, the utterly strange. Her revision of the romantic ego dramatizes its tendency toward disproportion and excess, and she is fully capable of both using and mocking this heightened sense of self, as she does in her poem "Lady Lazarus."

Plath's well-known autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar* (1963), has nothing of the brilliance of her poems, but it effectively dramatizes the stereotyping of women's roles in the 1950s and the turmoil of a young woman only partly aware that her gifts and ambitions greatly exceed the options available to her. In the novel Plath uses her experience as a guest editor of a young-women's magazine (in real life, *Mademoiselle*) and then, in an abrupt shift, presents her heroine's attempted suicide and hospitalization. Plath herself had suffered a serious breakdown and attempted suicide between her junior and senior years in college. The pe one reason why attention to Plath's life has sometii ments of her art. While her poems often begin in depends on Plath's imaginative transformations of exp ber of her poems (such as "Daddy") where the figure formed into an emblem for masculine authority. Otto the author of a treatise on bumblebees. His deatl consequence of a diabetic condition he refused to was the crucial event of her childhood. After his de struggling to support two small children, encou ambitions.

In many ways Plath embodied the bright, young, m She went to Smith College on a scholarship and grad Fulbright grant she studied in England at Cambridg married the poet Ted Hughes. On the face of it her perfect fate for such a young woman; it combined careers together (Plath's first book, *The Colossus*, ap Hughes's first collection, *The Hawk in the Rain*), ar 1960, and Nicholas, born in 1962), with a country h poems, however, we find the strains of such a life; t ing, by a terrible constriction against which she unl in the bath, / The cloak of holes" ("Purdah"). In arti tic life, Plath adopted the license of Robert Lowell dent in Lowell's poetry seminar, to write about "pri

While still living in Devon, Plath wrote most of *Ariel* (by Christmas 1962, she had gathered them them in a careful sequence). The marriage broke u the beginning of the new year Plath found herself a London flat during one of the coldest winters in began new poems, writing furiously until February The *Ariel* collection published by Hughes in 1965 sequence; it omits what Hughes called "some of poems from 1962" and includes the dozen or so p before her death and that she had envisioned as Nonetheless, the powerful, angry poems of *Ariel*, feeling, are Plath's best-known work. Fueled by a her father, she speaks in these poems as one whos it is as if she were the character in George Eliot's D suddenly before the novel's heroine and says, "I a however, demonstrate her ability to render a wide poems about her children (such as "Morning Son Fields") and a number of arresting poems about t of natural processes the Romantic ego finds somet response to nature is intense, often uncanny. He where (as in "Blackberrying") the appearance of th from the consciousness of the one who sees it.

For all her courting of excess Plath is a remar stanzas, her clear diction, and her dazzling alteratio The imaginative intensity of her poems is her ow difficult circumstances of her life. She once rem those cries from the heart that are informed knife. . . . I believe that one should be able to co even the most terrifying . . . with an informed an of her style, and of the persona she created, contir variety of contemporary poets.

Part 1 Chapter 5

The literary essay (elementary)

Instructions

1. TYPE OF BOOK You should, at this stage, be reading as widely as possible both for general interest and to increase your vocabulary. At the same time, whether you are preparing for an examination or not, it is wise to devote particular attention to a small selection of books as the writing of literary essays presupposes a detailed knowledge of certain texts. You will be reading classics, modern novels, popular stories, plays and non-fiction – principally short biographies of famous people or accounts of exploits and outstanding achievements. The books you will be reading for special study will either be short original works or simplified texts of the level of Longmans' Simplified English Series or Longmans' Bridge Series.

2. SUMMARIES In order to be able to write literary essays you must know the contents of the books you are studying very well indeed. As it may not always be possible to read a book twice, it is advisable to keep a record of what you read. A well-arranged summary will enable you to revise the contents of a whole book in a matter of minutes.

It is not necessary to write long, laborious summaries of each chapter. These are tedious to write and not very exciting to read. The best way to keep a record of a book is to make a page by page summary in note form. It is rarely necessary to write more than a few points for each page. Here is an example based on the Longmans' Simplified version of *Jane Eyre*.

Chapter 1

Page	GATESHEAD
9	Reed children: Eliza, John, Georgiana. Jane dismissed. Room next door: book, window-seat.
10	Discovered by John. Appearance: fat, coarse features. Character: selfish; ill-treats Jane.
11	Strikes and insults Jane. Throws book at her. They fight. Discovered by Mrs Reed, Bessie & Abbot. Jane punished: Red Room.

Chapter 2

	THE RED ROOM
13	Attitude of maids: both against Jane.
14	Jane locked in room. Remembers kind uncle and the promise Mrs Reed had made to him.
15	Thinks of the dead: light, 'ghost'. She screams. Attracts attention but Mrs Reed refuses to let her out.

This sort of summary tells you all you need to know and the page-references enable you to look up any incident in the story which you may have forgotten. When you have finished making out your summary you are ready to begin essay writing.

3. TYPES OF ESSAY The literary essays you will be writing will be narrative and descriptive, but unlike general essays, these will be based entirely on the books you have studied. The questions you will be set will be designed to test your knowledge of the book. You may be required to reproduce in your own words any particular part of the story or to write a brief description of one or more characters.

4. ANSWERING THE QUESTION You may know the contents of a book very well and yet still fail to write a satisfactory essay. It is most important to discipline yourself to answer each question *as closely as possible*. Do not disregard the question altogether and then proceed to tell the whole story from the beginning to impress on the reader the fact that you know the book well. You must only include information which helps you to answer the question.

5. ACCURACY All the information given in your essay about characters and events should be accurate. There should be no difficulty about this if you know the book well. On no account attempt to 'invent' facts of your own or to write things about the characters which are not in the book. It is not necessary to learn passages by heart in order to be able to quote. If, however, you do quote a phrase, make sure you are using the *exact* words of the book. Do not put quotation marks around words or phrases which were never spoken at all but which have occurred to you on the spur of the moment.

6. REPRODUCING PART OF THE STORY If you are asked to re-tell part of the story in your own words, take great care to relate events in the order in which they occurred. When arranging your facts in chronological order you will not only avoid confusion, but you will be able to give a clear account of what happened without omitting any important details.

Some questions require a detailed knowledge of a small part of the book, say a chapter or even a fairly short scene. Do not attempt this type

of question unless you know the book well enough to be able to reconstruct the scene, stage by stage, as it appears in the book. If a question covers a great many chapters it is not necessary to give too much detail about any one particular scene: keep to the most important events only.

7. 'CHARACTER' QUESTIONS Questions which require you to give an account of a person's character are, on the whole, more difficult than those which ask you to reproduce a scene. The reason for this is that to answer 'character' questions you have to select your facts from all parts of the book.

The characters in a story can be divided into two groups: the people who play a leading part (these are called *major* characters) and those who play a small part (*minor* characters). For instance, in *Jane Eyre*, Jane and Mr Rochester are major characters; Mrs Reed and Grace Poole are minor characters.

The best way to write an account of a person's character is to note down abstract qualities which he or she possesses and then to illustrate them by referring to events from the book. The sort of qualities you should look for are: courage, cowardice, generosity, meanness, kindness, cruelty, understanding, initiative, wickedness, stupidity, cunning etc.

If you are asked to give an account of the part played by a certain person (this is not a 'character' question exactly) you should begin with a brief and very general description of his or her character. Then you should go on to relate the main things the person did, illustrating your answer from your knowledge of the story.

8. PLANNING Never attempt to answer a literary question without first making out a plan. Only by doing so will you be able to make sure that you will answer the question closely. Once written, a plan should help you greatly for you will know beforehand not only what you will write in each paragraph but how many paragraphs will be included in your essay.

A good way to make a plan is to leave a wide margin on the left-hand side of the page. In the left-hand column you should write down any points that will help you to answer the question. These points may be written in any order as they occur to you. You may then order them correctly in the right-hand column, dividing your material into clear paragraphs. Cross out your plan neatly with a single line when you have completed it so that it will be possible for your teacher to refer to it if necessary.

Examine carefully the plans that follow, noting how they have been written. They are based on questions on *Jane Eyre*.

(a) SUBJECT: Give an account of the visit of the Fortune Teller.

IDEAS	PLAN
Asks for Jane. Mary Ingram, Amy and Louisa Eshton. Blanche insists. Witch's arrival. Mason. Jane's attitude: suspicious. Appearance of witch. 'Reads' her face. Crosses palm. Eyes, forehead, mouth. Mr R's purse. Reveals himself.	*Introduction* 1. Witch's arrival: effect on guests. Blanche insists. *Development* 2. Blanche's visit: disappointment; Mary Ingram, Amy and Louisa Eshton. Witch wants Jane. 3. Witch's appearance: dress, hat. Jane suspicious and not afraid. Crosses palm. 4. Speaks of Blanche (loves his purse). 'Reads' Jane's face: eyes, mouth, forehead. *Conclusion* 5. Reveals himself, asks for forgiveness. Jane shocks him: Mason.

(b) SUBJECT: Describe the character of Helen Burns.

IDEAS	PLAN
Contentment. Illness. Kindness. Advises Jane about Mrs Reed. Punishment. Miss Scatcherd: history lesson. First meeting with Jane. Clever. Mr Brocklehurst's visit. Brave. Miss Temple. Death.	*Introduction* 1. Who Helen Burns was: her character in general: kindness, courage, influence on Jane. *Development* 2. *Kindness:* answers questions of unknown girl (first meeting). Smiles at Jane: Mr B's visit. 3. *Courage:* history class; accepts punishment without complaint (Miss Scatcherd). 4. *Understanding:* older than Jane; advice and influence (Mrs Reed). 5. *Cleverness:* top of class; criticizes herself, wants to improve; discussions with Miss Temple. *Conclusion* 6. Illness and death: calm acceptance; Jane's sorrow.

The essay that follows is based on the second of the two plans given above. Read it carefully, noting how it has been written.

Helen Burns was the only true childhood friend Jane Eyre ever had. Her kindness and courage, her understanding and intelligence made a deep and lasting impression on the younger girl.

Jane met Helen shortly after her arrival from Gateshead. Helen was kind to her right from the start. She willingly put aside the book she was reading to answer Jane's childish questions about Lowood Institution and the staff. On a later occasion when Jane was publicly humiliated by Mr Brocklehurst, Helen smiled at her and this simple act helped Jane to face up to her punishment.

Helen herself was often punished. Once she was dismissed from a history lesson and made to stand in the middle of the classroom. Another time she was severely beaten by Miss Scatcherd. Even though the punishment was unjust, Helen accepted it without complaint.

Her belief that it was wrong to remember past injustices made Helen act in this way. When Jane complained of Mrs Reed's harsh treatment, Helen showed great understanding, but at the same time, she pointed out that people should love their enemies because nothing could be achieved by violence.

Though Helen was very clever and top of her class, she continually criticized herself in an effort to correct her 'faults'. Jane was present when Helen and Miss Temple talked together over tea. She was amazed to discover that Helen had read so much and was able to converse so well with her teacher. Moments like these were the happiest in Helen's life.

After a long illness, Helen was able to meet death with the same calm acceptance that she faced life. She died happy with no regrets. Jane, who was with Helen on the night of her death, lost a true and dear friend.

Answer these questions:

1. Would you say that the question has been answered closely? Why?
2. Show how facts are drawn from different parts of the book in order to answer the question.
3. Is all the information that is given accurate? Justify your answer from your knowledge of the story.
4. How does the writer illustrate abstract qualities of character by referring to events in the book?
5. What relationship is there between the plan and the essay. Comment on the arrangement of material.
6. In what important ways does this essay differ from one requiring you to reproduce part of the story?

Exercises

Instructions

The questions given below should be answered with reference to any books you have studied in detail. You should write essays of between 250 and 300 words not spending more than 35 minutes on each question. The best way to divide your time is as follows: plan: 5–10 minutes; writing 20–25 minutes; re-reading: 5 minutes.

1. Give a detailed account of any short scene.
2. Describe a meeting that took place between two characters and show what it led to.
3. Give a general account of the experiences of any *one* major character.
4. Write short notes on any *two* minor characters describing the part they played in the story.
5. Give an account of the part played in the story by either a major or a minor character.
6. Explain how an important event came about.
7. Give an account of a character's first impressions of a place or of other characters.
8. Describe a typical day in the life of any *one* character.
9. Explain a character's attitude to someone or something.
10. What special qualities are shown by a major or minor character (e.g. courage, initiative etc.) and how are these brought out in the story?
11. Explain the strange behaviour of a character, illustrating your answer from the story.
12. Give an account of friendship or hostility between two characters.
13. On what occasions is a person's true character revealed? Confine your answer to a consideration of any *one* major character.
14. Show how one character's suspicions of another are confirmed by the events which take place.
15. Describe an important visit that takes place in the story.

Part 2 Chapter 9

The literary essay (advanced)

Poetry

Instructions

1. READING If you are studying the works of a major poet, you will find it impossible to become fully acquainted with *all* the poems included in the selection. You should, therefore, concentrate on the most important ones and make it your aim to know them well. You will be required to have a detailed knowledge of these poems and they will have to be read several times before they can be properly assimilated. Minor poems should not be ignored, but less emphasis should be placed on them.

2. SUMMARIES It is essential to keep a record of each of the major poems you read. The notes you make on each poem should fall into three distinct parts:

(a) *Meaning and Intention* A brief, stanza by stanza summary should be made, together with a short note on the poet's intention.

(b) *Structure* Note should be made of any outstanding structural features, principally the following: Contrast, Illustration, and Repetition.

(c) *Devices* Any of the following will be found in the poems you read: Simile, Metaphor, Personification, Alliteration, Onomatopoeia, Rhyme, Assonance, and Rhythm. Keep a record of a few useful quotations which illustrate any of these devices.

Study Keats' Ode 'To Autumn' which is given below. When you have done so, read carefully the notes which follow, noting how they have been written.

To Autumn

I

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
  Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
  With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
  And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
    To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
  With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
    For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
  Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
  Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
  Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
    Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
  Steady thy laden head across a brook;
  Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
    Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
  Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, –
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
  And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
  Among the river sallows, borne aloft
    Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
  Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
  The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
    And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

NOTES

(a) *Meaning and Intention*

Stanza I Picture of the richness of autumn: vines, apples, gourd, hazel shells, late flowers: the end of summer.

Stanza II Where autumn may be 'seen': the 'granary floor', the 'half-reap'd furrow', the brook, the 'cyder-press'.

Stanza III The songs of spring – but there is also 'music' in autumn: at the end of the day: sound of gnats, lambs, crickets, the red-breast, swallows.

Intention To re-create the atmosphere of autumn and to convey its richness and beauty.

(*b*) *Structure* The poem is built on illustrations which convey the main idea behind each stanza (e.g. apple trees, the 'cyder-press', the 'full-grown lambs'). Brief contrast with spring in Stanza III.

(c) *Devices*

Simile '... like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook'.

Metaphor '... Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells'.
'Drowsed with the fume of poppies'.
'... in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn'.

Personification '... whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,' etc.

Alliteration 'winnowing wind'.
'... barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day'.
'... lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn'.

Rhyme Strict pattern, but not insistent.

Rhythm Drowsy: closely matches sense.

3. FURTHER STUDY When you have completed your notes on each poem, you should attempt to see the poet's work *as a whole*. The chief things you should observe are as follows:

(a) The main themes that recur in the poet's work and which poems best illustrate them.

(b) The principal features of the poet's style (e.g. use of metaphor; everyday speech; satire; attention to detail etc.). It should not be necessary for you at this stage to refer to works of criticism. Pay close attention to the actual poems rather than to what other people have to say about them.

4. PLANNING Your plan must be a close and accurate analysis of the question. In the column on the left, write down the titles of the poems and the ideas which you consider relevant to the question. On the right, divide your essay into main headings, noting the poems you will use to illustrate your ideas. Your general attitude to the subject should be defined in the introduction.

The plan and essay given below are based on a selection of Keats' poetry. Study them carefully, noting how they have been written.

SUBJECT Would it be true to say that in his Odes, Keats attempts to escape from the unhappiness of life through some form of delight in beautiful sights and sounds?

ATTITUDE Statement true only for 'Nightingale' and 'Grecian Urn'.

TITLES AND IDEAS	PLAN
'Psyche'. 'Autumn'. 'Urn'. 'Melancholy'. 'Nightingale'. Identification. Beautiful sights and sounds. Symbolism and lack of symbolism. Escape theme. Escape from what?	*Introduction* 1. Statement true only for 'Nightingale' and 'Grecian Urn'. *Development* 2. Beautiful sights and sounds but no symbolism: 'Psyche' and 'Autumn'. 3. Unhappiness felt keenly: 'Melancholy'; escape implied? 4. Escape theme in 'Nightingale' and 'Urn'. 5. 'Nightingale': identification with beautiful object: *sound*. 6. 'Urn': identification with beautiful object: *sights*. *Conclusion* 7. Harsh reality: escape temporary.

Though Keats' great love for the beauty of Nature and classical mythology can be seen in all his Odes, it is only in the Odes 'To a Nightingale' and 'On a Grecian Urn' that he gives direct expression to his desire to escape from the unhappiness of life on earth.

Keats conveys this love of beautiful sights and sounds in the 'Ode to Psyche' and 'To Autumn'. In 'Psyche', the lovers are discovered

'In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms'.

The poem 'To Autumn' is full of beautiful pictures and sounds: 'the small gnats mourn', the 'lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn'. But in both poems, Keats is interested in beautiful objects for their own sakes. The beauties described do not at the same time symbolize a more perfect world to which the poet may escape.

In the 'Ode to Melancholy', Keats urges the reader to contemplate intensely beautiful and ephemeral objects in order to feel unhappiness more keenly, not to escape from it. At the same time, there is an implied suggestion of 'escape' into a more beautiful world. One is not wholly unhappy when considering 'beauty that must die', but experiences 'aching Pleasure'.

Direct expression of the desire for escape from the world is given in the Odes 'To a Nightingale' and 'On a Grecian Urn'. In the former poem, Keats speaks of the misery on earth:

'The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan'.

Similarly, human love in 'On a Grecian Urn' is undesirable because it

> '... leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
> A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.'

In both these Odes, Keats identifies himself with some 'unworldly' beautiful object. Real beauty, according to the poet, is immortal and, therefore, beyond the range of human experience. For an instant, the beautiful song of the nightingale enables him to become one with objects of great beauty: '... the Queen Moon ... Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays'. The description of Nature that follows in the stanza beginning 'I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,' is both realistic and symbolic of Keats' conception of absolute beauty, and differs in this respect from similar descriptions in 'To Autumn'.

If beautiful sounds help the poet to escape from 'leaden-eyed despairs' in the 'Ode to a Nightingale', beautiful sights enable him to do the same in the Ode 'On a Grecian Urn'. Here Keats reconstructs an ancient scene which, for him, has absolute beauty because it is eternal:

> 'Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
> Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu'.

For a short time, Keats is able to identify himself so completely with the 'little town' he imagines that he forgets the unhappiness of the world.

The harsh reality of everyday life, however, is always in the background. In the 'Ode to a Nightingale', 'the plaintive anthem fades' to 'toll' the poet back to his 'sole self'. 'On a Grecian Urn' likewise ends with a reference to old age and passing generations:

> 'When old age shall this generation waste,
> Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
> Than ours ...'

Escape from this world can never be anything more than momentary.

Answer these questions:

1. Explain, with reference to the above essay, how a study of the meaning, intention, structure, and devices of each poem help the writer to answer the question.
2. Comment on the arrangement of material in this essay and on the writer's use of fact.
3. What is the function of the Introduction and how do the paragraphs that follow develop the main idea?
4. Would it be true to say that this is an *exact* answer to the question set? Why?
5. Show what relationship exists between the plan and the finished essay.

Exercises

Instructions

Where relevant, the questions below should be answered with reference to any selection of poems you have studied in detail. You should write essays of between 350 and 500 words and not spend more than 45 minutes on each question. The best way to divide your time is as follows: planning: 5–10 minutes; writing: 30–35 minutes; re-reading: 5–10 minutes.

1. Give an account of the poet's power as a story-teller.
2. Discuss the poet's sympathy with Nature.
3. Illustrate the poet's concern for human thoughts and feelings.
4. Discuss the poet's interest in the past.
5. Give an account of the poet's ability as a descriptive writer, pointing out his attention to detail.
6. What has the poet to say about his own personal feelings and experiences?
7. Write a detailed appreciation of any *two* lyrics.
8. Write a detailed appreciation of any *two* poems which contrast with each other in style and subject-matter.
9. What is the poet's attitude to good and evil?
10. Illustrate any three of the following from your knowledge of the poems: (i) vivid description; (ii) vigorous action; (iii) sorrow and despair; (iv) family affection; (v) peaceful scenes.
11. Account for the poet's optimism or pessimism.
12. What evidence is there of inner conflict in the poems you have studied?
13. What would you consider to be the poet's favourite subject?
14. Discuss the poet's use of metaphor.
15. What special interests has the poet? (e.g. love of music, mythology, nature etc.). Illustrate your answer from your knowledge of the poems.
16. Basing your answer on *four* or *five* poems, give an account of the poet's view of life.
17. Do we learn anything about contemporary events from this selection of poems?
18. Write a full appreciation of any *one* longer poem you have studied.
19. What is more important to the poet: sensations or thoughts?
20. Discuss the poet's attitude to human relationships.
21. What religious feeling is expressed in the poems you have read?
22. Discuss the main features of the poet's style.
23. Is a consistent philosophy of life expressed in the poems you have read?

24. What appeals most to the poet: a life of action, or one of meditation?
25. Discuss the poet's attitude to death and after-life.
26. Describe the function of different backgrounds and settings in any *five* poems you have read.
27. What is the poet's attitude to everyday things?
28. Discuss and illustrate the poet's qualities as a satirist.
29. 'A reading of the minor poetry is indispensable to a proper understanding of the major poetry.' Discuss.
30. What is more important to the poet: the detailed description of scenes, or the thoughts that these scenes suggest to him?

Plays and novels

1. SUMMARIES It is essential to make brief notes of the contents of any play or novel you are studying as this makes revision a much less formidable task.

For plays, brief notes on each scene will be sufficient. Here is an example, based on a few scenes from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*:

Act one

SCENE I *Witches:* they will meet Macbeth after the battle.

SCENE II *Duncan*, *Malcolm*, and *Captain:* report of Macbeth's bravery. +*Ross*: Cawdor, a traitor; title goes to Macbeth.

SCENE III *Witches:* the charm. +*Macbeth* and *Banquo:* greetings; three titles and prophesies; witches disappear; Reactions. +*Ross* and *Angus*: first prophesy true: Cawdor: a traitor. Macbeth becomes 'rapt', thinks of murder.

SCENE IV *Duncan* and *Malcolm:* Cawdor executed. +*Macbeth*, *Banquo*, *Ross*, *Angus:* Duncan's welcome. Malcolm named 'Prince of Cumberland'. Macbeth's reactions: 'That is a step On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap'.

When summarizing novels, your notes should take roughly the same form, except, of course, that you will be recording the main incidents and ideas that occur within each *chapter*.

2. FURTHER STUDY When your summary has been completed, you should make notes on each of the following: (a) *Underlying Theme* (b) *Plot* and (c) *Character*.

(a) *Underlying Theme* Most of the plays and novels you will be studying will do something more than just 'tell a story'. To understand the 'story' is only to understand the book at its very simplest level. Sometimes the actual 'story' may be unremarkable and may be summarized in a few

sentences. Behind the bare events, there is usually a main underlying theme and, very often, there may be a number of subsidiary themes as well. The whole point of the 'story' is to convey a certain view of life which is reflected in the action and in the characters. Everything that takes place must be seen in relationship to the main theme.

In *Macbeth*, for instance, Shakespeare is not simply writing a 'murder story'. His intention is to show us how ambition can corrupt even the finest when it becomes an obsession. An important subsidiary theme in the play is the nature of evil. There are references to light and darkness throughout. Evil is equated with the forces of darkness. This is brought out by the peculiar blending of natural and supernatural elements. The supernatural symbolizes evil and is in sharp conflict with the 'natural' world and its accepted standards of behaviour. The conflict is resolved in the nature and actions of the principal characters. Once this has been understood the simple framework of the 'story' can be seen in its proper perspective.

(b) *Plot* An understanding of the plot involves a close study of the structure of a play or novel. A plot may be highly ingenious in that the author sets out deliberately to mystify his readers and lead them on to an unexpected outcome, or it may be virtually non-existent. Most plots are built round mental or physical conflict which may or may not be resolved in the course of the narrative.

The simplest plot has a definite beginning, middle, and end. The events which take place build up to a climax which may take the form of one or several dramatic scenes. At the climax, the conflict may finally be resolved or events may take place to prevent a resolution. Seemingly insignificant happenings which profoundly affect the course of the narrative may only be properly understood at or after the climax. The beginning-middle-end sequence may be varied enormously. When this occurs, you should observe how the normal pattern has been altered and what effect this has had on the central conflict.

A play or novel may contain one or several sub-plots in addition to the main one. A sub-plot is usually connected in some important way to the central plot: it may run parallel and eventually 'meet' it, or it may be in complete contrast so that the reader may read into it a great deal of implied comment on the principal events and underlying theme.

The play, *Macbeth*, has a definite beginning, middle, and end. At the outset, Macbeth is physically brave and morally weak as opposed to his wife who has great moral courage. After Duncan's death, Macbeth becomes more and more hardened to the idea of evil and is not troubled by his conscience in all the subsequent murders he commits. Towards the end of the play, the positions at the beginning are reversed: Macbeth is afraid of nothing, whereas his wife breaks down completely. Every event

that takes place isolates the hero more and more so that at the climax of the play he is facing the whole of the English army alone. The great moral and physical conflict of the play is resolved after the hero's death when order is restored to the kingdom.

(c) *Character* The main qualities of a character will always be brought out in the action, in the dialogue, and in the effect the character makes on others. Where the action concerns a tragic hero, a close study should be made of his character. No hero in tragedy is wholly 'good': there is always some fundamental weakness in his make-up, a 'tragic flaw' which is responsible for his downfall. Macbeth, for instance, is too easily influenced, and too ready to believe in supernatural prophesies. His innate love of power and his latent ambitions may never have come to the surface if he had not taken the witches' prophesies seriously.

It is important to realize that in a well-written play or novel, the main characters *develop*: that is, they are quite different at the end of the book from what they were at the beginning. They may mature, or grow wiser, or become corrupt, or discover qualities which they never knew they possessed. Macbeth alone, fearing nothing, and prepared to face a whole army is quite different from the brave, highly-respected general so warmly welcomed by King Duncan at the beginning of the play. Similarly, other characters 'develop' in this play, like Lady Macbeth, Macduff, and Malcolm. Less important characters, like Duncan, or Lady Macduff are *static* in that they do not develop in any way at all.

Close study should also be made of the interplay between characters in a play or a novel. Important characters may 'develop' because they are influenced by others, or as a result of the conflict between opposing natures. Macbeth is profoundly influenced by his wife at the beginning of the play: it is she who persuades him to murder Duncan. She, in turn, is deeply influenced by her husband. Her troubled state of mind, her sleep-walking, and even her eventual death are the indirect results of Macbeth's actions.

3. PLANNING Your plan must be a close and accurate analysis of the question. In the column on the left, you should note down in any order ideas or incidents which you consider relevant to the question. You should then re-arrange your ideas in the column on the right so that they form a logical sequence. You must know how many paragraphs will make up your essay before you begin writing.

The plan and essay given below are based on *Macbeth*. Study them carefully, noting how they have been written.

SUBJECT Show how, after Banquo's murder, Macbeth's character grows gradually more evil, and his isolation becomes more marked.

IDEAS	PLAN
Macduff flees. Lady Macbeth's guilt. Murders: Lady Macduff and son. Witches. Lenox and Lord. 'The very firstlings.' 'Sweet bodements'. Banquo's ghost. Macbeth's intentions. Interpretation of apparitions. 'Full of sound and fury ...'	*Introduction* 1. Position immediately before and after Banquo's murder. Lady Macbeth/ghost. First signs of evil and isolation. *Development* 2. Lenox: open disapproval. Macbeth and witches: 'sweet bodements'. Evil intentions: 'The very firstlings ...' 3. Puts this into practice: Lady Macduff and her son. 4. Macbeth alone – Malcolm and Macduff; Rosse on the state of Scotland. 5. Lady Macbeth: guilt; Macbeth: none. *Conclusion* 6. End: Macbeth and servant: the situation. Comment on 'life'. His death; the restoration of peace.

Though at the beginning of the play, Macbeth is entirely dependent on his wife for advice and encouragement, he eventually reaches a point where he is able to take decisions on his own. Even his wife is not aware of his intentions to murder Banquo: 'Be innocent of the knowledge,' he tells her, 'till thou applaud the deed.' When Banquo's ghost appears after the murder, Macbeth is the only one who sees it. His wife cannot explain his strange behaviour and thinks he lacks courage. But this is not so: Macbeth has become wholly evil and will stop at nothing. His comment on Macduff's absence from the banquet hints of his future plans. He is now quite alone. Lady Macbeth, so long his partner in evil, does not appear again until the end of the play.

This isolation becomes immediately apparent when we hear Lenox expressing open disapproval of Macbeth and giving the first full account of his crimes. But Macbeth himself is quite unconcerned about other people's opinions. He deliberately seeks out the witches alone. Far from filling him with terror, the apparitions he sees are 'sweet bodements'. Assured of future success, Macbeth emerges from the cave as evil as the 'secret, black and midnight hags' whose advice he sought. Now there is nothing to deter him from his intentions. On learning that Macduff has fled to England, he says menacingly:

> 'The very firstlings of my heart shall be
> The firstlings of my hand.'

Macbeth at once puts this into practice. Lady Macduff and her son

are murdered simply because Macduff has fled to England. There is no justification at all for this murder, for Macbeth has nothing to gain by it. It clearly shows us that Macbeth has become an unrestrained and evil tyrant.

After this truly shocking murder, Macbeth remains without a single friend. Most of the lords who gathered round him have fled to England where Malcolm and Macduff are preparing for war with the help of the English noble, Siward. Rosse tells Macduff of the dire situation in Scotland, where

'good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps.'

At the end of the play, Macbeth is cut off even from his wife. Lady Macbeth's mind is deeply disturbed as a result of her husband's crimes and her own share in them. She is so overcome by guilt that she takes her own life, whereas her husband is quite untroubled by his conscience.

With only his faithful servant, Seyton, Macbeth has much to cope with. Everybody deserts him; the English army approaches nearer and nearer; in the midst of all, his wife dies, but he has no time to give way to grief. Her death prompts him to comment on life which has been for him 'full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' He goes off to face the whole of the English army alone, still confident that he is invincible. He wavers only for an instant when Macduff disillusions him, and then bravely meets his inevitable end. Peace is restored to Scotland only after the death of this 'butcher, and his fiend-like queen'.

Answer these questions:

1. Show, with reference to the above essay, how a grasp of the underlying theme helps the writer to answer the question.
2. What references are made to the plot? Explain why they are necessary in the above essay.
3. How does the writer bring out the fact that the hero's character 'develops'?
4. Would you say that this is an exact answer to the question set? Why?
5. Show what relationship exists between the plan and the finished essay.

Exercises

Instructions

Where relevant, the questions below should be answered with reference to any plays or novels you have studied. You should write essays of between 350 and 500 words and not spend more than 45 minutes on each question. The best way to divide your time is as follows: planning: 5–10 minutes; writing: 30–35 minutes; re-reading: 5–10 minutes.

1. How does the author arouse our sympathy for the main character?
2. Give a brief account of a scene and discuss its function in the play or novel.
3. Compare and contrast any *two* characters.
4. Give an account of a character's motives for acting in the way he does.
5. Show what relationship exists between the main plot and the sub-plot.
6. Discuss the function of the setting and the background.
7. Show how a letter or a confession changes the course of the action.
8. Describe the part played by women in the story.
9. Describe how the author conveys a humorous situation.
10. What effect have new arrivals on the plot?
11. Show how the character of the hero develops during the course of the story.
12. Discuss the main turning-points in the hero's career.
13. Give a brief account of any *one* important event and discuss the attitudes to it of *two* or *three* major characters.
14. Would it be true to say that the hero's downfall is largely due to some basic fault in his character?
15. In what respect could this story be said to be a criticism of society?
16. Show how the author prepares the reader for a big scene or a climax in the story.
17. What is the underlying theme of the story and how is it brought out?
18. Discuss the function of supernatural elements in the plot.
19. What is the essential conflict in the story and how is it resolved?
20. What use is made of symbolism? Explain, with reference to three or four events.
21. What are the author's views on good and evil?
22. Show how a seemingly minor occurrence has important consequences.
23. What is the significance of any *three* minor characters?
24. Would you say that the author is concerned more with thought than with action?
25. How does the author bring out human weaknesses and virtues?
26. What coincidences occur in the plot? Would you say they are convincing?
27. How does the author succeed in mystifying us about the eventual outcome?
28. How far are the descriptive passages essential to the plot?
29. Would you say that the lack of any plot prevents us from enjoying this play or novel?
30. What do we learn about contemporary manners and customs from this play or novel?

D. In the space of fourteen lines Keats covers compactly and effectively the seeker or explorer, the object discovered, the moment of silent awe, and the recognition of and speculation about the enormity of the discovery in the physical and intellectual worlds of man.

The first sentence of paragraph A provides the thesis of the entire essay, and the second sentence is the topic sentence of this first paragraph, a division of the thesis idea. The details are not merely listed; they are interpreted in relation to the three kinds of explorers, and their symbolic value is discussed in terms of man's discovery. Then the vastness of the discoveries is related to the sense of motion in the poem.

The first paragraph would be a failure if it relied solely on the first two sentences (step one—generalization). It would also fail if the writer merely were to add to these sentences a list of the explorers (step two—details), as the first version of the paragraph does. The value of the paragraph lies in how it interprets that list and relates it to the topic sentence (step three—interpretation of details).

Paragraph B treats the response to discovery by providing paraphrase and brief quotations. Sentence four extracts the important details in the sonnet, but these have been prepared for by a series of interpretative generalizations in the first three sentences. The rest of the paragraph develops the idea of contrast and repeats and adds details to carry on the interpretation.

In paragraph C the one main detail taken from the poem is the quotation of the last two and one-half lines of the sonnet. No discussion follows this quotation. However, the image is prepared for by the first two interpretative sentences of the paragraph. To carry on the discussion after the quotation would probably lead to needless repetition.

Throughout the analysis of Keats' sonnet, the three-step procedure is clear. As a result, generalizations are supported by details, but are not dominated by them. In the details selected and the interpretative comments, there is no evidence of slanting or misreading. By starting with a worth-while thesis idea and by developing it with sufficient complexity, the essay avoids the pitfall of superficiality.

CHAPTER 10 ORGANIZATION

Since an interpretation is essentially the explanation and evaluation of a literary work, it must be written coherently. Just as a poem or a story has its own shape or design, so does the critical essay. Without some kind of design the poem or the interpretation would be incoherent to a reader. Even a story or poem presented in the seemingly chaotic form of stream of consciousness may have a very carefully worked out pattern—a deliberate ordering of disorder. The interpreter of literature, of course, would not write in the stream of consciousness mode. He has to provide his readers with logical patterns of organization, since even the best ideas can be destroyed by incoherent arrangement. Although the outline of an interpretative paper need not stand out like a skeleton spotlighted in a dark corner, the reader should feel that he is being led logically and fluently from one point to the next in an essay.

Clear organization requires meticulous attention to the relationships of parts and details in an essay. Without patient, careful planning, the writer will have difficulties. As we have seen in chapter 7, this planning should be linked to the notes and ideas recorded and, above all, to the thesis statement. Once the thesis is determined, then the process of breaking it down into smaller units can begin; these divisions are the equivalent of the Roman numerals and, occasionally, the capital letters in an outline. In turn, these units must also be subdivided to take care of smaller generalizations and details; these are the Arabic numerals and lower case letters in an outline. In this process of dividing and subdividing, every step is important.

LOSS OF FOCUS

Just as the thesis is crucial to development of content, so it is also an essential tool in solving problems of organization. If the outline of an essay is carefully arranged in accord with the thesis statement, the author of a literary interpretation will not have problems with

focus—that is, with sticking to the idea with which he started. If the paper is assembled without concern for the central generalization, even if it is an excellent one, or if the thesis is vague or poorly defined, then the author will invariably lose or blur the focus on his statement of purpose.

An example of loss of focus is the following essay on Lardner's "Haircut":

> At first glance, Ring Lardner's story "Haircut" seems to be only for the reader's pleasure. Looking closer, we see that it is a characterization of a small-town barber who devotes part of his time and most of his very limited intelligence to the praise of Jim Kendall. Jim evidently had a warped and bitter outlook on life. He was a practical joker and found his greatest delight in making people unhappy.
>
> I was somewhat amazed at the lack of four-letter words in this story. I find it hard to believe that anyone like the barber could carry on such a "clean" conversation. It might be noted, too, that the time required to read the story is the average length of time for a haircut.
>
> As the barber told Jim's story, he betrayed his own illiteracy and plain lack of intelligence in several ways. His language was probably the most obvious giveaway to his stupidity. [Examples are given.]

The troubles in this paper are due to an unclear conception of the thesis statement. The first paragraph simply indicates the nature of the relationship of the barber to Jim, but this glimmer of a thesis is immediately destroyed in the second paragraph by a series of personal reactions to the story. This second paragraph not only lacks unity but completely obscures the focus.

If the writer had started with the following first paragraph, he would have had less difficulty in defining his thesis and maintaining clear focus:

> In "Haircut" the essential meaning is conveyed to the reader by Lardner's consistent use of irony. There are two kinds of irony: that associated with the barber's self-revelations and that stemming from the climactic event in his rambling account, the death of Jim.

With this paragraph as a guide, the writer can now concentrate on the irony in the story, and he can look at it from the two closely related points of view suggested in the paragraph. The writer of this second introductory paragraph would be less likely to have difficulty with maintaining a clear focus on his material or with arranging the major parts of his theme.

THE USE OF TRANSITIONS TO ACHIEVE FOCUS AND FLUENCY

In the construction of expository and analytical essays, transitions are indispensable ingredients. As guides and pointers they help the writer acquire focus. For example, by repetition or careful restatement of key words and phrases, he can point to his thesis throughout a paper. Transitions are also the tools of fluency—the clear and graceful movement of style, thought, and structure in writing. They provide links within sentences, between sentences, between paragraphs, and between major parts of an essay.

Some of the most commonly used transitions are these:

1) Pronouns as links to their antecedents, the nouns whose places the pronouns take.

2) Purely transitional words and phrases which function solely to point out connections, additions, and alternatives: *however, furthermore, nevertheless, for example, on the other hand,* etc. To these should be added conjunctions, both coordinating and subordinating. Coordinating conjunctions link equal parts of a sentence; they can also operate between sentences—that is, between details or thoughts separated in sentence form. Subordinating conjunctions show the precise relationship between a main clause and the detail or idea subordinated to it.

3) Echo words: key words and phrases directly repeated or reworded—particularly effective in keeping the thesis or the topic sentence of a paragraph before a reader.

4) Built-in thought progression, such as cause and effect or question and answer, which by logical expectation provides thought links.

5) Transitional paragraphs—short paragraphs which summarize what has gone before and which look ahead to the next phase of an essay.

Among the most important problems involving the use of transitions are the thought gap, the movement from paragraph to paragraph, and the need to relate material either to the topic sentence of a paragraph or to the thesis.

Thought Gap A particularly prevalent kind of loss of focus within and between sentences is the thought gap, or the missing thought link. In this case the author probably knows what he wants to say but does not provide all the details and ideas necessary. Nor does he present the proper transitions to unite everything clearly. The following two sentences offer a good example of how thought gaps hinder the process of communication and hence blur the focus: "When Mrs. Braggioni washes her husband's feet, an image of Christ is created. The reader suspects that his deceit will continue." A revised version of these sentences might be:

> When Mrs. Braggioni washes her husband's feet, the image of Mary's anointing the feet of Christ is suggested. However, the careful reader has already detected that Braggioni is a fraud, a false savior—in fact, a Judas. The reader also suspects that Braggioni's charity toward his wife is deceitful, for Porter has clearly established that Braggioni has little regard for his wife, or for any woman, and will continue to abandon her whenever he desires.

The revision supplies two missing thoughts: the idea of Braggioni as a false savior and the strong suggestion that his wife means very little to him. Words like *However, also,* and *for* supply the necessary transitions between details, and the implications of words like *Christ, savior, Judas,* and *charity* offer further continuity to the revised version. The relationships between all thoughts and details in the paragraph are now clear.

Transitions Between Paragraphs Since each paragraph in a paper is an important building block in the total structure, it is essential to provide the cement—the transitional links—between them. This tie can be made by relating the topic sentence or the first few sentences at the beginning of each new paragraph to the preceding paragraph or to the thesis.

When making a transition from one paragraph to another, the writer can sometimes put the backward-looking element of transition in a subordinate construction and allow the subject matter of the new paragraph to occupy the most prominent place in the sentence. Let us assume that the following sentence begins a new paragraph: "Despite the sensual pleasure derived from his relationship with the Lady, the Knight is led to spiritual despair because the real world lacks faith in his vision." The introductory phrase looks back to the previous paragraph or paragraphs, and the main clause establishes the subject of the new unit, which may, of course, encompass more than one paragraph.

Relevance of Details and Ideas Sometimes a writer will use details and ideas relevant to the topic of a paragraph or of the entire essay but will fail to make that relevance clear to the reader. Such failure will naturally blur the focus and impede the fluency of an essay. Although an author does not have to spell out every implication or every minute step involved in the progression of his thought, he should try to make clear to the reader the relevance of all the material in his essay. In cases where the material is relevant but the writer has not made the relevance clear, the fault can often be remedied by slight revision or rearrangement. For example, the addition of a brief transition or, if necessary, of a transitional sentence or two pointing more directly to the relationship involved will solve the problem of loss of focus and fluency. We cannot emphasize too much that the reader should not be held responsible for doing the author's work of maintaining focus. At the same time, the author should not insult the reader's intelligence by spelling out the obvious.

Importance of Transitions Demonstrated To demonstrate how important transitions are in the attainment of clear focus and fluency, let us reexamine the second paragraph of the analysis of Keats' "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" (pp. 116–118).

> (1) It is the response to the discovery which each makes that provides the rich emotional and intellectual impact of wonder or awe. (2) The experience is communicated by Keats through a contrast between the vigor involved as the object of discovery makes its impact and the accompanying response of silence. (3) The object of discovery in each case looms large through the senses. (4) Chapman is pictured as speaking out "loud and bold"; the planet "swims" suddenly into the vision of the gazer (the pinpointing of a sight object in a vast background); and the enormous Pacific dazzles the "eagle eyes" of Cortez. (5) In contrast to the vigor of the experience—the impact of the object discovered—the response is gentle. (6) Keats' response to Chapman comes through a quiet sense image of breathing serene air. (7) The power in Chapman's clarion ring also contrasts noticeably with the complete outward silence of Cortez and his men. (8) In both instances the observer and participator is struck speechless with awe. (9) In Cortez' case the only sense activity is the gazing of the men at each other. (10) This activity of the men's eyes amid the silence captures effectively the feeling of wonder.

In the first sentence the words *discovery* and *awe* tie the new paragraph to the thesis stated at the beginning of the essay. These

same words, plus the reference to *each*, relate to the discussion of the three kinds of explorers, which is the substance of paragraph one.

Having made these crucial ties, the second paragraph also has to maintain its own movement and structural unity. Sentence two is linked to sentence one by the summarizing word *experience* and by the repetition of *response* and *discovery*. At the same time, the sentence moves forward by introducing the contrast which will govern the rest of the paragraph. Sentence three presents one side of the contrast and repeats the phrase *object of discovery*. The phrase *each case* keeps before the reader the examples of paragraph one; it also leads to sentence four, where the three are discussed. In sentence five comes the contrasting element introduced by the pure transitional phrase *In contrast to* and linked to the rest of the paragraph by the repetition of *experience, object,* and *response*. Sentences six and seven offer two examples to support sentence five. The reference to *Chapman* links sentences six and seven, and the verb *contrasts* in sentence seven reinforces the purpose of the paragraph. In sentence eight the words *both instances* and *awe* are signs of focus and fluency. Sentences nine and ten fall together logically and are tied to sentence seven by the reference to *Cortez*. In sentence ten the phrase *This activity* carries the previous sentence forward, as does the emphasis on the words *men's eyes* and *silence*. The final reference to *wonder* keeps alive the thesis of the essay.

This analysis of the transitions in the paragraph demonstrates the importance and intricacy of the links between small and large elements in a tightly organized essay. Without a conscientious effort to provide these ties, you cannot maintain focus and fluency. At the same time, you should not allow your concentration upon transitions to force you to make them artificial or stilted. The more natural the transitions, the more effective they will be.

POOR ARRANGEMENT OF PARTS

It is possible to make everything in an interpretative essay relate to the central idea and still have a poorly organized paper. If the large sections, even though related to the central generalization, are arranged poorly, then the effectiveness of the total organization is diminished. If a single paragraph is out of place or incoherent internally, then the organization will also be weak.

Illogical Arrangement of Main Parts The following essay is ineffectively organized because the main parts are not arranged logically:

Throughout the adventures of Huckleberry Finn the emphasis is upon freedom—moral freedom, the freedom of physical adventure, and social freedom.

Huck's moral dilemma centers on Jim, the escaped Negro. At first Huck looks down upon Jim just as everyone else has done, but when he recognizes that Jim is a human being who loves his family and who is completely devoted to him, Huck changes his view. Yet in altering his attitude he finds himself in bondage to responsibility—to the need to return Jim to his rightful owner. This conflict between the responsibility he feels and the human attachment to Jim creates for him a moral dilemma. He must decide and free himself of this ethical burden. When he says, "All right, then, I'll *go* to Hell," he decides against society and in favor of humanity. In so doing, however, he ironically feels the weight of guilt upon himself. Through irony, however, Twain has made Huck the only free man, the man capable of innate decision contrary to the dictates of his society.

Huck desires to seek his own life of physical adventure because society impinges on him. The escape from society and his father, the meeting with Jim on the island, and the lengthy trip on the Mississippi River show Huck as the youngster seeking physical freedom. At times he finds himself in bondage, especially to the Duke and Dauphin. But the river at least becomes for him a symbol of his free life of adventure.

His freedom is also restricted by the demands of society upon him. Convention requires him to dress properly, to have good table manners, to attend school, to read the Bible, and to go to church. All of these he rejects, and even at the end of the book he is on his way to escape the restrictions of society. He will indeed be a free man.

Although the content of the paper could be considerably improved or at least expanded, we are primarily concerned with the organization. The thesis is clear enough and actually establishes the arrangement of parts in the paper. It is this arrangement, however, which throws the essay off. A reader looking carefully at the three parts can see a possibility for an order of climax, starting with the least important section and moving to the most important. The paragraph on physical adventure should be placed first, then the section on freedom from the restraints of society, and finally the portion on moral freedom. Moral freedom is so strongly emphasized in the novel that it has to constitute the high point of such a paper; yet here it is taken care of first. Everything coming after it is anticlimactic. If the

section on moral freedom were put last, then the rest of the essay could be arranged to build up to it. These changes might, of course, involve different transitions, and perhaps the addition of a concluding paragraph, but no major alterations within the paragraphs would be necessary as far as organization is concerned. Even if the content is not changed, the writer would have a far more tightly organized essay than the original.

Poor Placement of a Paragraph Sometimes the general structure of an interpretative essay may be adequate, but one paragraph may be out of place, chiefly because the author has failed to bring related materials together in one section of his paper. Below is an example of this kind of poor paragraph placement in a section of a paper comparing Huck and Tom:

> Tom makes games out of all the adventures the two boys get into, whereas Huck responds to them in a much more serious way. In the chapter "We Ambuscade the Arabs," Tom organizes a gang that will rob and kill people. However, the boys, including Huck, eventually get tired of Tom's storybook exploits. During the liberation of Jim, Tom also promotes tactics he has gathered from romantic adventure books. Yet all the while he knows that Jim is actually free. Unaware of this fact, Huck wants to liberate Jim quickly and directly. Jim's freedom is not a game to Huck.
>
> In the book Huck faces several moral dilemmas, whereas Tom does not seem to be aware of such problems. One of Huck's ethical choices involves the freedom of Jim. According to law it was illegal to help a slave to escape. In addition, Huck has been brought up to believe that Negroes are property, not people. As a result of the rattlesnake episode Huck learns that Jim is human. Hence later he has the motive for his decision to protect Jim, even at the expense of his own soul. For Tom there is no concern about the soul.
>
> In the story both boys seem to like adventure—but for different reasons. While traveling down the Mississippi, Huck can escape society and be free of school and church. For this freedom he is willing to face all kinds of adventures. For Tom an adventure is another game—a boy's game of cowboys and Indians.

Although in this example the content is considerably oversimplified, the main problem at this point is the failure to bring together the closely related first and third paragraphs. If the third paragraph were moved to the beginning of the selection, the present second paragraph would conclude the paper appropriately. The error in placement of material throws a needless and annoying burden upon the reader and indicates that the author of the essay has not thought out every detail of the structure of his paper.

Confusion Within a Paragraph Even if the paragraphs are properly placed, poor organization within a paragraph can cause confusion. In a paper dealing with the emotional disturbances of Holden Caulfield in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye,* an author first stressed the poor relationships of Holden with members of his family. After this point was adequately established in the paper, the following paragraph appeared:

> Holden has the ability to control his language as he did when he was in the presence of the nuns. Holden is continuously rebelling against his school, sexual, and family environments. The novel ends leaving the reader with doubts as to whether Holden ever will become stable and without emotional problems. And one cannot help wondering whether his sister will continue on the same path, for already she is living in her imaginary world about which she writes.

Not only is this paragraph poorly written, suffering especially from inexact phrasing, but it is a model of internal incoherence which sends the reader jumping aimlessly from point to point. The author has apparently decided to use this paragraph as a catchall for the ideas he did not wish to develop—a kind of miscellany. The lack of clear relevance of the paragraph to the rest of the essay and its loss of internal order and logic practically ruin the entire effort.

THE RUNNING COMMENTARY

A problem of organization which is unique in analytical and interpretive writing occurs when the author slavishly follows the literary work paragraph by paragraph or stanza by stanza. Since he is not writing something out of his own experience, he often feels duty-bound to comment on each image, allusion, stylistic feature, etc., as it presents itself. This procedure prevents his essay from having any individuality of structure. Actually the interpretation is in its own way created and deserves to have its own shape.

If the writer religiously adheres to the organization of a poem, drama, or story, he will create difficulties for himself, even if he offers

a great deal of useful interpretation. For example, his running commentary will probably consist of short, choppy, disconnected thoughts and details—like footnotes on individual lines of a poem. Also, related points will occasionally be left unconnected simply because they occur in different places in the text. It is far better for a writer to assemble all the material and interpretation relevant to a phase of his thesis in one rich paragraph or section of his paper rather than to scatter the details and thoughts throughout the essay.

Following is a running commentary discussing "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer":

> In lines one, two, and three the image of travel is presented. In line four the image is related to literature so that the travel becomes imaginative and not real. Lines five and six single out one author, Homer, whose value Keats has been told about. In lines six and seven the poet describes the exhilarating experience of acquiring firsthand appreciation of Homer through Chapman's bold interpretation. The first of two comparisons occurs in lines nine and ten: the poet's discovery is likened to that of an astronomer. The last four lines relate the poet's experience to that of Cortez and his men—the silent, speculative awe that comes from moments of great discoveries.

This running commentary is certainly better than a paraphrase of the poem, for it contains interpretative comments beyond the surface translation of the lines in the paraphrase. However, it is not nearly so rich a synthesis of the poem as is the interpretation on pages 116–118. In the first place, in the running commentary, there is no strongly defined thesis—just a line-by-line restatement and analysis. Second, the links between words and details in the poem are presented very nearly as they occur in the line-by-line movement of the sonnet. The analysis thus has no individuality, no structure of its own. The main defect, however, is that the commentator has lost sight of the meanings implied in the main experience and those to which it is linked because he has been too intent on each line or group of related lines. Furthermore, he has paid little attention to the techniques Keats used to present the sense of awe.

A professional critic writing a running commentary will be aware of the links and will call attention to them, but the running commentary is not recommended for the beginner in literary analysis. At times, of course, the writer may have to follow the pattern of organization in the work he is discussing. For example, if the topic involves character analysis and the chronology of the story indicates a process of change in the character, then the writer would probably have to follow the change as it takes place in the work—without allowing plot details to dominate his analysis of the alteration. The wise author will impose the structure of his essay upon the literary work so that he can acquire the best disciplined organization possible and thus provide a full and coherent journey for the reader.

LACK OF PROPORTION

Another problem which the writer of an interpretative essay may encounter is that of proportion. Proportion is the allotment of space in an essay to ideas and details depending upon their importance. If a thesis has two equal and related parts, then one should not be treated in a single paragraph and the other in five paragraphs. Nor should a minor point in a section of a paper emerge to dominate that part of the essay. If, while organizing or writing an essay, the author finds that certain points have suddenly assumed a new and greater importance, he may have to revise his thesis to grant them their due significance.

Sometimes lack of proportion will occur because the writer allows his introduction to become too inflated. If, for example, in a paper of eight paragraphs, four are introductory, something is drastically wrong with the proportion. Either the introduction should be pared, or the essay should be extended in order to develop the intricate thesis presented in the first four paragraphs.

The need to achieve balance in the structure of an essay is related to solidity of content, for if an important point is played down, then the content as well as the organization will be defective. In order to attain this balance, the writer cannot resort to slide rules or word counts. He must simply use common sense or at least the guidelines of his own outline.

The loss of proportion or balance in the following essay injures both the organization and content:

> In *Moby Dick* two chapters, "The Monkey-Rope" and "The Mat-Maker," provide insight into the theme of fate which runs throughout this vast, cataclysmic story of Ahab's battle with fate. In both chapters Ishmael and Queequeg are performing duties aboard the *Pequod*. Each time the activity leads Ishmael to speculate about man's destiny.
>
> Up to the chapter called "The Mat-Maker," Ishmael has associated fate primarily with the Calvinistic view of predestination. The activity of weaving the mat with Queequeg leads Ishmael to

broaden his view of fate. By analogy he links their actions with three aspects of fate. The fixed threads become necessity, for example, the inexorable fact of death or the biological needs of man whereby he sustains himself. Ishmael's own weaving of a thread between the fixed strands he sees as free will—man making his own way or his own decisions in the context of necessity. Queequeg's haphazard striking of the threads with a sword to aid Ishmael's weaving becomes chance—the incidents and experiences which are unpredictable and uncontrollable by the free will. In these events other people, not necessarily the one whose destiny is involved, affect fate. Ishmael thus reasons that of the three—necessity, free will, and chance—chance is the most powerful shaper of man's destiny.

In the novel itself the element of chance—the coinciding of foreboding events and the impact of others—is quite strong. For example, it is chance alone which leads the crewmen to the *Pequod*, and chance that Ahab is their commander. It is Ahab's domination of the boat, his impact upon the men, that creates their destiny. It is also chance that the *Rachel*, spurned by Ahab in its search for a lost son, should rescue the one orphan of the *Pequod*, Ishmael, from the coffinlike lifebuoy which by chance happened to be available to keep him from being swallowed by the mysterious ocean.

In "The Monkey-Rope," the emphasis on the interrelationship between people as part of the definition of chance is startlingly presented through the dangerous activity of Queequeg working on the whale while Ishmael, a rope attached to him, tries to keep his savage friend from being smashed between the whale and the ship.

Thus in two chapters Melville brings to his readers a fascinating analysis of a complicated subject—fate.

This essay lacks proportion because the main emphasis falls upon the chapter "The Mat-Maker," although the thesis statement and the conclusion stress two chapters. "The Monkey-Rope" is barely discussed and is almost completely dominated by the second and third paragraphs, even though it holds the climactic position in the paper. "The Mat-Maker" may be the more important chapter, but "The Monkey-Rope" certainly deserves much more discussion to achieve the prominence announced for it in the thesis. Both proportion (organization) and content are involved here; the failure is indeed unfortunate, for the first three paragraphs are quite satisfactory in both organization and content. The essay, however, simply runs out of gas.

GOOD ORGANIZATION DEMONSTRATED AND EXPLAINED

You should read carefully Philip Booth's poem "Cold-Water Flat," the essay analyzing it, and the discussion of the organization of the essay.

Cold-Water Flat

Come to conquer
this living labyrinth of rock,
young Theseus of Dubuque
finds he is mazed without a minotaur,
without his Ariadne in the dark.

He dreams beyond
his steelwalled fear to fields grown
vertical with corn
and hope. Home to this heroic end:
imprisoned in the city of alone;

here smog obscures
his visionary victor's world
and streetsounds dulled
with rain reverberate in airshaft hours
where braver conquerors have been felled.

Amazed at night,
stalking the seven maids no sword
can save, he is devoured
in passageways of reinforced concrete,
trapped by his beast, and overpowered

in sleepless dead-
end dreams. How now, Theseus? How send
word home you are confined
with neither wings nor lover's thread
in the city that a murderer designed?

Myth and Reality in "Cold-Water Flat"

A. In "Cold-Water Flat" Booth uses contrast as his basic principle of poetic structure. The ancient myth of Theseus' destruction of the minotaur is pitted against the failure of "young Theseus of Dubuque" to conquer his new urban environment. The dreams and visions of modern man, linked to ancient myth, are undermined by harsh realities of life in the city and in the cold-water flat. In developing the major contrast between myth, dream, vision, and heroism, on the one hand, and the reality of contemporary urban life, on the other hand, Booth uses numerous verbal devices ironically.

B. The substance of ancient mythology is ever present in the references to Theseus, Ariadne, the minotaur, the seven maids, and the thread. Theseus, aided by Ariadne, discovers the means to destroy the minotaur and escape from the frightful maze housing the monstrous half-man and half-bull. In his conquest, Theseus saves the seven maidens from being offered as human sacrifices to the minotaur. Furthermore, he wins Ariadne, who in helping him had betrayed her own father.

C. The heroism of the mythical Theseus is basic to the vision and dream of conquest cherished by the modern Theseus. Instead of a maze, he faces the "living rock" of urban life, but he fails. He has no Ariadne; he even has no minotaur. He may stalk the seven maids, but instead of heroically liberating them from death, he finds himself trapped by his own sexuality—the beast within. Thus the heroic ancient myth is used in Booth's poem to underscore modern man's failure in urban living.

D. Booth's image of the beast in stanza four masterfully demonstrates how he uses verbal devices ironically and how he reinforces the structural contrast between mythical heroism and the harsh reality of entrapment. In terms of Theseus' heroism, the beast is the minotaur, who is destroyed. In the myth the minotaur is an external adversary. In using the word *beast* in the context of the seven maids, Booth converts it to an inner state—a sexuality which adds to modern man's trap.

E. In addition, throughout the poem the language representing myth and unreality is constantly undercut by the words and images suggesting failure. In stanza one, the phrase *to conquer* is matched with *mazed.* The image of a *living* rock suggests real life and not the mythical rocklike mazes which Theseus escaped by means of a thread. In stanza two the emphasis seems to be on dreams and hope. But the syntax of the poetic sentence converts *heroic end* into *imprisoned in the city of alone*; hence the heroism is terribly ironical. In stanza three the smog and rain cover the *visionary victor's world*; the dirt of reality obliterates the myth of heroic victory. In stanza five the dreams beyond the *steelwalled fear* which seem hopeful are reversed to *sleepless dead-end dreams*—an obliteration of vision and heroic myth. And the word *confined* powerfully echoes images throughout the poem like *mazed, imprisoned, trapped,* and *overpowered.* All of these verbal devices reinforce the ironic reversal of the Theseus myth and provide basic structural ties of contrast.

F. There are other important examples of Booth's ironic deployment of language to establish the basic contrast in "Cold-Water Flat." The key image *mazed,* based, of course, on the classical myth, is converted in stanza four into a pun—*Amazed,* which in context suggests modern man's discovery of the force of his own sexuality as another kind of trap. This play on words is matched by the ironical references to the word *home,* which represents another vision destroyed—the vision of "fields grown/ vertical with corn/ and hope." So entrapped is "young Theseus of Dubuque" by the loneliness and emptiness of urban life that the persona in stanza five has to ask the question, "How send/ word home you are confined/ with neither wings nor lover's thread/ in the city that a murderer designed?" The rhetorical question makes it clear that home, the pleasant escape from modern urban mazes, is out of reach.

G. The structural principle of contrast in "Cold-Water Flat" ultimately resolves itself in the disappearance of heroism, myth, dreams, and visions. The harsh reality of being mazed in modern urban living is the conqueror. The mythical victory of Theseus becomes in contemporary terms the victory of the man-made mazes of urban life.

What are the ingredients of organization in this interpretative essay?

1) Thesis statement: Although the essay is reasonably complex, the thesis is established in paragraph A. This stresses contrast as the basic principle of structure in the poem, defines it in terms of the ancient myth and modern man, and points out the relationship of verbal devices of irony to the contrast. In developing the components of the thesis, the paragraph foreshadows the organization of the essay: the two major parts to be presented are the relationship of the

mythical Theseus to his modern counterpart and the verbal devices used to reverse the heroic ancient myth.

2) The breakdown of the parts: Paragraph A, the introduction, provides the thesis statement. Paragraph G, the conclusion, summarizes the important point made in the entire analysis and in effect returns to the content of paragraph A. Between A and G come the two major divisions: paragraphs B and C deal with the relationship of the ancient myth to the contemporary Theseus; paragraphs D through F develop the use of devices of irony. The arrangement is logical because the discussion in D through F is meaningful only in the context of the details of the old myth applied to the present. Furthermore, since the thesis stresses structure, the discussion of verbal stitching deserves the climactic position in the organization of the paper.

Within each of the major divisions, the smaller parts are clearly organized. In the first major division, paragraph B provides essential details about the mythical Theseus, and paragraph C applies these to the modern Theseus. In the second major division (D through F), D uses one important image (the beast) to establish the purpose and direction of that section. Paragraph E systematically looks at other stanzas for evidence of verbal devices of irony and structural links. Paragraph F, the climax of the second major division, pinpoints two important terms (*mazed* and *home*), introduces a new device—the pun—and ties all to D and E.

Each of the paragraphs has its own organizational consistency and progress. Every paragraph is organized around a single important point—a topic sentence. In each paragraph unity and coherence, basic ingredients of organization, are maintained.

3) Maintenance of focus: By reiteration of key words and phrases like *contrast, myth, reality, Theseus, urban,* and *ironically*—or variants of these—the substance of the thesis statement is always kept before the reader. The clear relationship between the major parts and the logical order within each also make the thesis unfold fluently and coherently. In other words, the careful construction of the building blocks (the paragraphs) into a clear design automatically keeps the focus on the thesis statement.

4) Proportion: The second major division is longer than the first. However, since the discussion of the verbal devices is important and in fact advances the content of the first division, the additional space is needed. Within the main sections, there is a sense of proportion between the parts; for example, in the first division paragraph C balances paragraph B.

5) Transitions: In addition to the repetition of key terms referred to above (3), continuity is provided by many other means. Within the paragraphs, each sentence is related to the preceding one. In paragraph A, for example, sentence two is linked to one by the verb *pitted against,* which picks up *contrast* in sentence one. Sentence three repeats the phrase *ancient myth*; *life in the city* refers to *new urban environment.* In the same sentence the verb *are undermined* continues the emphasis on contrast. Sentence four embraces all of the important terms in the paragraph (and in the entire essay): *contrast, myth, dream, vision, heroism, reality, contemporary,* and *urban.* The repetition of the poet's name also ties the sentence to the initial broad statement.

The transitions between paragraphs also help the reader. In paragraph B the opening phrase picks up a key part of the contrast—*The substance of ancient mythology.* In paragraph C the phrase *The heroism of the mythical Theseus* links that paragraph to both A and B. Paragraph D pulls out of C the image of the beast and turns the essay to a discussion of verbal devices. Paragraph E starts with a pure transitional term—*In addition*—and also echoes or repeats important words and ideas from the previous paragraphs. The word *undercut,* for example, echoes *contrast.*

Thus almost every kind of transitional device available to a writer is used in this essay to provide fluency of movement. This fluency, coupled with a well-defined thesis, careful arrangement of all parts, and maintenance of clear focus, offers a pattern of organization that any reader can profitably follow.

Obviously the tight control over the material in this essay shows that the author knew what he was doing and that he planned every step carefully before he wrote the selection. While he wrote it, he was conscious of the responsibility of providing his readers with clear and meaningful guidelines of organization.

ORGANIZATION OF A COMPARISON ESSAY

At times you may be asked to write a paper in which you will have to deal with two literary works in relation to a thesis statement. It is possible to face a similar problem when dealing with only one poem or story—for example, a comparison of two characters. The comparison paper, which would include contrast, poses serious problems of organization. Once you have selected your thesis, there are at least three general ways to proceed.

The first way concentrates on each of the works separately and then links them in a climactic section of the paper. The outline for such an approach would look something like this:

Introduction—thesis statement.
I. First work as related to the thesis.
II. Second work as related to the thesis.
III. Synthesis—The comparison of the two works; the generalizations drawn from these comparisons can also partially serve as a summary.

This approach, if carefully handled, can be successful, but it establishes three barriers. First, the reader is forced to bear the burden of remembering parts I and II so that the synthesis can be intelligible to him. Second, it will be impossible in part III to avoid the repetition of ideas and possibly details already dealt with. If the repetition becomes too prominent, then the paper will seem to be padded. Since repetition is already a problem, this kind of pattern should not include a summary. A third disadvantage is that, because comparisons are made after the substance of each work has been discussed, the organization in part III may be choppy and disjointed, like a running commentary on the essay itself.

Another approach, after you have clearly defined your central generalization, is to organize the material in categories of similarities and differences. A general outline using this approach is as follows:

Introduction—thesis statement.
I. Similarities.
  A. First similarity.
    1. First work.
    2. Second work.
  B. Second similarity.
    1. First work.
    2. Second work.
II. Differences.
  A. First difference.
    1. First work.
    2. Second work.
  B. Second difference.
    1. First work.
    2. Second work.
III. Summary.

In this approach you may have material which you cannot clearly classify. For example, if one work stresses a point and the other does not, the comparison is one-sided and hence seemingly absent. Actually this problem can be placed under Differences. If the material cannot be classified under either Similarities or Differences, then it probably is irrelevant to the thesis and should be omitted.

A very effective way to organize a comparison paper is to build the essay not around the works themselves or around their similarities and differences, but around the thesis. If that statement is complex enough, it can be broken into smaller generalizations which can be carefully arranged as follows:

Introduction—thesis statement.
I. Point A relevant to the thesis.
  A. First work.
  B. Second work.
  C. Synthesis of the section. [This may run concurrently with A and B; it does not have to be a separate step.]
II. Point B relevant to the thesis.
  A. First work.
  B. Second work.
  C. Synthesis of the section.
III. Summary.

No matter which pattern of organization you choose for your comparison paper, you must be careful to keep your plan clear for the reader. The opportunities for chaotic organization are literally doubled in the comparison essay.

As an example of the third kind of organization of a comparison paper, let us examine an essay comparing the Knight in "La Belle Dame" (p. 32) and the narrator in "The Heavy Bear" (p. 3). The essay will explore the following thesis: "The sensual and emotional experiences of the Knight in 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' and of the narrator in 'The Heavy Bear' lead to a mood of despair because of the harsh realities of life and man's nature." Instead of discussing each poem separately or basing the organization on similarities and differences, the essay breaks the thesis into smaller generalizations which are then used as the main sections of organization. The outline would be thus:

Introduction—thesis statement.
I. Experiences emphasizing senses and the sensual.

A. "La Belle Dame"—great emphasis on sense experience, but also on grace and beauty.
B. "The Heavy Bear"—highly sensual and sexual; makes appetite gross and clumsy.

II. Conflict with reality.
A. "La Belle Dame"—reality versus an ideal beauty, derived through the supernatural Lady.
B. "The Heavy Bear"—reality versus the ideal of pure love (the spirit).

III. Results of the experiences.
A. "La Belle Dame"—despair of the Knight caused by forces beyond himself.
B. "The Heavy Bear"—perplexity and despair of the narrator because of inability to control sensuality and emotions within himself.
C. Points in both poems related to the sense of despair.
1. Image of sleep and despair.
2. Universality of central figure of despair.

Conclusion.

Comparison of "La Belle Dame" and "The Heavy Bear"

The sensual and emotional experiences of the Knight in "La Belle Dame sans Merci" and of the persona in "The Heavy Bear" lead to a mood of despair because of the harsh realities of life and of man's nature.

Both poems emphasize the power of experiences based on the senses or on sensuality. In "La Belle Dame," the relationship with the Lady is beautiful, graceful, and seductive. The details describing the Lady and her actions emphasize the Knight's fascination with her; in fact, he is so absorbed by her that he can see nothing else "all day long." Every one of his senses is engaged: sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Yet these are not ordinary sense experiences, for the "wild wild eyes" and the strange language of the woman make her beauty and appeal seem extraordinary—indeed, beyond real experience.

In "The Heavy Bear," on the other hand, the senses and emotions are vividly and realistically distorted and unpleasant; they are far from graceful, beautiful, and exotic. The senses in effect become the uncontrollable appetites of man, particularly his sensuality. The bear is the symbol of man's inner urges or appetites. The animal's brutish, heavy, lumbering nature and his need for candy, honey, and sugar connote the essential crudeness and irrepressibility of man's drives and emotions. Of these, the grossness of man's sexual nature is most emphasized, especially in the crude embrace of the beloved one.

The world of the senses in "La Belle Dame" is idealized; it becomes a vision of beauty which lies beyond the physical but which is attainable through the senses. This visionary quality of the Knight's experience is conveyed by the Lady. She is beyond reality, an inhabitant of a supernatural kingdom. She is described as "a faery's child," who sings a "faery's song." The grot, the center of her supernatural existence, is an "elfin grot." The Knight, then, is pursuing something outside the real world of the warring Kings and Princes, whose skepticism shatters his pursuit of ideal beauty and returns him to the spiritual despair of the cold hill's side—the despair which the observer so graphically sees in the Knight's face.

In "The Heavy Bear," the persona is not pursuing ideal beauty represented in a supernatural female form. He seems to be plagued all too powerfully and persistently by the nagging reality of "belly and bone," by the drives of sexual appetite and fierce emotion. Yet in this poem there is an implied ideal which establishes a contrast, just as the real and the ideal collide in "La Belle Dame." The implied ideal of Schwartz' poem involves love—the pure love of the beloved which can be inferred in the last stanza. The persona's better self, his spirit, is aware of the grossness of the sexual attraction to the "very dear," but the reality of that attraction overpowers the recognition of the purity of love. As the persona says, the bear is a "stupid clown of the spirit's motive." Although this ideal is perhaps not as strongly portrayed as is the vision of beauty in "La Belle Dame," it is in Schwartz' poem a basic part of the conflict between the reality of appetite and the pure motives of the spirit.

In both poems the conflicts lead to perplexity and despair in the Knight and in the first person narrator. The Knight's despair comes because of the disillusionment that attends the failure of the projection of his better self—the vision of ideal beauty. The lack of faith in that vision by the warriors of the real world destroys the ideal. The Knight then is the victim of forces outside the vision. On the other hand, the persona of Schwartz' poem is the victim of forces within himself—his uncontrollable appetites.

In both poems, interestingly enough, the reality which creates despair comes in images of sleep. The Knight's seemingly comfortable sleep in the arms of the Lady is destroyed by the dream of the Princes and warriors. In stanza two of Schwartz' poem, an ominous

note of fear of the dark extremes of appetite and of the ultimate extinction of the "quivering meat" is conveyed in the nighttime inner turbulence of the heavy bear, who sleeps with the persona, breathing heavily at his side.

Even more ominous is the implication of the universality of the experiences depicted in each poem. The Knight could be Everyman failing in the pursuit of ideal beauty, although Keats never makes an explicit statement of the symbol. Schwartz, on the other hand, directly expands his major symbol, the bear, in the last two lines: "Amid the hundred million of his kind,/ The scrimmage of appetite everywhere."

Although the two poems were written well over a century apart and although the poets approach their subjects quite differently, they make similar comments on the bitter realities of human experience.

CHAPTER 11 SOME MATTERS OF STYLE

Even if you establish a solid and workable thesis statement, provide some excellent ideas and details to support it, and organize your essay logically, you may still mar your essay by stylistic lapses. You cannot present ideas effectively unless you express them clearly. Because we cannot go into every stylistic problem you may confront, we shall concentrate on four difficulties common in papers of literary analysis: incoherent sentence structure, wordiness, jargon, and poor integration of quotations.

In each of these problems, communication between you and your readers is of the utmost importance. If at any time you break down or impede this process, you are in effect defeating your main purpose in writing your essay—to explain your ideas and the details you choose to support them. If such breakdowns are too frequent, then the essay becomes worthless.

INCOHERENT SENTENCE STRUCTURE

In any standard composition book, numerous errors in sentence structure are discussed. Here we shall simply provide some examples of faulty sentence structure that destroy communication.

In a paper on Oedipus, a writer carelessly included the two following sentences:

> The tragic flaw being the eruption of Oedipus' emotions upon the revelation and the tragedy complete with the suicide of his wife and the piercing of his eyes with his own two hands.

> The [Oedipus] complex being, where the father is hated by his son and love for his mother.

shoulders slump. "Take the horses," Moses said; he pulled himself up to his rig, then sat, his knees together beside the boy. Mingo's knees drew together. Moses's voice changed. It began to rasp and wheeze; so did Mingo's. "Missouri," said the old man, not to Mingo but to the dusty floor of the buckboard, "if I don't misremember, is off thataway somewheres in the west."

1986

NTOZAKE SHANGE
b. 1948

In a 1976 interview in *Time* magazine, Ntozake Shange recalled the circumstances that prompted the writing of "A Nite with Beau Willie," one of the most powerful poems in the work for which she is best known, *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*:

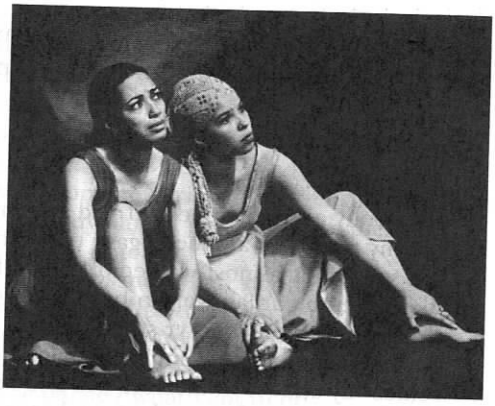
> It was hot. I was broke. I didn't have enough money for a subway token. I was miserable. The man in the next room was beating up his old lady. It went on for hours and hours. She was screaming. He was laughing. Every time he hit her I would think, yeah, man, well that has already happened to me. So I sat down and wrote "Beau Willie." All my anger came out.

Shange's young adult experiences while living in a Harlem boardinghouse were a far cry from her "rich and somewhat protected" childhood. She was born Paulette Williams on October 18, 1948, in Trenton, New Jersey, the daughter of Eloise Williams, a psychiatric social worker and educator, and Paul T. Williams, a surgeon, for whom she was named. When she was eight, her family moved to St. Louis, Missouri. Shange remembers the difficulties she encountered when she was bused to a formerly segregated German-American school: "I was not prepared for it. . . . I was being harrassed and chased around by these white kids. My parents were busy being proud."

The family moved back to Trenton when she was thirteen, and the adolescent Shange began a period of intense reading, devouring the works of Dostoevsky, Melville, Carson McCullers, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Simone de Beauvoir, and Jean Genet, among others. In addition, Shange's artistic development was nourished by her parents' friendships with prominent performers such as Josephine Baker, Dizzy Gillespie, Chuck Berry, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis. W. E. B. Du Bois was also a visitor in her family's home. Shange enrolled at Barnard College, in New York City, in 1966. Despite emotional upheaval, marked by a series of suicide attempts and a difficult separation from her law-student husband, she graduated with honors in 1970. In 1971, while studying for a master's degree in African American studies at the University of California at Los Angeles, she took an African name. *Ntozake* translates as "she who comes with her own things," and *Shange* as "who walks like a lion."

From 1972 to 1975 Shange taught humanities, women's studies, and African American studies at various colleges in California. At the same time, she was reciting poetry and dancing with West Coast performance groups, including her own company, For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide. She moved to New York in 1975 during the Public Theater's production of her choreopoem—poems that are

performed much like the movements of a dramatic dance sequence—*for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf.* The play went on to become the second by an African American woman to reach Broadway (Hansberry's *Raisin in the Sun* opened on Broadway in 1958). In addition to tremendous popular success, the play won Obie and Outer Critics Circle awards and was nominated for the Emmy, Grammy, and Tony awards.



Janet League (left) and Ntozake Shange (right), perform in a 1976 production of *for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf.*

for colored girls is a mesh of poetry, music, dancing, and light. Seven women, dressed in the colors of the rainbow plus brown, the color of the earth and the body, perform twenty poems, without any set or props. In her introduction to the piece, Shange writes that *for colored girls* is about "our struggle to become all that is forbidden, all that is forfeited by our gender, all that we have forgotten." Tracing the women's emotions from youth to maturity, the piece focuses on the lack of communication between men and women and on the misunderstanding of women, exploring particularly the theme of unrequited love. Although many of the poems center on the physical, psychological, and emotional pain experienced by its characters, the piece also asserts the possibility of surviving and developing self-esteem with the support of other women. Many critics praised *for colored girls* as witty and unpredictable; others faulted it for undeveloped characterizations and especially for a lack of sympathetic male figures. It is not surprising that it sparked much debate in African American intellectual circles.

After *for colored girls*, Shange went on to publish a novella, *Sassafrass* (1977); three novels, *Sassafrass, Cypress, and Indigo* (1982), *Betsey Brown* (1985), and *Liliane: Resurrection of the Daughter* (1994); the historical novel *Some Sing, Some Cry* (2012), co-authored with her sister Ifa Bayeza; and several volumes of poetry, including *Nappy Edges* (1978), *Ridin' the Moon in Texas: Word Paintings* (1987), and *The Love Space Demands* (1991), in which her resistance to conventional grammar and spelling reflect a rejection of the hierarchies inherent in standard English as well as a connection with the African American oral tradition. Two of her plays were produced by Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival (*Spell #7* and *A Photograph: Lovers-in-Motion*), and in 1980 she won a second Obie, for her adaptation of Brecht's *Mother Courage*, which featured a black family during the American Civil War. Her nonfiction books *See No Evil: Prefaces, Essays and Accounts, 1976–1983* (1984), *if I can cook you know God can* (1975), and *lost in language & sound: or how I found my way to the arts* (2011) as well as two visually beautiful children's books, *i live in music* (1994), with illustrations by Romare Bearden, and *ellington was not a street* (2004).

Throughout her innovative, productive career, Ntozake Shange's work has been foremost a celebration of language. As she told a *New Yorker* interviewer in 1976, "I listen to words, and when people can't say what they mean they are in trouble."

round to miz bertha's where lil richard[8]
gets his process
run backwards to the rosebushes / a drunk man / lyin
down the block to the nuns in pink habits
prayin in a pink chapel
my dreams run to meet aunt marie
my dreams draw blood from ol sores
these stains & scars are mine
this is my space
i am not movin

1978

Bocas:[1] A Daughter's Geography

i have a daughter / mozambique
i have a son / angola[2]
our twins
salvador & johannesburg[3] / cannot speak
the same language
but we fight the same old men / in the new world

we are so hungry for the morning
we're trying to feed our children the sun
but a long time ago / we boarded ships / locked in
depths of seas our spirits / kisst the earth
on the atlantic side of nicaragua costa rica
our lips traced the edges of cuba puerto rico
charleston & savannah / in haiti[4]
we embraced &
made children of the new world
but old men spit on us / shackled our limbs
but for a minute
our cries are the panama canal / the yucatan[5]
we poured thru more sea / more ships / to manila[6]
ah ha we're back again
everybody in manila awready speaks spanish

the old men sent for the archbishop of canterbury[7]
"can whole continents be excommunicated?"
"what wd happen to the children?"
"wd their allegiance slip over the edge?"

8. African American singer, songwriter (b. 1932), known for his sleek, wavy ("processed") hairdo.
1. Mouths (Spanish).
2. Mozambique and Angola are African nations long torn by civil war.
3. South African city near the black township of Soweto, the site of much poverty and racial unrest. Salvador, a city in Brazil, saw a tremendous influx of slaves to work its sugar plantations, which accounts for its strong African heritage.
4. Countries and towns that were ports of entry or places of labor for African slaves brought to the Western Hemisphere.
5. A peninsula in southeastern Mexico. The Panama Canal is perhaps a reference to the part blacks played in its construction.
6. Capital city of the Philippines. African slaves were brought to the Philippines by the Spanish during their rule over the islands.
7. Head of the Church of England.

"dont worry bout lumumba[8] don't even think bout
ho chi minh[9] / the dead cant procreate"
so say the old men

but i have a daughter / la habana[1]
i have a son / guyana[2]
our twins
santiago & brixton[3] / cannot speak
the same language
yet we fight the same old men

the ones who think helicopters rhyme with hunger
who think patrol boats can confiscate a people
the ones whose dreams are full of none of our
children
they see mae west & harlow[4] in whittled white cafes
near managua[5] / listening to primitive rhythms in
jungles near pétionville[6]
with bejeweled benign natives
ice skating in abidjan[7]
unaware of the rest of us in chicago
all the dark urchins
rounding out the globe / primitively whispering
the earth is not flat old men

there is no edge
no end to the new world
cuz i have a daughter / trinidad[8]
i have a son / san juan[9]
our twins
capetown & palestine[1] / cannot speak the same
language / but we fight the same old men
the same men who thought the earth waz flat
go on over the edge / go on over the edge old men
you'll see us in luanda.[2] or the rest of us
in chicago
rounding out the morning /
we are feeding our children the sun

1983

8. Patrice Lumumba (1925–1961), first prime minister of the Congo (now Democratic Republic of the Congo); ousted by Joseph Kasavubu, he died under mysterious circumstances.
9. Vietnamese nationalist leader (1890–1969) who was the first president of North Vietnam (1954–69).
1. Or Havana; the capital of Cuba.
2. A country in northeast South America, much of whose population is descended from African slaves.
3. A poor, racially mixed section of London. Santiago is the capital of Chile.
4. Mae West (1892?–1980) and Jean Harlow (1911–1937), American film stars known for their sultry personas and spicy wit.
5. Capital of Nicaragua.
6. City in Haiti.
7. Former capital of the Ivory Coast, a country in west Africa.
8. One of the islands of the Caribbean nation of Trinidad and Tobago.
9. The capital of Puerto Rico.
1. Historically, a region comprising parts of modern Israel, Egypt, and Jordan; also the nation of the Palestinian people. Capetown is the capital of South Africa.
2. The capital of Angola; in the 16th to the 19th centuries, it was the center of slave trade to Brazil.

He came and stood in front of my chair then. This boy is worth more than one hundred shares of gilt-edged preferred, and the good part about it is we all going to be drawing down interest on him. Then he handed me a five-dollar bill as crisp as the one he had held up before, and told me to buy myself a fountain pen; and he told Mama he was going to be the one to stake me to all the ink and paper I needed as long as I stayed in school. All I had to do was show him my report card.

All I could do was say thank you, and I said I would always do my best. And Miss Lula Crayton said Amen. And Miss Liza Jefferson said God bless the lamb and God bless you Mayfield Turner. Then before anybody else could say anything he excused himself and Aunt Sue walked him to the door and he put on his alpaca topcoat, his black Homburg hat and his Wall Street gloves and was gone.

All Mama could do was wipe her eyes, and all Papa could do was look at the floor and shake his head and smile. But Uncle Jerome was on his feet again, saying he was talking about the word made manifest for Manifest Destiny;[9] and I knew he was going to take over where Sawmill Turner had left off and preach a whole sermon with me in it that night. And so did everybody else, and they were looking at me as if I really had become the Lamb or something. So I looked at the mantlepiece, and I heard the Mother Goose clock and outside there was the Valley Forge bitter wind in the turret-tall chinaberry tree.

1974

9. In the 19th century, a doctrine that the United States had both the right and the duty to expand across North America.

MAYA ANGELOU
b. 1928

In an interview with African American critic Claudia Tate, Maya Angelou proclaimed, "All my work is meant to say, 'You may encounter many defeats but you must not be defeated.' In fact, the encountering may be the very experience which creates the vitality and the power to endure."

The career of Maya Angelou is a testament both to her vitality and to her power to endure. Angelou has expressed her talents as a dancer, singer, producer, composer, journalist, actor, and teacher as well as a writer. Beginning with *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970), which was nominated for a National Book Award, she has chronicled her various careers in four other autobiographical volumes. Angelou has also published five volumes of poetry: *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'for I Diiie* (1971), which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, *Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well* (1975), *And Still I Rise* (1978), *Shaker Why Don't You Sing* (1983), *Now Sheba Sings the Song* (1987), and *I Shall Not Be Moved* (1990). Chosen by President Bill Clinton to read at his inauguration on January 21, 1993, Angelou was both the first African American and the first woman poet to be so honored.

Born Marguerite Annie Johnson on April 4, 1928, in St. Louis, Angelou moved frequently as a child. Her divorced parents, Vivian Baxter and Bailey Johnson, sent her and her brother, Bailey, back and forth between St. Louis and Stamps, Arkansas, where her paternal grandmother lived, then finally to San Francisco to settle with their mother. It was her ten years in Arkansas that provided Angelou with the experiences that would be the core of her immensely popular autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

In that volume Angelou describes what it meant to be a black girl in Arkansas during the Depression. One vivid example was the treatment she received from the ironically named dentist Dr. Lincoln, who refused to treat her seriously decayed teeth because she was black. Angelou reflects: "It seems terribly unfair to have a toothache and a headache and to have to bear at the same time the heavy burden of Blackness." However, the racism of the South was exceeded by the trauma of her being raped at age eight by her mother's boyfriend. After naming her assailant, Angelou had to endure the horror of the trial and the subsequent murder of her rapist by her uncles. Feeling that her words had the power to kill, she descended into silence for the next five years. The writer who was later to state, "I write for the Black voice and any ear which can hear it," spent many years unable to speak herself, but listening to and absorbing the voices around her.

Despite the difficulties of her early life, Angelou's autobiographies and poetry are full of references to the positive, life-affirming values, particularly courage, of the African American community in which she grew up. Her grandmother Annie Henderson, of Stamps, embodied for this injured child strength in the face of adversity. Through the Depression and despite racism and sexism, Henderson's ability to keep her general store solvent and her pride intact excited her granddaughter's admiration. Another resilient southern woman, Mrs. Flowers, the aristocrat of black Stamps, helped Angelou regain her voice through afternoons of reading and reciting literary classics.

These experiences in the South provided Angelou with the "power to endure" her adolescent years in California. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* recounts her headlong rush into maturity as she became the first African American streetcar conductor in San Francisco and graduated from Mission High School at sixteen only to deliver a son one month later. Throughout the second volume of her autobiography, *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), Angelou weathers difficulties with men and with jobs, including a week's stint with prostitution and a flirtation with drugs.

In the third volume of her autobiography, *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* (1976), Angelou recounts her life as a dancer and member of the European touring cast of *Porgy and Bess*. In *The Heart of a Woman* (1981), Angelou relates her growing commitment to writing and her involvement in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. She moved to Brooklyn to learn the craft of writing from her friend John Oliver Killens, who introduced her to the Harlem Writers Guild and to writers such as Paule Marshall and James Baldwin. During this time, she met Martin Luther King Jr. and became the Southern Christian Leadership Conferences' northern coordinator. She also appeared as the White Queen in Jean Genet's play *The Blacks*.

Angelou's travels are the subject of her fifth autobiographical volume, *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1984). In this book she tells of her quest to understand Africa during a stay in Ghana and of her decision to return to the southern United States for the first time since her childhood. It is not surprising that her sojourn in Africa helped her understand herself both as an African and as an American. *A Song Flung Up to Heaven* (2002) recapitulates many experiences chronicled in the earlier volumes; she ends this record of her life as she prepares to write *Caged Bird*. Her first six autobiographies were reissued in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings: Collected Autobiographies of May Angelou* (2004). *Mom and Me and Mom* (2013) focuses on Angelou's relationship with her mother, Vivian Baxter.

Angelou is also a prolific poet, whose lyrics draw on African American oral traditions. Many of her poems explore the vicissitudes of love and the pleasures and difficulties of being an African American. Her *Collected Poems* was published in 1994, and *A Brave and Startling Truth* appeared in 1995. In 1993 President Bill Clinton invited Angelou to write a poem for his inauguration; the poem she recited, "On the Pulse of Morning," won the 1994 Grammy Award in the Best Spoken Word category. Angelou has also written for television—the PBS series *Black, Blues, Black* (1968) and a teleplay of *Caged Bird*—and for the screen—*Georgia, Georgia* (1971) and *Sister, Sister* (1979). She received a Tony nomination for best supporting actress in the television series *Roots*. Writing across a range of genres, including children's books, cookbooks, and inspirational volumes, Angelou continues to be among the most popular African American writers. As her audience has grown, her critical reputation has declined. *Caged Bird*, however, remains widely admired.

More than fifty colleges and universities have awarded Angelou honorary degrees, including Smith College, Mills College, and the University of Arkansas. In 1981 she accepted a lifetime appointment as the first Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University. In 2010 she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama.

Still I Rise

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own back yard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise

That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

1978

My Arkansas

There is a deep brooding
in Arkansas.
Old crimes like moss pend
from poplar trees.
The sullen earth
is much too
red for comfort.

Sunrise seems to hesitate
and in that second
lose its
incandescent aim, and
dusk no more shadows
than the noon.
The past is brighter yet.

Old hates and
ante-bellum[1] lace, are rent
but not discarded.
Today is yet to come
in Arkansas.
It writhes. It writhes in awful
waves of brooding.

1978

1. Existing before the Civil War.

9

Drafting the Essay

This chapter deals with the second stage of the writing process, drafting the essay. By the time you reach this stage, you should have chosen a topic and thought about what you want to say about it. Now your task is to draft the essay. How do you do this? To help you answer this question, we discuss the basic aspects of the interpretive essay and offer some guidelines for writing a first draft.

THE ARGUMENTATIVE NATURE OF INTERPRETIVE ESSAYS

Qualities of essays. Essays about literature are "arguments." You may think of an *argument* as a verbal fight between people. But in rhetoric, it is a form of persuasive discourse that employs logic to explain and defend ideas. Although writings about literature can be solely informational (just give information) or expressive (just state opinions), essays are argumentative. An *argumentative essay* has three main qualities. First, its goal is to persuade people of the validity of its ideas. Second, it has a *thesis,* an overall claim. Third, it supports its thesis with evidence (facts, reasoning, and, when necessary, testimony).

Essays as arguments. The argumentative nature of essays about literature arises from the relationship between the work and its reader. Good literature is complex. It communicates on many levels of

meaning and by many methods. A single work may exist as a system of sounds, symbols, ideas, images, analogies, actions, psychological portrayals, moods, or grammatical structures—all of which are separate entities, yet all of which interrelate. Furthermore, literature also invites readers to participate in creating the work. A work is not complete until it is read. The author leaves *gaps in the work* for readers to fill with their imagination. The completed work—the work that is read—is something more than the words on the page. It is a collaboration between text and reader. As a result, perceptions of a work vary from age to age, reader to reader, even reading to reading. This variability of perception occurs because no single reading, however careful, can take in all the elements of most works, or synthesize them into all their structural relationships, or include all the vantage points from which even one reader might experience a work.

Consequently, no single view of a work, whether your own or someone else's, can be the all-encompassing or final view. Cultures change, people change and, as a result, perception changes. It is a common experience for children to enjoy works—*Huckleberry Finn, Gulliver's Travels,* "Rip Van Winkle," *Alice in Wonderland*—and as adults to enjoy them again, but for different reasons and with new understandings of them. This does not mean that all interpretations of a work are equally valid. Interpretations of literature are subject to the same rules of human thought—accurate observation, sound reasoning, systematic procedure, thoroughness of treatment—as any other interpretive discourse. But no single interpretation can encompass the whole work.

Because literature is complex and can be perceived variously, essays about literature are arguments. You, the writer of the essay, cannot take for granted that your interpretation of the work is the same as your reader's. Your reader may have missed the very facts in the work you have found most compelling or most "obvious." Your reader may have a totally different understanding of the work than you do. If you want your reader to grasp your interpretation or accept it as valid, you must explain and persuade. You must write an argument.

THE STRUCTURE OF ESSAYS ABOUT LITERATURE

Argumentative essays have two interrelated structures: an *argumentative structure* based on logic and a *rhetorical structure* based on persuasion. Because argumentation is a means of persuasion, the argumentative structure is really part of the rhetorical structure. But

the two structures are not exactly the same, so we will talk about them separately.

The Argumentative Structure

Inductive reasoning. The argumentative structure of an essay consists of two kinds of reasoning: inductive and deductive. *Inductive reasoning* is the "scientific method." It consists of observing specific instances of something and drawing conclusions about them. You notice, for example, that in Act One of *Hamlet,* Hamlet is melancholy all the time. Then in Act Two, he is melancholy most of the time. In Act Three, he is melancholy four times. In Act Four, just two times. And in Act Five, none of the time. Having observed these instances of Hamlet's behavior, you can conclude that Hamlet starts out as a melancholy fellow but that his melancholia decreases throughout the play.

Inductive reasoning is essential for interpreting literature, but in itself it can seem like a dead end. So what if Hamlet is melancholy? To get beyond the "so what?" question, you need a second kind of reasoning, deduction. What if, for example, you want to claim that Hamlet's melancholia is the cause of something or, that by Act Five, it reaches crisis proportions? *Deductive reasoning* allows you to support such claims, to *do* something with your inductive conclusions.

Deductive reasoning. Syllogisms are the basis of deductive reasoning. A *syllogism* is a unit of reasoning that consists of two claims that support a third claim. The two supporting claims are called *premises,* and the third claim is called a *conclusion.* The *major premise* states a general concept. The *minor premise* is a specific instance of that concept. The *conclusion* connects the specific instance to the general concept:

MAJOR PREMISE: All complex characters are fascinating.

MINOR PREMISE: Anna Karenina is a complex character.

CONCLUSION: Therefore, Anna Karenina is fascinating.

Although in formal logic all three parts of a syllogism are stated, in argumentative essays parts of syllogisms are usually left unstated. The above syllogism would probably be stated something like this: "Anna Karenina is fascinating because she is so complex." Here, the major premise has been left out and is present only as an assumption.

Such incompletely stated syllogisms are called *enthymemes.* Authors use enthymemes when they believe the unstated premises would seem obvious or readily acceptable to their readers. But just because an author uses enthymemes does not mean that the syllogisms are absent. You can recover all the parts of such syllogisms in order to test their validity.

The deductive reasoning of an essay consists of a series of syllogisms that support a thesis. Consider, for example, the deductive reasoning of the student essay on the *Odyssey* in the previous chapter (pages 248–253). The student's thesis is that although Ogygia might seem like paradise to most people, Odysseus leaves it because to him it is not. She supports this thesis with two sets of syllogisms. In the first set she reasons why Ogygia seems like a paradise:

- MAJOR PREMISE: Many people believe that all places like Eden are paradises.

  MINOR PREMISE: Ogygia is like Eden.

  CONCLUSION: Therefore, many people would believe that Ogygia is a paradise.

In the second set of syllogisms, she reasons why Odysseus fails to find Ogygia a paradise.

- MAJOR PREMISE: All people who constantly scheme and love to overcome challenges are creative.

  MINOR PREMISE: Odysseus constantly schemes and loves to overcome challenges.

  CONCLUSION: Therefore, Odysseus is creative.
- MAJOR PREMISE: All creative people would hate living in a place that demands no creativity.

  MINOR PREMISE: Odysseus is a creative person.

  CONCLUSION: Therefore, Odysseus would hate living in a place that demands no creativity.
- MAJOR PREMISE: All places that anyone would hate are not paradise.

  MINOR PREMISE: Places that demand no creativity, like Ogygia and Eden, are places that some people (namely, Odysseus) would hate.

  CONCLUSION: Therefore, Ogygia is not, for Odysseus, a paradise.

These two sets of syllogisms—the syllogism about the nature of paradise and the ones about Odysseus—form the deductive framework of

this student's essay. If you read her essay carefully, you will see that she leaves parts of her syllogisms unstated. She uses enthymemes. Such incompleteness is typical of essays. The point, however, is that the deductive reasoning of all essays consists of a chain of syllogisms, whether fully stated or not, that lead to and support a thesis.

But what about the inductive reasoning in her essay? We see inductive reasoning in two crucial places: (1) her claim that Ogygia is like Eden and (2) her claim that Odysseus is a craftsman. She arrived at these claims by noticing numerous related facts about Ogygia and about Odysseus's behavior. Now, in her essay, she supports her claims with some of these facts. But had she done no more than this, we might be tempted to ask, "So what?" So what if Ogygia is like Eden? So what if Odysseus is crafty? She anticipates our "so what?" questions with deductive reasoning that leads to her thesis: Someone as enterprising and clever as Odysseus would hate living in a static place like Eden and Ogygia, even though many people think of them as "paradise." She thus joins inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning to establish the argumentative structure of her essay.

The Rhetorical Structure

Rhetoric defined. *Rhetoric,* simply put, is the art of persuasion. It consists of all the devices writers use to make their claims attractive and convincing. For essays, the most important rhetorical device is argumentation—the reasoning that supports your thesis. Reasoning, however, is not the only rhetorical device you can use in an essay. Other rhetorical choices include how you organize the essay, where you put your thesis, what parts of your syllogisms you leave unstated, and which parts you emphasize and support with evidence from the text. All these choices help create the rhetorical structure of the essay.

How to organize your essay. The organization of any essay depends in part on the line of reasoning you develop, and this will vary from topic to topic. But the general structure of an argumentative essay is fairly standard and almost always contains the following units:

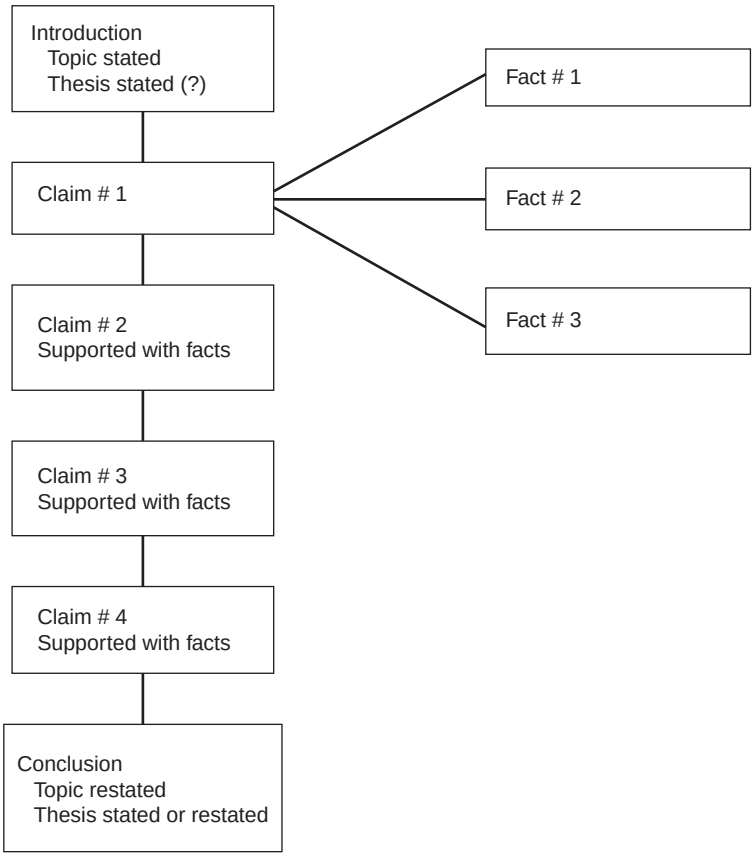
1. **Title.** The *title* should tell enough about the topic of the essay to capture the interest of readers and let them know the focus of the essay. The topic is what the essay is about. For the sake of clarity, include the author's name and the title of the work you will discuss: "The Jungle as Symbol in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*."
2. **Introduction.** The *introduction* should state the topic of the essay and should be interesting enough to make the reader want to keep

on reading. You can state your thesis here, or you can choose to state it later. Keep introductions short—one to three paragraphs.

3. **Body.** The *body* is the place where you develop your line of reasoning. It consists of a series of paragraphs that contain claims (usually one claim per paragraph) along with supporting evidence. The body should contain as many paragraphs as necessary to make your argument convincing.

4. **Conclusion.** The *conclusion* signals that the essay has come to an end. It should remind the reader of the problem posed at the beginning of the essay (the topic) and briefly summarize the solutions. It should state or restate the thesis. The conclusion should be brief, a paragraph or so.

The following graphic represents this structure:



The student essay on the *Odyssey* illustrates these structural principles. The title—"Paradise Rejected in Homer's *Odyssey*"—gives enough information about the topic for readers to know, and be intrigued by, the focus of the essay. The introduction (the first paragraph) presents the topic as a problem to be solved: Why does Odysseus leave "paradise"? The body of the essay consists of a series of paragraphs spelling out the chain of syllogisms that make up the author's reasoning. The conclusion—the last paragraph—answers the question raised in the beginning.

Where to put the thesis. You have three choices: You can put it in the introduction, you can put it in the conclusion, or you can leave it unstated but implicit. You have to decide which is rhetorically most effective for your topic. If you state the thesis at the beginning, readers have the comfort of knowing what to look for as they read the rest of the essay. If you withhold it until the end, you create a sense of suspense that climaxes with the revelation of thesis. If you leave the thesis implicit, you allow readers to infer it and thus to participate in its discovery.

The author of the essay on the *Odyssey* puts her thesis at the end of the essay rather than at the beginning. Her rhetorical strategy is to open the essay with an intriguing question, then lead us toward an answer—her thesis—at the end.

Which premises to support with evidence from the text. Your syllogisms, and ultimately your thesis, are believable only if your audience accepts the premises of the syllogisms. You do not have time to support all your premises with evidence, and you do not really need to. Your audience will accept most of them as true, but you will have to support some of them to make your argument believable. Which ones? This, too, is a question about rhetorical strategy. You have to decide which premises your audience will accept as true and which ones they will want supported with evidence. For essays about literature, "evidence" consists of anything inside or outside the text that bears on your topic.

The author of the student essay on the *Odyssey* leaves many of her premises and conclusions unstated. The ones she emphasizes and supports with evidence are (1) that Eden and Ogygia are similar and (2) that Odysseus is creative. Is she right to have supported these claims and not some others? Only she and her

readers can answer that question for sure. Some readers might say no, that she needs to support other claims as well. Others may say yes, that these are the key claims needing support. Arguing effectively depends on your ability to choose for the benefit of your audience which claims to state and support. Where you present them—and how—becomes part of the rhetorical structure of your essay.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING FIRST DRAFTS

You are now about to begin writing. The following are suggestions about what to think about and do as you write.

Keep in Mind the Needs of Your Audience

As you write the drafts of your essay, calculate the needs of your audience. You will write better essays if you write for an audience that includes not just your instructor but anyone who enjoys literature and has ideas about it. Your goal is to convince them that your ideas have merit. Imagine yourself in conversation with your audience. In order to follow your line of thought, they will want to know certain things. Anticipate and supply their needs, just as you would if you were talking with them in person.

One of their needs is for clarity. They deserve a full and clear explanation of the points you are making. Your readers—including your instructor—cannot read your mind. Assume that they have already read the work or can read it. You need only to summarize and paraphrase those parts of the work that illustrate your points. But if you do not spell out your ideas, your readers may miss them altogether. In being fully clear, you may feel that you are being childishly obvious, but it is better to be obvious than risk having readers miss your points.

Your readers also need to be convinced. Assume that they want to learn from you, but do not expect them to surrender their views of the work just because you tell them to. Think of them as constantly asking, Why should we believe what you say? Your task is to explain and show them why.

Avoid Extreme Subjectivity (Overuse of "I")

Should you use "I" in essays about literature? Some teachers insist that students not use "I." One reason is that teachers want students to avoid stating their opinions without supporting them with facts and reasoning. We are used to asserting opinions in casual conversation: "The Harry Potter books are wonderful!" But the essay form demands proof and reasoning. Another reason is that if you fill your essays with phrases like "I feel," "I think," "I believe," "It seems to me," your essay, no matter how thorough and well reasoned, will sound overly opinionated. Notice how the author of the essay on the *Odyssey* uses "I" frequently in her notes and journal but eliminates it entirely from her essay.

Having said this, however, essays about literature are inevitably "subjective." Yes, you have to pay careful attention to details in the text. These are the basis for all your claims about it. Yes, you have to use sound logic to support claims. Yes, you have to be objective—willing to entertain understandings of a work other than your own. But nearly all works of literature are open to interpretation. That is why we write about them. Your interpretations are likely to be different from other people's. For this reason, it is standard practice for critics to use "I" when writing interpretations of literature, even in the most scholarly writing. Many essays, in fact, would sound stilted and strange if their authors did not use "I." An example is the student essay on George Eliot's *Adam Bede,* printed in Chapter 13. The author compares her own experiences to those of a character in the novel. Even in essays that do not, like this one, take a reader-response approach to literature, the inclusion of an occasional "I believe" makes rhetorical sense. It emphasizes where the author departs from others' opinions: "Many critics see Hetty as selfish and thoughtless, but I see her more sympathetically."

Two suggestions, then, pertain to the use of "I" in your essays. First, use "I" helpfully but sparingly. Second, find out your teacher's preference about the use of "I" and write accordingly.

Draw Up a Rough Outline

Many people find rough outlines indispensable for drafting essays. A rough outline consists of the main points you want to make,

including the thesis. If the author of the essay about the *Odyssey* had made a rough outline, it would look something like this:

Introduction

Raise this question: Why does Odysseus leave Ogygia, which seems like paradise?

Body

Claim #1: Ogygia is a paradise.

Support this claim by comparing Ogygia to Eden (my standard for what paradise is). Give facts from the two texts.

Claim #2: Odysseus leaves Ogygia because he wants to be with Penelope and because he is too creative to be happy there.

Support these claims with facts from the Odyssey.

Conclusion

Claim #2 is the answer to my question and therefore my thesis. I will make it my conclusion as well.

Rough outlines are just that—*rough.* They include only the main points of your draft, not all the nuances. Their usefulness is to give you a general sense of your line of thought and rhetorical strategy and to help you make sure that all claims relate to your topic. When you start writing, you may discover new ideas or run into dead ends. If so, redo your rough outline and go on from there.

Begin Writing

Don't bog down. If you have trouble with the introduction (as many people do), move on to the body of the paper. Work on stating your

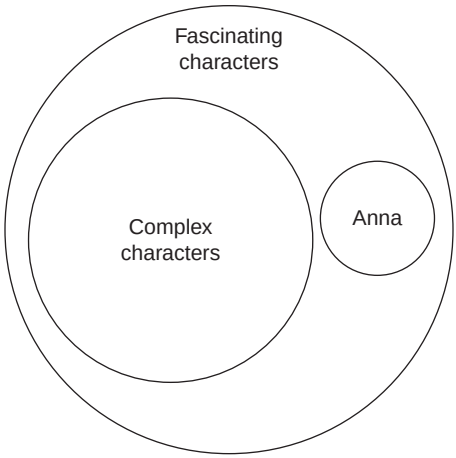
claims clearly and supporting the key ones with evidence. Tackle the claims that seem easiest to support first. Once you get a draft written, it is easier to rearrange claims, to fill in gaps, and to decide for sure what your thesis is.

Use Sound Deductive Reasoning

The deductive logic of your essay is made up of the syllogisms and chains of syllogisms that constitute your reasoning. If one or more of your syllogisms is invalid, the whole of your argument is undermined. Logic is a complex topic we do not have the space to discuss thoroughly here. But a general rule is to avoid *non sequiturs.* The Latin term *non sequitur* means, "It does not follow." A *non sequitur* results from the improper—that is, illogical—statement of a syllogism. For example, the conclusion of the following syllogism "does not follow" from the premises:

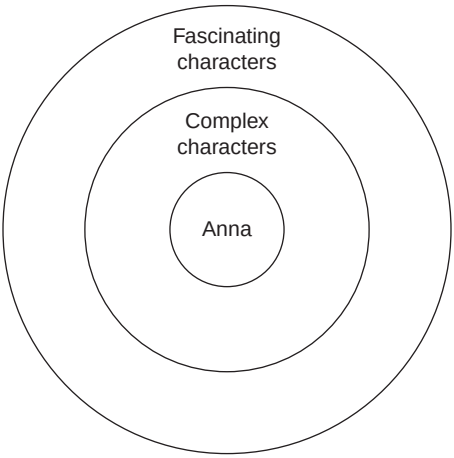
MAJOR PREMISE: All complex characters are fascinating.
MINOR PREMISE: Anna Karenina is fascinating.
CONCLUSION: Therefore, Anna Karenina is complex.

You can test syllogisms with a graphic that uses circles.



Just because Anna is fascinating does not mean she is complex. She may be fascinating for many other reasons. The correct statement of this syllogism is as follows:

MAJOR PREMISE: All complex characters are fascinating.
MINOR PREMISE: Anna Karenina is a complex character.
CONCLUSION: Therefore, Anna is fascinating.



When you plan and write your essay, test the validity of your syllogisms. After you finish the first draft, go back over it to make sure your syllogisms are valid. For practice, identify some of the key syllogisms in one of the essays in Chapter 13 or in an argumentative essay in a newspaper or news magazine. Write down the syllogisms and see if they are properly stated.

Support Key Claims with Facts

The believability of your argument rests not only on the validity of your reasoning but on the truth of your premises. The logic of your syllogisms may be perfectly valid, but if readers do not accept your premises as true, they will reject your conclusions, including your thesis:

MAJOR PREMISE: All healthy people eat spinach.
MINOR PREMISE: Hugo is a healthy person.
CONCLUSION: Hugo eats spinach.

This syllogism is stated correctly, but the major premise is highly questionable. Look again at the correctly stated syllogism about Anna Karenina above. Is it true that "all complex characters are fascinating"? If not, the conclusion that Anna is fascinating is dubious.

Establish the truth of premises by supporting them with facts. Anything in the work is a *fact*. Facts can be quotations, words, incidents, details of setting, descriptions of characters, conflicts within the plot, word sounds, punctuation—anything in the work. Facts need not be just quotations; they can be your summaries of scenes and events.

Notice, for example, how the author of the essay on the *Odyssey* combines summary and quotation to support her claim that Odysseus is a craftsman:

> Odysseus is a craftsman, a maker, a builder. He crafts the stratagem of the Trojan Horse. He crafts his escape from Polyphemus, the Cyclops (135). He crafts his way past Scylla and Charybdis (188–89). He crafts his artful speech to Nausicaa that wins her help (90–91). He tells the story of his adventures, Alcinous says, "as though you were a practiced bard" (172). Finally, he crafts the defeat of the suitors. He loves stratagems so much that he invents them for the sheer pleasure of it. After telling Athene one of his elaborate lies, she says,
>
> > He must be indeed a shifty lying fellow who could surpass you in all manner of craft even though you had a god for your antagonist. Dare-devil that you are, full of guile, unwearying in deceit, can you not drop your tricks and your instinctive falsehood, even now that you are in your own country again? (205)

The only "long" quotation in this paragraph is the one at the end. Otherwise, the paragraph consists of the author's summary of relevant facts as well as brief quotations she weaves into her own

sentences. She also gives page references, so readers can check her facts or get a sense of their context. Page references have a rhetorical function as well. They say, in effect, "Reader, I know what I'm talking about. If you don't believe me, go check my references."

Use Sound Inductive Reasoning

When you reason inductively, you draw conclusions from facts in the work. Instances of Hamlet's melancholia, for example, lead you to conclude that he is melancholy. When you include inductive reasoning in an essay, you usually reverse this order. You state a claim (the conclusion of your inductive reasoning). Then you present facts that led you to it.

To make your inductive reasoning convincing, follow three rules of evidence. First, give enough facts to support your claims. You need not cite every relevant fact, just enough so readers can see the reasonableness of your claim. Second, report facts that are representative of all the facts, not just isolated, atypical facts (the one and only time that Hamlet is melancholy). Third, account for facts that contradict your thesis. If there are incidents in which Hamlet is not melancholy, explain why these do not nullify your claim that he is melancholy. Often, when you explain away negative examples of your claims, you make your overall argument more subtle and convincing. Hamlet's occasional gaiety, you might argue, does not contradict his melancholia; rather, it is a cover for it, a mask he wears.

Define Key Terms

Learn the meaning of important words in primary sources. Look up words in a good dictionary when you have any doubts about their meaning. Doing so is especially necessary for poetry and earlier authors such as Shakespeare and Chaucer. For definitions of terms, the two most authoritative dictionaries are *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1989); and *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* (1966). *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* is based on "historical principles"; it describes and gives examples of a word's use over the years. If you want to know what a word meant to Shakespeare or Chaucer, look it up in the *OED.* The *Merriam-Webster's Third International* is a "descriptive" dictionary; it describes how the word is used and spelled today. The college edition of the

Merriam, abridged from the *Third New International,* is adequate for nearly all your needs, as are most hardcover "desk" dictionaries on the market. As of this writing, you can search *The American Heritage Dictionary* (3rd edition, 1996) online at *Bartleby.com*. Also, your library may subscribe to the online version of the *OED.* A Web site that includes *Webster's New World College Dictionary* (4th ed., 1999) and other materials related to languages is yourdictionary.com. For definitions of specialized literary terms, such as *gothic* and *naturalism,* see M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham's *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (2009).

Organize Evidence According to a Coherent Plan

Evidence consists of everything you offer in support of your claims and thesis. It includes both your reasoning and whatever facts you use to buttress your reasoning. The most important "coherent plan" for presenting evidence is your line of thought, the chain of enthymemes that lead to your thesis. These will vary from topic to topic. You will have to work out a different plan of reasoning for each essay.

Nonetheless, there are several ways of presenting facts from literature that make evidence easy to follow.

1. *Spatial organization* presents the facts as they appear in the work, from beginning to end.
2. *Chronological organization* takes up the facts in the order in which they occur in time. Often, spatial order is the same as chronological but not always. Many works employ devices such as stream of consciousness and flashbacks that make spatial sequence different from chronological. Detective fiction, for example, depends on a gradual revelation of past events. Not until you finish reading a detective novel can you know the chronological order of events. One advantage of either organization is that you give the reader the sense that you are covering all the important details of the work.
3. *Organization by ascending order of importance* moves from the least important facts or claims to the most important. The advantage of this method is that it gives your essay suspense by ushering readers toward a climax. Organizing from the least controversial claims to the most controversial is a variation on this plan.

The paragraph about Odysseus's craftsmanship (page 267) combines two of these plans of organization. The author arranges her facts *chronologically* by starting with the Trojan Horse and ending with the defeat of the suitors. Had she arranged them spatially—as they appear in the text—they would be out of chronological sequence. She also arranges her facts in *ascending order of importance.* She ends with Odysseus's most important stratagem, the defeat of the suitors, and with his most surprising trait, his love of stratagems. This plan provides an orderly review of Odysseus's career, makes her facts easy to follow, and gives her presentation a measure of suspense.

Make Comparisons Complete and Easy to Follow

When you make extended comparisons, organize them so they are easy to follow.

- Cover the *same aspects* of all the things compared. If you talk about metaphor, symbolism, and imagery in one work, you need to talk about these same things in the other work.
- Also, discuss items *in the same order.* If you talk about metaphor, symbolism, and imagery in one work, keep this same order when you discuss the other work: metaphor first, symbolism second, imagery last. The outline for such a comparison would look like this:

Work #1
- Metaphor
- Symbolism
- Imagery

Work #2
- Metaphor
- Symbolism
- Imagery

For comparisons of more than two things or for long, complex comparisons, another method of organization may be easier for readers to follow:

Metaphor
- Work #1
- Work #2
- Work #3

Symbolism
Work #1
Work #2
Work #3

Imagery
Work #1
Work #2
Work #3

The student essay on the *Odyssey* uses this second plan of comparison:

Claim: Eden and Ogygia are similar.
Reason #1: Their physical features are similar.
A. Eden has certain physical features (described).
B. Ogygia's physical features (described) are almost exactly the same.
Reason #2: Their inhabitants live comfortable and pain-free lives.
A. Eden
B. Ogygia
Reason #3: The inhabitants have companionship.
A. Eden
B. Ogygia
Reason #4: Both places are free from death.
A. Eden
B. Ogygia

There are other ways to organize comparisons. You could, for example, discuss all the similarities together, then all the differences. The general rule is to make the comparison thorough and orderly, so readers can see all the lines of similarity and difference. Doing this usually requires ample revisions of your outlines and drafts. The next chapter, Chapter 10, deals with the revision and editing stages of the writing process. It concludes with two drafts of a comparison essay, and shows how revision can improve the arrangement of extended comparisons.

Checklist for Drafting the Essay

- Plan the rhetorical structure of your essay.
- Make a rough outline of the essay.

- Compose a title that signals the focus of the essay.
- Decide where you will state your thesis.
- Write an introduction that explains the problem(s) you plan to solve.
- Lay out the organization of the body of the essay.
- Write out your key syllogisms. State them so they make logical sense.
- Decide which premises you will support with evidence.
- Make sure your premises follow convincingly from the evidence.
- Define important terms.
- Organize comparisons so they are easy to follow.
- Write a conclusion that announces how the problem is solved.

Works Cited

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