

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**

**Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bouzaréah**

**Department of English**



# **British and American Literature Lessons for Third Year Students of English at ENS de Bouzaréah.**

Designed by Dr. Kenza Nezzar

**Academic year 2024/2025**

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## **Overview of the Module**

The Course is twofold, Learners start by British literature that spans over one semester; we start chronologically, we will analyze British poems and texts first, we shift to American literature in the second semester.

Before indulging in any analysis of literary texts, we give students the chance to know about all the literary terms and theory they need: like rhetorical devices, poetic forms, and types of plays, types and elements of fiction. The teacher, then, proceeds to give assignments to the students; so that they become familiar with the way to analyze a poem, a play, a novel or any piece of fiction. Thus, the program is three sections: the first section includes all the theoretical knowledge the students need. The second one during the first semester is concerned with poems and literary texts from British literature that, we give students as assignments, and then we duly discuss them. The third section in the second semester is concerned with poems and texts from American literature.

## **Aims and Objectives of the Module**

This course in British and American literature aims at making students from different perspectives and backgrounds taste and enjoy literary texts; poems, plays and novels of famous and outstanding writers of British and American literature. It aims at getting rid of the anxiety students have, when they have any literary text to analyze. It also acquaints the students with the different trends in literature; giving them enough knowledge about the context in which literary texts were produced.

## **Teaching Philosophy Statement**

### **How to apprehend literature in the best possible way?**

I strongly believe in motivation, motivating students to learn more about literature, literary theory, literary terms, and literary genres is a first step to equip them to taste literary texts. To enjoy their analysis; it clearly frees them from the anxiety and pressure, when it comes to analyze literary texts or to write essays and research papers about specific authors and their texts. Using all mediums remains the best way to teach literature: encouraging students to compare between the original texts and their cinematographic version is a way to try to approach literature using different mediums; hence, the audio-visual teaching along with the literary theory new approaches to literature, makes it really interesting and enjoyable. Having to deal with literary texts is

Designed by Dr. Nezzar Kenza

possible and fruitful if we can see the human dimension as fundamental to any analysis. Students read literature of English language and culture, thus; acquiring more and more understanding and empathy for the other. Literature has the potential to make us enjoy the small life journey that the human beings are given, and to relate to each other, connecting languages, religions and humans.

## **Suggested Program in British and American Literature**

- I) **Theoretical background and literary terms: Major Literary forms.**
  - A) **Poetry**
    - Rhyme**
    - Rhythm and Meter**
    - Figures of speech**
    - Poetic forms**
  - B) **Drama**
    - History of drama**
    - Theatres and plays**
  - C) **Fiction**
    - Elements of fiction**
- II) **British literature**
  - A) **British poetry**
    - Epic poetry: Extracts from Milton's "Paradise Lost"**
    - Classical poetry: A Sonnet of Shakespeare.**
    - Victorian poetry: A Sonnet of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.**
    - Pre-Romantic poetry:  
A poem of Robert Burns: Red Red Rose.**
    - Romantic poetry:  
A poem of Wordsworth: Perfect Woman.**
  - B) **British Drama**
    - Analysis of Shakespeare's Hamlet**
  - C) **British Fiction**
    - Analysis of Austen's "Pride and Prejudice"**
- III) **American literature**
  - A) **American Poetry:**
    - Colonial period: A poem of Ann Bradstreet.**
    - Romantic period: A poem of Edgar Allan Poe.**
    - Realism: A poem of Robert Frost.**
    - Modernism: A poem of T.S. Eliot.**
  - B) **American Fiction**
    - Analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter"**
    - Analysis of the short story 'the Gift of the Magi' by O' Henry.**

## I) Theoretical background and literary terms

### Major Literary forms

Plato divided literature into the three classic genres accepted in Ancient Greece: **poetry**, **drama**, and **prose**. The Romantic poet Coleridge (2019: p. 90) distinguished between prose and poetry in the following way: 'Prose = words in the best order, poetry = the best words in the best order'.

#### A) Poetry:

The word poetry derives from the Greek *poiesis*, meaning a "making" or "creating". It is a form of art in which language is used for its aesthetic and evocative qualities, with or without its ostensible meaning. It is a composition written in **verse**. Poems make use of the aesthetic qualities of language to suggest differential meanings and to evoke emotive responses. The poet Dylan Thomas said: "A good poem helps to change the shape and significance of the universe, helps to extend everyone's knowledge of himself and the world around him." (Quoted in Poteat et al. 1993: p. 195)

Poems rely heavily on **imagery** and **metaphor**; they may have a rhythmic structure based on patterns of stresses (**metric feet**) or on patterns of different-length syllables (as in classical **prosody**). Arguably, poetry pre-dates other forms of literature. In prehistoric and ancient societies. Poetry appears among the earliest records of most literate cultures, with poetic fragments found on early monoliths, rune stones and stelae.

The oldest surviving poem is the Epic of Gilgamesh, from the third millennium BC in Sumer in Mesopotamia, now Iraq (Kotter: 2008, p.221), which was written in cuneiform script on clay tablets and, later, papyrus. Other ancient epic poetry includes the Greek epics, Iliad and Odyssey, and the Indian epics, Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The efforts of ancient thinkers to determine what makes poetry distinctive as a form, and what distinguishes good poetry from bad, resulted in "**poetics**" — the study of the aesthetics of poetry. Classical thinkers employed classification as a way to define and assess the quality of poetry. Notably, the existing fragments of Aristotle's Poetics describe three genres of poetry — the epic, the comic, and the tragic — and develop rules to distinguish the highest-quality poetry in each genre, based on the purposes of the genre. Later aestheticians identified three major genres: **epic poetry**, **lyric poetry** and **dramatic poetry**, treating comedy and tragedy as subgenres of dramatic poetry.

Language and tradition dictate some poetic norms: Persian poetry always rhymes whilst Greek poetry rarely does. Some languages contain more rhyming words than others do. **Italian**, for example, has a rich rhyming structure permitting use of a limited set of rhymes throughout a lengthy poem. The richness results from word endings that follow regular forms. English, with its irregular word endings adopted from other languages, is less rich in rhyme. The rejection of traditional forms (**traditional verse**) and structures for poetry that began in the first half of the twentieth century, coincided with a questioning of the purpose and meaning of traditional definitions of poetry and of distinctions between poetry and prose, particularly given examples of poetic prose and prosaic "poetry". Numerous modernist poets have written in non-traditional forms (**the free verse**) or in what traditionally would have been considered prose, although their writing was generally infused with poetic diction and often with rhythm and tone established by non-metrical means.

## 1. Poetic genres

We classify Poetry in terms of different genres and sub genres. A poetic genre is generally a tradition or classification of poetry based on the subject matter, style, or other broader literary characteristics.

**a) Narrative Poetry:** Narrative poetry is a genre of poetry that tells a story. Broadly, it subsumes epic poetry, but the term "narrative poetry" is used for smaller works, generally with more direct appeal than the epic to human interest. Narrative poetry may be the oldest genre of poetry. Many scholars of Homer have concluded that his Iliad and Odyssey are just compilations of shorter narrative poems that related individual episodes and were more suitable for an evening's entertainment. Notable narrative poets have included Ovid, Dante, Chaucer, William Langland, Luiz de Camões, Shakespeare, Alexander Pope, Robert Burns, Adam Mickiewicz, Alexander Pushkin, Edgar Allan Poe and Alfred Tennyson.

**b) Epic poetry:** Epic poetry is a genre of poetry, and a major form of narrative literature. It recounts, in a continuous narrative, the life and works of a heroic or mythological character or characters. Western epic poems include Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, Vergil's Aeneid, the Nibelungenlied and Luiz de Camões' Oz Lusaka's. Eastern examples are the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Mahabharata, Valmiki's Ramayana, Ferdowsi's Shahi Nama, and the Epic of King Cesar. The composition of epic poetry and of long poems generally, became uncommon in the west after the early 20th century.

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**c) Dramatic poetry:** Dramatic poetry is drama written in verse to be spoken or sung, and appears in varying and sometimes related forms in many cultures. In the latter half of the 20th century, verse drama fell almost completely out of favour with English-language dramatists. The best-known practitioners of this genre include Aeschylus, Kalidas, Sophocles, Gil Vicente, Jan Kochanowski and Shakespeare.

**d) Satirical Poetry:** Poetry can be a powerful vehicle for satire. The punch of an insult delivered in verse can be many times more powerful and memorable than the same when spoken or written in prose. The Greeks and Romans had a strong tradition of satirical poetry, often written for political purposes.

**e) Lyric poetry:** Lyric poetry is a genre that, unlike epic poetry and dramatic poetry, does not attempt to tell a story but instead is of a more personal nature. Rather than depicting characters and actions, it portrays the poet's own feelings, states of mind, and perceptions. While the genre's name, derived from "lyre," implies that it is intended to be sung, much lyric poetry is meant purely for reading.

**f) Verse Fable:** The fable is an ancient and near-ubiquitous literary genre, often, though not invariably, set in verse form. It is a brief, succinct story that features anthropomorphized animals, plants, inanimate objects, or forces of nature that illustrate or imply a moral teaching.

**g) Prose poetry:** Prose poetry is a hybrid genre that demonstrates attributes of both prose and poetry. It may be indistinguishable from the micro-story or short fiction. Most critics argue that it qualifies as poetry because of its conciseness, use of metaphor, and special attention to language. While some examples of earlier prose strike modern readers as poetic, prose poetry is commonly regarded as having originated in 19th-century France, where its practitioners included Aloysius Bertrand, Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud and Stéphane Mallarmé.

## 2) Basic Elements of Poetry

### a) Prosody

Prosody is the study of the meter, rhythm, and intonation of a poem. Meter is the definitive pattern established for a verse (such as iambic pentameter), while rhythm is the actual sound that results from a line of poetry. Prosody also may be used more specifically to refer to the scanning of poetic lines to show meter.

**b) Rhythm:**

The methods for creating poetic rhythm vary across languages and between poetic traditions. Languages are often described as having timing set primarily by accents, syllables, or moras, depending on how rhythm is established, though a language can be influenced by multiple approaches. For example:

- Latin, Catalan, French and Spanish are syllable-timed languages.
- English, Russian and, generally, German are stress-timed languages.

**c) Meter:** In the Western poetic tradition, meters are customarily grouped according to a characteristic metrical foot and the number of feet per line. Like the **iambic pentameter**. It contains five feet per line, in which the predominant kind of foot is the "iamb. Its system originated in ancient Greek poetry, and was used by poets such as Pindar and Sappho, and by the great tragedians of Athens. Meter is often scanned based on the arrangement of "poetic feet" into lines. "The strict meters in English are often called 'accentual-syllabic'; because in addition to the strict control over the number of syllables in line, there is in these meters also some control on the distribution of the accented syllables. Thus, in perhaps the best known accentual-syllabic meter, the iambic pentameter, each line is said to consist of ten syllables (plus or minus one); with the stressed syllables in even-numbered positions (...) the four basic strict meters in English are 'iambic', 'trochaic', 'anapaestic', 'dactylic'". (Fabb, N., & Halle, M. (2008 :44)

- ❖ **iamb** — unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable
- ❖ **trochee** — one stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable
- ❖ **dactyl** — one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables
- ❖ **Anapest** — two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable

The number of metrical feet in a line are described in Greek terminology as follows:

- dimeter — two feet
- trimeter — three feet
- tetrameter — four feet
- pentameter — five feet
- hexameter — six feet
- heptameter — seven feet
- octameter — eight feet



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**d) Rhyme, Alliteration, Assonance:** Rhyme, alliteration, assonance are ways of creating repetitive patterns of sound. They may be used as an independent structural element in a poem, to reinforce rhythmic patterns, or as an ornamental element.

-Rhyme consists of identical (hard-rhyme) or similar (soft-rhyme) sounds placed at the ends of lines or at predictable locations within lines (internal rhyme). Languages vary in the richness of their rhyming structures.

-Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in two or more neighbouring words or syllables. We find alliteration in many familiar phrases and expressions such as "down in the dumps."

-Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in non-rhyming words as in, "some ship in distress that cannot ever live." It is used in modern English-language poetry, and in Old French, Spanish and Celtic languages.

**e) Rhyming Schemes:** In many languages, poets use rhyme in set patterns as a structural element for specific poetic forms, such as ballads, sonnets and rhyming couplets. However, the use of structural rhyme is not universal. Much modern poetry avoids traditional rhyme schemes. Classical Greek and Latin poetry did not use rhyme. Rhyme entered European poetry in the High Middle Ages, in part under the influence of the Arabic language in Al Andalus (modern Spain). Shakespeare, for instance, in all his sonnets follows the following rhyme scheme:

a,b,a,b in the first stanza

c,d,c,d in the second stanza

e,f,e,f in the third stanza

g,g in the last stanza.

## Figures of Speech

**Figurative language** is often associated with literature--and with poetry in particular. However, the fact is we use figures of speech every day in our own writing and conversations. For example, common expressions such as "falling in love" and "climbing the ladder of success" are all **metaphors**. Likewise, we rely on **similes** when making explicit comparisons

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"light as a feather" "smart as a fox"; In addition, we use **hyperboles** to emphasize a point "I'm starving". Richard Nordquist, professor emeritus of English at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Georgia (USA), in his work about figures of speech presents us with the following twenty figures, sometimes called **sense devices** and **sound devices**, these are the most common in English literature. Bellow is the list of figures that he explained, in addition to many examples we added.

### 1- Alliteration

The repetition of an initial consonant sound. As in:

The **b**aby's **b**lue **b**onnet

### 2- Anaphora

The repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or verses, like in:

**Mad** world! **Mad** kings! **Mad** composition! *King John*, by Shakespeare, or in Julius Cesar famous quote: "**I** come, **I** saw, **I** conquered"

### 3- Antithesis

The juxtaposition of contrasting ideas in balanced phrases. Like in "Give every man your ear, but few your voice." - William Shakespeare

### 4- Apostrophe

Breaking off discourse to address some absent person or thing, some abstract quality, an inanimate object, or a non-existent character. As in the following extract of Edgar Allan Poe's:

Oh! Blue moon,

You saw me standing alone.

Without a love in my heart

Without a dream of my own.

The following is an apostrophe taken from the poem 'Holy sonnet X' by John Donne from 'Death, be not proud, though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so'

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Here is another apostrophe, the line is from the play, 'Romeo and Juliet' by William Shakespeare. Juliet is seen speaking to the dagger.

'O happy dagger! This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die. '

### 5- Oxymoron

A figure of speech in which incongruous or contradictory terms appear side by side.

Examples:

The baby is **born dead**.

This is **awfully nice**.

His comfortable misery.

### 6- Assonance

Identity or similarity in sound between internal vowels in neighboring words, like in

(Knows, blows) (Me, see) (Goes, rose)

### 7- Chiasmus

A verbal pattern in which the second half of an expression is balanced against the first but with the parts reversed.

Example: a state's man is a man who puts **himself** at the service of his **nation**, or it is a man who puts **the nation** at **his** service.

Do not let **a kiss fool you**, or **a fool kiss you**.

### 8- Euphemism

The substitution of an inoffensive term for one considered offensively explicit.

To say a **correction facility** instead of **jail**

**Resting in peace** instead of **dead**

**Pregnancy termination** instead of **abortion**.

### 9- Hyperbole

An extravagant statement; the use of exaggerated terms for the purpose of emphasis or

heightened effect.

I explained this **a million times**.

Am hungry, I **can eat a horse**.

### 10- Irony

The use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning. A statement or situation where the meaning is contradicted by the appearance or presentation of the idea.

Examples:

Two **identical twins**, one said to the other: **you are ugly**.

Two **marriage therapists** got **divorced**.

### 11- Litotes

A figure of speech consisting of an understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by negating its opposite.

Example: in the famous play of Corneille 'Le Cid', Chimene said to Rodriguez:

Go I hate you no more (I still love you).

### 12- Metaphor

An implied comparison between two unlike things that actually have something important in common. Like in:

- His heart of stone surprised me.
- I smell success in this building.
- He is buried in a sea of paperwork.
- There is a weight on my shoulder.
- Time is money.
- No man is an island.

### 13- Metonymy

A figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated; also, the rhetorical strategy of describing something indirectly by referring to things around it.

Example:

He has a **fine hand** (meaning he writes well).

Such as **crown** to represent “king or queen”

**White House** to represent the American “President.”

#### **14- Onomatopoeia**

The use of words that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer

to. Examples:

the **twit** of birds, the **mewling** of cats, the **splash** of a stone in water...etc

#### **15-Paradox**

A statement that appears to contradict itself.

George Bernard Show said: What a pity youth is wasted on the young.”

#### **16- Personification**

A figure of speech in which an inanimate object or abstraction is endowed with human qualities or abilities. Like in:

The stars danced playfully in the moonlit sky.

#### **17- Pun**

A play on words, sometimes on different senses of the same word and sometimes on the similar sense or sound of different words. Examples:

"Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana." - Groucho Marx The

wedding was so emotional that even the cake was in tiers

#### **18- Simile**

A stated comparison (usually formed with "like" or "as") between two fundamentally dissimilar things that have certain qualities in common.

Like in Christina Rossetti's poem “A Birthday”:

My heart is like a singing bird  
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;  
My heart is like an apple-tree.  
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;  
My heart is like a rainbow shell

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That paddles in a halcyon sea;  
My heart is gladder than all these  
Because my love is come to me.

### **19- Synecdoche**

A figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole (for example, *ABCs* for *alphabet*) or the whole for a part ("*England* won the World Cup in 1966").

### **20- Understatement**

A figure of speech in which a writer or a speaker deliberately makes a situation seem less important or serious than it is.

I wouldn't say it tasted great (talking about a terrible food).

I wouldn't say he is thin (talking about an obese).

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## **English Poetic Forms**

### **The Sonnet**

A short rhyming poem with 14 lines. Dante invented the original sonnet form in the 13/14th century and an Italian philosopher named Francisco Petrarch. The form remained largely unknown until Shakespeare found and developed it. Writers such as Sonnets use iambic meter in each line and use line-ending rhymes.

### **The Limerick**

A five-line witty poem with a distinctive rhythm. The first, second and fifth lines, the longer lines, rhyme. The third and fourth shorter lines rhyme. (A-A-B-B-A).

### **The Haiku**

This ancient form of poem writing is renowned for its small size as well as the precise punctuation and syllables needed on its three lines. It is of ancient Asian origin. Haikus are composed of 3 lines, each a phrase. The first line typically has five syllables, second line has 7 and the 3rd and last line repeats another 5. In addition, there is a seasonal reference included.

### **The Acrostic Poem**

An acrostic poem is a poem where the first letters of each line spell out a word or phrase vertically that acts as the theme or message of the poem. Sometimes a word or phrase can also be found down the middle or end of the poem, but the most common is at the beginning. Many people use these poems to describe people or holidays, and lines are made of single words or phrases. Acrostic poems do not follow a specific rhyme scheme, so they are easier to write.

### **The Abecedarian Poem**

An ABC poem is a poem where the first letter of each line is the subsequent letter of the alphabet. The first line starts with A. The second line begins with B, and this continues for the rest of the poem. Each line focuses on building upon the central topic of the poem, creating a specific mood, feeling, or picture in the reader's mind. There are various types of ABC (or Alphabet) poems. Some use all 26 letters, while others only use 5-6 of the letters in alphabetical order.

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### **Blank Verse**

Blank Verse is constructed with unrhymed (therefore blank) Iambic Pentameters. No other verse form is able to convey such a beautiful rhythm of spoken English or is able to be used for the various levels of speech. It is often used in dramatic monologues.

Blank Verse was first used in English, in Surrey's translation of Virgil's Aeneid. The most famous uses of Blank Verse (aside from that used by Shakespeare in his plays) were in Milton's Paradise Lost, and Wordsworth's The Prelude.

### **The Ballade**

As its name suggests is a French form and along with the Rondeau was one of the first forms to be standardized in the 14th century. Written in syllabic prosody of one line length, the original French forms were octosyllabic, but now decasyllable is more common, and iambic tetrameter are just as acceptable. The construction is 28 lines, which are divided into three octave stanzas and a four lines envoi. The rhyme and pattern do not change. It turns around on only three rhymes and as is common with most French forms, the last line of each stanza is a refrain. The Ballade has a rhyme pattern of: a, b, a, b, b, c, b, C and the envoy b, c, b, C.

### ***Carving***

Your words carve nightmares in my skin, they bleed-  
obscure the lines that burn and scourge within,  
as deep into my flesh the etching feeds  
in layers only I knew to be thin.  
Is witnessing a branding also sin?  
I feel the tissues sizzle and contract,  
the bluntness of the knife is sinking in-  
**as violated nerve-ends now retract.**

You cut with great precision at the weeds  
your eyes detected underneath my skin;  
I bowed my head in silence and agreed,  
endured your efforts, keeping up my chin.  
But now I'm tired, hurting, in a spin;



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beside deep-rooted weeds I lost- I cracked  
on seeing on your face an old chagrin,  
**as violated nerve-ends now retract.**

The hand that wields the knife will not recede,  
though hesitation finally begins  
to waver and confuse in loss of speed;  
the silence that enfolds- a roaring din.  
Our faces slowly lose the deadly grin,  
essential parts that kept me whole, intact,  
regenerated by adrenalin-  
**as violated nerve-ends now retract.**

We'll throw the offal left into the bin  
and start to build a new; we'll re-enact,  
retrace our steps, determined we will win,  
**as violated nerve-ends now retract.**

***Leny Roovers***

### **The Ghazal**

The Ghazal is a very interesting poetry form and it exists throughout the whole of the Arabic and Muslim world; having originated as an Arabic poetry form. As Islam spread throughout the Ottoman Empire, so also did their poetry. Mostly, the Ghazal is far from religious in its subject matter. This is probably why the form became very popular in Europe in the 1800's and then later in the US with the "Flower Power" generation. Ghazal is a series of couplets each one capable of standing alone as a poem. The first couplet is called the *matla* or the place where the heavenly body rises. This couplet also sets the *meter* of the poems and the *rhyming pattern*.

### **The Ode**

An Ode was a poem that was written for an occasion or on a particular subject. Originally, it was a serious and dignified form but with modern society's irreverence, it has been the

tool for comedians with a distinct low respect for propriety, morality, and dignity. The following is an ode on spring by Thomas Gray:

### **Ode on spring**

Lo! Where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,  
Fair Venus' train appear,  
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,  
and wake the purple year!  
The Attic warbler pours her throat,  
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,  
The untaught harmony of spring:  
While whisp'ring pleasure as they fly,  
Cool zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky  
Their gather'd fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch  
A broader, browner shade;  
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech  
O'er-canopies the glade,  
Beside some water's rushy brink with  
me the Muse shall sit, and think (At  
ease reclin'd in rustic state)  
How vain the ardor of the crowd,  
how low, how little are the proud?  
How indigent the great!

Still is the toiling hand of Care:  
The panting herd's repose:  
Yet hark, how thro' the peopled air  
The busy murmur glows!  
The insect youth are on the wing,  
Eager to taste the honied spring,  
And float amid the liquid noon:

Some lightly o'er the current skim,  
some show their gaily-gilded trim  
Quick glancing to the sun.

To Contemplation's, sober eye  
Such is the race of man:  
And they that creep, and they that fly,  
shall end where they began.  
Alike the busy and the gay  
but flutter thro' life's little day,  
In fortunes varying colors driest:  
Brushed by the hand of rough Mischance,  
Or chilled by age, their airy dance  
They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear in accents low  
the sportive kind reply:  
Poor moralist! and what art thou?  
A solitary fly!  
Thy joys no glittering female meets,  
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,  
No painted plumage to display:  
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;  
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—  
We frolic, while 'tis May.

## **Pantoum**

The Pantoum was originally a Malaysian form of poetry, but was adopted and adapted by the French and become very popular with them, Hugo and Baudelaire, being amongst the foremost users of this form. The French liked it probably because of the way the quatrains were linked to each other, making it similar to existing French forms.

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The rhyme pattern is as follows; A1, B1, A2, B2...B1, C1, B2, C2, etc. the last stanza being Z1, A2, Z2, A1, note the reversal of the final repeated couplet thus completing the circle. Below is an example by Divina Collins:

### **Devil's eye**

**Black are the skies of hallowed eve**

**Soon awakens the spirits of death**

A dark vision with a spell to weave

**Never no more to take a breath.**

**Soon awakens the spirits of death**

To walk the night within his spell

**Never no more to take a breath**

Death shall be cast as a living hell.

**To walk the night within his spell**

He haunts the souls of the weak

**Death shall be cast as a living hell**

For the devil shall prey on the meek.

**He haunts the souls of the weak**

A dark vision with a spell to weave

**For the devil shall prey on the meek**

Black are the skies of hallowed eve.

### **The Rondeau**

This is a very underestimated and sometimes a very challenging poetry form. It consists of three stanzas, a quintet (5 lines), a quatrain (4 lines) and a sestet (6 lines), giving a total of 15 lines. The first phrase of the first line usually sets the refrain R it is

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admissible to use the whole line used as the refrain. The rhyme scheme is: R. a. a. b. b. a  
.... a. a. b. R .....a. a. b. b. a. R.

The meter is considered to be open and the French style is not bound by a rhyming pattern and is also more of a light and buoyant even "flashy" form of poetry which uses short lines. The English style however, is much dourer and more serious, even meditative and uses tetrameter or pentameter.

### *Ups and Downs* by **Maryse Achong**

**I rise and fall and rise again,**

Sometimes with ease, sometimes with pain,

Like a second nature to me

I do it almost easily;

It's something that I can't explain,

And I'm not about to complain,

to do so would be quite in vain,

but thanks to the Powers that Be

**I rise and fall and rise again.**

Far better that than to remain

Out for the count, washed down the drain,

No wallowing in misery,

I stand albeit shakily,

And though not always right as rain,

**I rise and fall and rise again.**

### **Rondel**

Another beautiful but neglected poetry form having lost its popularity to others in the passage of fashions. Basically, it is a 13-line poem which forms around two rhymes. There is a refrain, which is set up by the first two lines of the first stanza. The rhyme pattern is A. B. a. b.. and .a. b. A. B. for the first two stanzas and for the final stanza that mirrors

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the first two stanzas, with the last line repeating the first line of the first stanza a. b. b. a. A. The meter is open but like most French poetry, usually of eight syllables and this is one of the forms that in its purest form does not repeat any of the rhyme words. As a variation, the second line may be added to the last stanza to make it a Rondel Prime or a French Sonnet. Doing this also allows a variation in the rhyme pattern, so there can be: a. b. b. a. A. B., or a. b. a. b. A. B. as required. Below is an example:

*Goodbye by Lori Martin*

**It appears again I must say goodbye,**  
letting love fly through mist of pain,  
releasing my hold with heavy sigh,  
**Vowing, never shall I trust again**

Tears overwhelm will not to cry,  
shattered heart leaves bloody stain.  
**it appears again I must say goodbye,**  
letting love fly through mist of pain

If life were black or white 'stead of murky grey  
and lovers would mean what they say.  
Understanding not the how or why,  
**it appears again I must say goodbye**  
**Vowing, never shall I trust again.**

**The Rondelet**

This lovely French form uses a refrain and two rhymes. The first, third and last line are four syllables or two feet, and the four lines remaining are 8 syllables or four feet. This gives a rhyme scheme of; A. b. A. a. b. b. A, below is an example.

**I meet my love**  
When fate decrees to be sublime  
**I meet my love**  
Knowing that in the stars above

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We meet and share and you are mine  
Somewhere in the deep mists of time  
**I meet my love**

### The Sestina

The sestina is considered a difficult form of poetry to master. Its Inventor Arnaut Daniel a mathematician and a poet belonged to a group of twelfth century French poets called the troubadours. They labelled their styles according to the difficulty and the Sestina was one of the *troba clues*, the forms of the master troubadour. Later Francesco Petrarca who wrote a series of Sestinas, which he called. The Sestina is made up of seven stanzas. The first six stanzas have six lines each ending word falling in a precise mathematical progression, the seventh stanza has only three lines, which are a mathematical reflection of the first stanza. This gives a total of 39 lines. The first stanza is the defining stanza, and the six words that are used to end each line A.B.C.D.E.F. are the defining words. They are repeated in each of the following five stanzas of the poem in a strict pattern laid out thus:

**Stanza 1..A.B.C.D.E.F.**  
**Stanza 2..F.A.E.B.D.C.**  
**Stanza 3..C.F.D.A.B.E.**  
**Stanza 4..E.C.B.F.A.D.**  
**Stanza 5..D.E.A.C.F.B.**  
**Stanza 6..B.D.F.E.C.A.**

The final stanza (envoy) still uses the same six words, but uses only three lines with the even numbered words descending internally and the odd numbered words rising on the outside giving a pattern of:

Line 1..B..A  
Line 2..D..C  
Line 3..F..E

**Here is an example by Elizabeth Bishop:**

September rain falls on the **house**.  
In the failing light, the old **grandmother**  
Sits in the kitchen with **the child**  
Beside the Little Marvel **Stove**,  
Reading the jokes from the **almanac**,

Laughing and talking to hide her **tears**.

She thinks that her equinoctial **tears**  
And the rain that beats on the roof of the **house**  
Were both foretold by the **almanac**,  
but only known to a **grandmother**.  
The iron kettle sings on the **stove**.  
She cuts some bread and says to **the child**,

It's time for tea now; but the **child**  
Is watching the teakettle's small hard **tears**  
Dance like mad on the hot black **stove**,  
The way the rain must dance on **the house**.  
Tidying up, the **old grandmother**  
Hangs up the clever **almanac**

On its string. Birdlike, the **almanac**  
Hovers half open above **the child**,  
Hovers above the old **grandmother**  
and her teacup full of dark brown **tears**.  
She shivers and says she thinks the **house**  
Feels chilly, and puts more wood in the **stove**.

It was to be, says the Marvel **Stove**.  
I know what I know, says the **almanac**.  
With crayons, the child draws a rigid **house**  
and a winding pathway. Then the **child**  
Puts in a man with buttons like **tears**  
and shows it proudly to the **grandmother**.

But secretly, while the **grandmother**  
Busies herself about the **stove**,  
The little moons fall down like **tears**  
From between the pages of the **almanac**



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Into the flower bed the **child**  
Has carefully placed in the front of the **house**.

Time to plant **tears**, says the **almanac**.  
The **grandmother** sings to the marvelous **stove**  
and the **child** draws another inscrutable **house**.

### The Triolet

This is a fun little form having a rhyme pattern of A B a A b A B that can either work with the A and B lines being completely repeated or just the final word or phrase repeated. The **a** and **b** are of course just standard rhyme. There is no set syllable count, although the preferred one for repeating forms is the standard of eight syllables but there are many good examples around using iambic pentameter and similar meters. Below is an example

#### His Artful Kiss

*One soft kiss pressed upon the heart-*  
*cherished taste of coming rapture.*  
*End beyond measure, this to start,*  
***one soft kiss pressed upon the heart.***  
*Old Masters pale before its art.*  
*Oh to steal, to snatch and capture*  
***one soft kiss pressed upon the heart.***  
***cherished taste of coming rapture.***

*Allura D*

### Terza Rima

The *Terza Rima* is a wonderfully challenging poetry form of Italian origin. In the original form, there was no set meter although it is normal to keep a constant syllable count and line length. In the modern version, the syllables are accentuated and usually iambic tetrameter or pentameter. Lines 1 and 3 rhyme with each other and line 2 sets the rhyme for the next stanza. There can be any number of tercets or three-line stanzas and it is a matter of preference whether you link back to the first stanza or not. Dante in his *Divine Comedy* used the form. Below is an example by Robert Frost:

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## **Acquainted with the night**

**I have been one acquainted with the night.**

I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.

I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.

I have passed by the watchman on his beat  
and dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet

When far away an interrupted cry

Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;

and further still at an unearthly height,

One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.

**I have been one acquainted with the night.**

## **The Villanelle**

The *Villanelle* is a wonderfully challenging poetry form. It consists of nineteen lines, which comprise of two rhymes that are very different in the way they are used.

The unique thing about this form, is that the first and third lines of the first verse become the alternating final lines of the next four verses. Therefore, the choice of the first and last line is very important and more so because in the last stanza they form a couplet and become the "Closure". Below is an example by Dylan Thomas:

**Do not go gentle into that good night,**

Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

**Rage, rage against the dying of the light.**

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Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
because their words had forked no lightening, they  
**Do not go gentle into that good night,**

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
**Rage, rage against the dying of the light.**

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
**Do not go gentle into that good night,**

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
**Rage, rage against the dying of the light.**

and you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
**Do not go gentle into that good night,**  
**Rage, rage against the dying of the light.**

*Dylan Thomas*

## **B) Drama**

### **1. History of Drama**

Drama as a genre originated in ancient Greece; in Athens where hymns were sung in honor of the God Dionysus, those hymns called dithyrambs developed later and were adapted for choral processions of actors who were dressed in costumes and masks, but these were not actors in the modern sense of the term. In the 6th century BC Pisistratus, who then ruled the city, established a series of new public festivals. One of these, the 'City Dionysia', a festival of entertainment held in the honor of the God Dionysus and wine harvest, featured competitions in music, singing, dance and poetry. In addition, most remarkable of all the winners was called Thespis. According to tradition, in 534 or 535 BC, Thespis astounded audiences by leaping on to the back of a wooden cart and reciting poetry as if he was the characters whose lines he was reading. Thus; becoming the world's first actor.

### **2. Classical Drama and Plays**

Classical Greek drama was divided in two genres; the tragedy that is defined in Collins dictionary as a type of literature, especially drama, that is serious and sad, and often ends with the death of the main character. In classical and Renaissance drama, it is a play in which the protagonist, usually a person of importance and outstanding qualities, falls to disaster through the combination of a personal failing and circumstances with which he or she cannot deal. And the comedy; that is defined as a play in which the main characters and motive triumph over adversity later a hybrid form emerged which takes from both genres and this was called the tragicomedy.

### **3. Renaissance Drama and Elizabethan Theatre**

Queen Elizabeth I of England and Ireland reigned from 1558 to 1603, during the time when Europeans were starting to break out of the cultural constraints imposed by the medieval Church. Great thinkers across Europe were challenging the assumptions of the church and thought of all the Middle Ages misery as the result of the church's rule. This led to a blossoming of new perceptions in every area of human endeavor – art, music, architecture, religion, science, philosophy, theatre and literature. Writers turned in this era to works from the humanist Greco-Roman culture and this was called Renaissance. In England, through all the Middle Ages English drama had been religious and didactic.

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When Elizabeth came to the throne most of the plays on offer to the public were Miracle Plays, presenting in crude dialogue stories from the Bible and lives of the saints, and the Moralities. One of the play-writes of great caliber was Shakespeare that was the queen's own favorite.

By the time Elizabeth's reign ended, there were over twenty theatres in London, There was a real revolution in theatre. What changed at that time was that the theatre became a place where people went to see, a reflection of their own day-to-day interests. They wanted to laugh and to cry, to be moved, but not by religious themes. They wanted to see their daily life pictured.

### **C. Fiction**

By Fiction we mean a creative narrative that is invented by the writer; it indicates to the reader that the written content is original and unique to the author's imagination, though it may be based on a true story. Carter (1991: p. 8) makes a keen observation when he posits "Unless literary texts are discovered to be meaningful and relevant for personal experience then there is little point to their treatment I the classroom". Fiction may take the form of a Novel, a novella or a short story. We have different types of fictions:

Romance.

Detective stories.

Animal fiction.

Family saga.

Historical novels.

Adventure stories.

Fantasy.

Horror.

Mystery.

Science fiction.

## **How to analyze a work of fiction?**

### **Elements of fiction**

In modern criticism whenever we attempt to analyze a work of fiction, we have to deal with the elements that define it as a fiction genre, and these are six elements:

#### **1) The setting:**

The setting refers to the place and time in which the story is set. Settings in novels must be realistic to life. The sounds and the sights should be those that the reader is conversant with, those in real life, those that the reader can easily imagine.

#### **2) The plot:**

a plot is a flow of events in a story. The plot has five parts to it, and these are:

- **Exposition**

This is where the characters, the setting, and the conflict are introduced. This is where the stage is set, that is to say where the characters are going to act and where all the action is going to take place.

The exposition is the part of the novel of least action, but that does not mean it is not important. It is in fact the most important part of the plot, because it is where the ground work is set; the foundation of the whole novel.

- **Rising Action**

This is where the novel starts getting interesting. The characters start acting. They get caught up in problems and/ or move to solve these problems. The reader is gripped by the action. The transition from exposition to rising action should happen early on so as to engage the reader and keep him/her reading.

- **Climax**

This is where the action reaches its peak. The conflict is highest. At this point, the reader cannot simply put the book down.

- **Falling Action**

After the graph of activity reaches its maximum, it rapidly starts dropping. During this period, the truth is brought out, and all the mysteries are solved.

- **Resolution**

- 1) The conflict is resolved, and the story comes to its end. The reader responds with a sigh, a chuckle, a snuffle, a frown—whatever response is intended.

**Characterization:**

Critics list Characterization as one of the fundamental elements of fiction. A **character** is a participant in the story, and is usually a person, but may be any personal identity, or entity whose existence originates from a fictional work or performance. Characters may be of several types:

- **Point-of-view character:** The character from whose perspective (theme) the audience experiences the story. This character represents the point of view the audience empathizes, or at the very least, sympathies with. Thus; this is the "Main" Character.
- **Protagonist:** the driver of the action of the story and therefore responsible for achieving the story's Objective Story Goal (the surface journey). In western storytelling tradition, the Protagonist is usually the main character.
- **Antagonist:** a person, or a group of people (antagonists) who oppose the main character, or main characters.
- **Static character:** a character, who does not significantly change during the course of a story.

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- **Dynamic character:** a character who undergoes character development during the course of a story.
- **Supporting character:** a character that plays a part in the plot, but is not a major character.
- **Minor character:** a character with a small role in the story.

#### 4) Theme:

This is the major idea, or motif, that permeates the whole work. This motif recurs throughout from the beginning to the end. It is the writer's very reason for writing.

#### 5) Conflict:

The conflict, tension or problem is what makes the story move. Of the elements of a novel, this one is one of the most important. The characters move to solve this conflict, and their endeavors to solve these problems are what make the story worth reading. Without conflict, there is no story. Here is the scheme of a normal story:

A problem arises----character(s) move to solve it---Problem solved.

#### 6) Point of view:

Is the narrative voice; how the story is told—more specifically, who tells it. We have four types of point of view:

In the **First-Person point of view**, the story is told by a character within the story, a Character using the first-person pronoun I, If the narrator is the main character, the point of view is **first person protagonist**. Mark Twain lets Huck Finn narrate his own story in this point of view. If the narrator is a secondary character, the point of view is **first person observer**, like in Arthur Conan Doyle lets Sherlock Holmes' friend Dr. Watson tell the Sherlock Holmes story.

In the **third Person point of view**, the story is **not** told by a character but by an "Invisible author," using the third person pronoun (he, she, or it) to tell the story: If the



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third person narrator gives us the thoughts of characters, then he is a **third person**

**omniscient** (all knowing) **narrator**. If the third person narrator only gives us

information which could be recorded by a camera and microphone (no thoughts), then

he is a **third person dramatic narrator**.

## II) British literature

### English Epic Poetry:

In the following quotation, Dixon (1912: p. 190) quoted **Milton** who really had in mind to write something that stands the test of time: 'by labor and intense study (which I take to my portion in this life) joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to after times as they should not willingly let it die'. Milton published his masterpiece in 1667 arranged in twelve books.

### Extracts from Milton's Paradise Lost

The following extracts are from **Milton's Epic "Paradise Lost"**, written in **Blank verse**. Arnold (1999: pp. 143-172) posits that in the second chapter of Genesis there is a recognition that God desired to give Adam a fellow helper from his own species, whom Adam called Eve *'because she was the mother of all living'*. God created her from his own rib. Adam notes, reasonably enough that the animals come in pairs. So, God makes Eve from him, he relates that to Eve.

Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell  
of fancy, my internal sight, by which,  
abstract as in a trance, me thought I saw,  
Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape  
Still glorious before whom awake I stood;

465 Who, stooping, opened my left side, and took  
from thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,  
And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,  
but suddenly with flesh filled up and healed;

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The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;

470 Under his forming hands a creature grew,  
Man-like, but different sex, so lovely fair  
That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now  
Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained  
And in her looks, which from that time infused

475 Sweetness into my heart unfelt before  
and into all things from her air inspired  
The spirit of love and amorous delight.  
She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked  
to find her, or for ever to deplore

480 Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure:  
When, out of hope, behold her not far off,  
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned  
with what all earth and heaven could bestow  
to make her amiable; on she came,

485 Led by her heavenly maker, though unseen  
and guided by his voice, nor uninformed  
Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites;  
Grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,  
In every gesture dignity and love.

490 I, overjoyed, could not forbear aloud  
‘This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfilled  
Thy words, creator bounteous and benign,  
Giver of all things fair – but fairest this  
Of all thy gifts – nor enviest. I now see

495 Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself  
Before me; woman is her name, of man

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Extracted; for this cause he shall forgo  
Father and mother, and to his wife adhere,  
And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.'

**Here is Eve's version of her creation when she first awakes from sleep, not knowing who she is? From where she came? And for what sake was she created?**

'That day I oft remember, when from sleep  
I first awaked, and found myself reposed,  
Under a shade on flowers, much wondering where  
and what I was, whence thither brought, and how.  
Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound  
Of waters issued from a cave, and spread

455 Into a liquid plain, then stood unmoved,  
Pure as the expanse of heaven; I thither went  
with unexperienced thought, and laid me down  
On the green bank, to look into the clear  
Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.

460 As I bent down to look, just opposite  
A shape within the watery gleam appeared,  
bending to look on me; I started back,  
It started back, but pleased I soon returned,  
pleased it returned as soon with answering looks

465 Of sympathy and love; there I had fixed  
Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,  
Had not a voice thus warned me: "What thou seest,  
what there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself:  
With thee it came and goes: but follow me,

470 And I will bring thee where no shadow stays  
Thy coming, and thy soft embraces – he  
Whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy

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Inseparably thine; to him shalt bear  
Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called

475 Mother of human race"; what could I do,  
but follow straight, invisibly thus led?  
Till I espied thee, fair indeed and tall,  
Under a platan; yet methought less fair,  
less winning soft, less amiably mild,

480 Than that smooth watery image; back I turned;  
Thou, following, cried'st aloud, "Return, fair Eve;  
Whom fliest thou? Whom thou fliest, of him thou art,  
His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent  
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,

485 Substantial life, to have thee by my side  
Henceforth an individual solace dear:

Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim  
My other half"; with that thy gentle hand  
Seized mine: I yielded, and from that time see  
490 How beauty is excelled by manly grace  
and wisdom, which alone is truly fair.'

**Milton describes Satan's jealousy and envy of Adam and Eve living in the company of each other, while he is cast to hell, as is expressed in the following passage:**

505 'Sight hateful, sight tormenting!  
Thus, these two, Imparadised in one another's arms,  
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill  
Of bliss on bliss, while I to hell am thrust,  
where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,

510 Among our other torments not the least,  
still unfulfilled, with pain of longing pines;

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Yet let me not forget what I have gained  
From their own mouths; all is not theirs; it seems:  
One fatal tree there stands, of knowledge called,

515 Forbidden them to taste: knowledge forbidden?  
Suspicious, reasonless: Why should their Lord  
Envy them that? Can it be sin to know,  
Can it be death? And do they only stand  
by ignorance, is that their happy state,

520 The proof of their obedience and their faith?  
O fair foundation laid whereon to build  
Their ruin! Hence, I will excite their minds  
with more desire to know, and to reject  
Envious commands, invented with design

525 To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt  
Equal with gods; aspiring to be such,  
They taste and die: what likelier can ensue? But first  
with narrow search I must walk round This garden,  
and no corner leave unespied;

530 A chance but chance may lead where I may meet  
Some wandering spirit of heaven, by fountain-side,  
or in thick shade retired, from him to draw  
What further would be learned. Live while ye may,  
yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,  
535 Short pleasures; for long woes are to succeed.

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## **Classical poetry**

Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets. Burrow (2002: pp.92-93) Observes that Shakespeare's sonnets were first published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609; this volume contained 154 Sonnet. A second edition appeared in 1640. The following sonnet is one of his most known sonnets.

### **Shakespeare's 27<sup>th</sup> sonnet**

**How to analyze a poem? Shakespeare's sonnet as an example.**

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,  
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;  
But then begins a journey in my head,  
To work my mind, when body's work's expired:

For then my thoughts (from far where I abide)  
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,  
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,  
looking on darkness which the blind do see:

Save that my soul's imaginary sight  
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,  
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,  
Makes black night beauteous and her old face new.

Lo, thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,  
For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.

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### **How to analyze a poem?**

A good analysis of a poem means trying to highlight all the poetic elements of the poem; by a critical reading that takes into account both form and sense; this includes the form and structure of the poem; the rhyme scheme used by the writer; scanning the rhythm and meter

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used, and sorting out all the figures of speech used by the poet.

We will take the sonnet of Shakespeare and analyze it to illustrate, what we think, is the simplest way of analyzing a poem.

## I. Analysis of Form

### 1) Form and structure

The sonnet under study is an English sonnet, because it is organized into three quatrains and a couplet.

### 2) Rhyme Scheme

The rhyme scheme used in this sonnet is abab, cdcd, efef, gg.

### 3) Rythm and meter

The sonnet, like all Shakespeare's sonnets, follows the **iambic pentameter**, which is a line of ten syllables; or **5 feet** that follow the unstressed/stressed rhythm pattern.

Lo! **thus**/ by **day** /my **limbs**/ by **night**/ my **mind**

### 4) Sound devices

In the first stanza, first line there is an **alliteration** in **weary with**, and also in the second verse **travel tired**.

There is also a **pun** in the fourth line of the first quatrain: To

**work** my mind, when body's **work**'s expired.

In the last verse there is an **anaphora**: **For** thee, and **for** myself, no quiet find.

## II. Analysis of sense

### 1. Sense of the poem

This sonnet seems to be meditative, emphasizing the sleepless and restless nights that the poet describes, this unrest and the themes of sleepless nights spent thinking of a lover from whom the poet is separated seems also to be traditional. In the first stanza, Shakespeare describes his tiredness after working hard, and all he wants now is to hurry into his bed and get some rest 'dear repose', but as soon as he puts himself into his bed another journey begins; that is the journey of his thought towards the beloved young friend. He cannot stop his head from thinking while all he wants is to sleep, his eyelids are drooping, but he could not sleep.

In the second stanza, he starts thinking about someone who seems very precious to

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him, but also so far from him, the words « zealous, pilgrimage » indicate the depth of his feelings for the absent and beloved person (Critics say in this sonnet, Shakespeare is speaking about a young fair lord, that he loves much). In the third quatrain, though the night around him is dark and he cannot see much he uses his imagination to see his beloved, which seems like a source of light in the middle of all this darkness. In the last two verses (the couplet), he describes his life and how his limbs are kept busy with work during the day, while his mind is kept busy by thinking of the beloved and so he finds no quiet and no rest.

## 2. Sense devices

The sonnet is rich and full of imagery; there is a **metaphor** in the second line of the second stanza the 'zealous pilgrimage' of the poet's thoughts refers to a mental journey, as if his thoughts are capable of travelling physical distance as his body. In comparing thinking of his young friend to a pilgrimage, the poet implies that his devotion to his friend is like a religious faith.

There is also a **paradox in** the last line of the second stanza: "Looking on darkness which the blind do see", there is a contradiction in the whole verse; we cannot look on darkness, and the blind does not see. There is also an **oxymoron** in the third line of the third stanza « sightless view » the two words are opposites, but they form an expression. We have also an **apostrophe** in the second line of the third quatrain, when the poet addresses his young friend that is absent by saying: Presents thy shadow to my sightless view. There is also a **simile in** the third line of the third stanza: the poet compares the shadow of the fair lord to a « jewel ». There is also an **antithesis** in the first verse of the couplet 'by day my limbs, by night my mind'.

## Assignment I

This poem also belongs to the **Victorian period**. Analyze it as we have done with Shakespeare's sonnet; in terms of form and sense.

### The. Sonnet 43 (How do I love thee)

**by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 – 1861).**

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.



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I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

for the ends of being and ideal grace.

I love thee to the level of every day's

Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for right.

I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use

In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,

I shall but love thee better after death.

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## **Analysis**

### **1. Context**

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote in a time where woman could not write freely and were obliged to publish their works under different pseudonyms to escape social censure. A time where education was not yet open for women. She struggled all her life with her very tyrannic father; and she spent her solitary moments in writing; this is how Robert Browning could read her poems which led him to know her; and they eventually fell in love, but knowing that her father would not agree to the marriage; both poets fled to Italy to marry and live there.

### **2. Analysis of Form**

#### **1) Form and structure**

The sonnet under study is a Petrarchan sonnet made of 14 lines. Unlike the

Shakespearian sonnet this is a sonnet following the Italian modal; consisting of an

**octave and a sestet.**

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## 2) Rhyme Scheme

The rhyme scheme in this sonnet is as follows:

a,b,b,a,a,b,b,a.      c,d,c,d,c,d

## 3) Rythm and meter

The sonnet, follows the **iambic pentameter**, which is a line of then syllables; or **5 feet** that follow the unstressed/stressed rhythm pattern.

Example:

How **do**/ I **love**/ thee? **Let**/ me **count**/ the **ways**.

## 4) Sound devises

The most striking sound device is the **anaphora** '**I love thee**', which is repeated in subsequent verses: verse 1 and verse 2; number 5, 7, 8. it appears again in the second stanza.

We can find too an **assonance** in the second line

Depth, breadth

# II. Analysis of sense

## 1. Sense of the poem

Elizabeth Barret Browning expresses here an intense legitimate love to her husband to be Robert Browning; she goes on detailing the ways she loves her husband making us readers see the powerful bound between them. A love more and more powerful that she promises will be everlasting. Alluding to all the pain and struggles she had to live in before Robert appears to illuminate her life.

## 2. Sense devices

She used imagery extensively:

In the first stanza, second line we have a **hyperbole**; love cannot be measured like a three D object, she used it to express the intensity of her love.

We have also a **personification** in the third line: '**my soul can reach**' the soul had been given a human quality.

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we have **a simile** in line 7 and line 8; here she compares

her love to the way humans strive for their rights and also to those pure persons who turn from praise.

We have also **a metonymy** in line six:

sun stands for the day, and candle stands for the night.

## Assignment II

William Wordsworth along with Samuel Coleridge inaugurated the **Romantic poetry** in England with their collection of **Lyrical Ballads (1798)**. **The word romantic itself derives from the city of Rome** as Ferber (2005: p. 1) observes in the following quotation:

“In 1798, among the Schlegel circle in Jena, the word “romantic” (German romantisch) was definitively attached to a kind of literature and distinguished from another kind, “classic” (klassisch); it was soon attached to the Schlegel circle itself as a “school” of literature, and the rest is history. But the word already had behind it a good deal of history, which made it the almost inevitable choice. Nonetheless the word came down to the Schlegels and their friends through some interesting accidents. It is one of the oddities of etymology that “romantic” ultimately derives from Latin Roma, the city of Rome, for surely the ancient Romans, as we usually think of them, were the least romantic of peoples. It is then a pleasant irony of cultural history that one of the distinctive themes of writers (and painters) whom we now call Romantic was the ruins of Rome – as in Chateaubriand’s *Rene* (1802), Wilhelm Schlegel’s “Rom: Elegie” (1805), Staeël’s *Corinne* (1807), Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto 4 (1812), Lamartine’s “*La Liberté ou une nuit à Rome*” (1822), and so on – while a large share of the Italian tourism industry today depends on the image of Rome as The Romantic City. Indeed, the romantic ruins of ancient Rome could be taken as an emblem of the meaning and history of the word “romantic” itself”.

**Analyze the following poem of Wordsworth in terms of form and sense.**

**Perfect Woman**

**By William Wordsworth (1770-1850)**

She was a Phantom of delight  
When first she gleamed upon my sight;  
A lovely Apparition, sent  
To be a moment's ornament;  
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;  
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;  
But all things else about her drawn  
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;  
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,  
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,  
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!  
Her household motions light and free,  
And steps of virgin-liberty;  
A countenance in which did meet  
sweet records, promises as sweet;  
A Creature not too bright or good  
for human nature's daily food;  
for transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
e, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene  
the very pulse of the machine;  
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,

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A traveler between life and death;

The reason firm, the temperate will,

Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;

A perfect Woman, nobly planned,

To warn, to comfort, and command;

And yet a Spirit still, and bright

with something of angelic light.

Selected by Dr. **Nezzar**

## Analysis

### I. Analysis of Form

#### 1. Form and structure

The poem under study is a Ghazel made of 30 lines. Arranged into 15 couplets.

#### 2. Rhyme Scheme

The rhyme scheme in this goes **aa, bb, cc, dd, ee, ff, gg, hh, ii, jj, kk...**etc. since each lines rhyme together. The poem is rhyming in couplets.

#### 2. Rythm and Meter

The poem follows the **iambic tetrameter** in term of rhythm, which is a line of eight syllables; or **4 feet** that follow the unstressed/stressed rhythm pattern.

Example:

She **was** a **phantom of** delight

#### 4. Sound devises

In the first stanza, fourth line we have **an assonance**: a moment's ornament.

We have also **an anaphora** in: the word twilight, which is repeated in lines 5 and 6.

We have also an **alliteration** in: being breathing.

### II. Analysis of sense

#### 1. Sense of the poem

Wordsworth in a perfect romantic tries to describe his wife's physical and moral qualities. In the first stanza he idealizes his beloved giving her an angelic supernatural air (phantom, apparition, a dancing shape...etc.).

In the second stanza he tries to describe her closely after they come to live together, describing her motion in the house which she arranges, praising the way she does her house chores in perfection moving with light steps.

In the third stanza he goes on describing her moral qualities emphasizing her strength, patience, endurance, foresight and will.

## 2. Sense Devices

The poem is full of images; more specifically **Metaphors**:

A phantom of delight.

A lovely apparition.

A moment's ornament.

A dancing shape.

an image gay.

**Similes:**

Her eyes as stars of twilight fair.

Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair.

## Assignment III

**Robert Burns** was a Scottish poet and lyricist. He is widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland and is celebrated worldwide, regarded as a pioneer of the Romantic movement in Scotland, much of his writing is in a "light Scots dialect" of English, accessible to an audience beyond Scotland. He also wrote in standard English. He was nicknamed **the bard of Scotland**.

**Analyze the following poem, and say what is particular about its English.**

### A Red, Red Rose by Robert Burns

O my Luve is like a red, red rose  
that's newly sprung in June;

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O my Luve is like the melody  
that's sweetly played in tune.

So fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
so deep in luve am I;  
and I will luve thee still, my dear,  
till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;  
I will love thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run.

and fare thee weel, my only luve!  
and fare thee weel awhile!  
and I will come again, my luve,  
though it were ten thousand miles.

From Scott : 2009, p. 26.

## **Analysis of Shakespeare's play: Hamlet**

### **1) History and Structure of the play:**

#### **a) History**

The Tragedy of Hamlet, prince of Denmark is a tragedy written by William Shakespeare between 1599 and 1601. It is the longest and most powerful and influential tragedy in English literature; it is the most popular play of Shakespeare during his lifetime, and it is still the most performed since 1879. Shakespeare based Hamlet on the legend of Amleth, preserved by 13<sup>th</sup> century chronicler Saxo Grammaticus in his Gesta Denorum as subsequently retold by 16<sup>th</sup> century scholar François de Belleforest. The tragedy is set in the kingdom of Denmark; it dramatizes the revenge that the Son Hamlet Prince has to exact on his treacherous uncle Claudius for murdering his brother King Hamlet. The greedy uncle killed his own brother, pretending that the late king was sting by a serpent, to get the thrown and took as a wife Hamlet's mother Queen Gertrude. The prince Hamlet's overwhelming grief over the death of his father and the hasty marriage of his mother, then his Father's Ghost revelation was vividly portrayed, the play presents both true and feigned madness; and explores themes of revenge, treachery, moral corruption.

#### **b) Structure of the play:**

The play is made of five acts, as in all Shakespeare's tragedies.

ACT 1: Scene 1: Elsinore. A platform before the castle.

ACT 1: Scene 2: A room of state in the castle.

ACT 1: Scene 3: A room in Polonius's house.

ACT 1: Scene 4: The platform.

ACT 1: Scene 5: Another part of the platform.



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ACT 2 Scene: A room in Polonius's house.

ACT 2 Scene: A room in the castle.

ACT 3 Scene: A room in the castle.

ACT 3 Scene: A hall in the castle.

ACT 3 Scene: A room in the castle.

ACT 3 Scene: The Queen's closet.

ACT 4 Scene: A room in the castle.

ACT 4 Scene: Another room in the castle.

ACT 4 Scene: Another room in the castle.

ACT 4 Scene: A plain in Denmark.

ACT 4 Scene: Elsinore, a room in the castle.

ACT 4 Scene: Another room in the castle.

ACT 4 Scene: Another room in the castle.

ACT 5 Scene: A churchyard.

ACT 5 Scene: A hall in the castle.

## 2) Plot overview:

Shakespeare's play opens with a scene on the platform of the castle of Elsinore, where two watchmen Francisco and Bernardo see a ghost who resembles the deceased king Hamlet walking the ramparts of the castle, the ghost refuses to talk to anybody and disappears with dawn. Then the two guards bring Horatio, a scholar and the best friend of Prince Hamlet, the following night to watch with them to see the ghost, the ghost did not want to speak to Horatio too. Horatio decides to convince prince Hamlet to watch with them, Hamlet watches with them the next night, and to his great surprise the Ghost appears, but asks Hamlet to follow him alone so that he can speak. In another part of the platform, the ghost reveals to Hamlet the truth about his death, and that he has been murdered by the poison that his own brother Claudius poured in his ears while he was in the garden taking his nap.

The Ghost asks prince Hamlet to take his revenge. Hamlet takes an oath from **Horatio** and

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the guards that what they have seen has to remain secret, and decides to fake madness to discover if what the ghost said was the truth, or if that ghost was just the devil wanting to damn him. Entering into a deep melancholy, the queen Gertrude and Claudius are worried about Hamlet's behavior and want to know the cause. They summoned two of his friends to spy on him; in the meanwhile, Ophelia, Hamlet's beloved was really shaken to see Hamlet's transformation, and she believed he was mad because he was mean to her and returned all her letters. She told her father Polonius about it, the lord chamberlain thought that Hamlet's cause of madness might be his love for Ophelia, when he tells both Claudius and the Queen about it; Claudius agrees to spy on a clandestine meeting they set between Hamlet and Ophelia.

Hamlet was mean to Ophelia again, he asked her to go to a nunnery, and he said he wishes to ban marriages, so Claudius was sure now that the cause was certainly not the love of Ophelia, but something else. In order to cheer up Hamlet the Queen and king decide to bring a troop of players that Hamlet knew and liked, to perform some plays. Hamlet welcomed his friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern; however, he quickly knew they were summoned by the king and Queen. The troop of players came to the castle, and the moment he saw them, Hamlet got the idea to include the scene of his father's murder in the play to confirm his uncle's guilt. Hamlet asks Horatio to watch with him the reaction of his uncle when the scene of the murder occurs. Hamlet invited his mother, Claudius, Polonius and Ophelia to watch the play performed, when the murder scene was acted, Claudius instantly reacts by calling for light and storming out of the room, both Hamlet and Horatio agree that this proves his guilt.

Hamlet quickly follows his uncle to kill him, but he finds him praying, Hamlet delays his revenge thinking that killing him while praying would send him to heaven. Hamlet summoned by his mother, goes to her closet where Polonius was under the curtains to spy; Hamlet confronts his mother rudely, his father's ghost appears to him again to ask him to leave his mother to God and kill Claudius. The queen, who saw her son speaking alone, thought that he is mad, she calls for help and Polonius frightened for the queen asked for help, so Hamlet stabbed him thinking it was Claudius. Claudius now frightened of Hamlet's madness decides to send him to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Ophelia goes mad of grief for her father, and drowns in the river, her brother Leartes returns from France in a rage, Claudius manages to convince him that Hamlet is the cause for both his father's and sister's deaths, so he swears revenge. While they were conspiring

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together to kill Hamlet sends two letters one for his friend, to narrate what he went through, and sent another letter to the king telling him he is returning to Denmark after pirates attacked his ship on route to England. Claudius decides to use two plans to get rid of Hamlet, he poisoned Laertes' blade, then poisoned a goblet of wine as a back-up plan, so that if the poisoned sword does not hit him, he will drink the poisoned wine.

Hamlet returns to Denmark while Ophelia funeral was taking place, mad with grief he attacks Laertes saying that he had always loved Ophelia. The fencing match is arranged between Hamlet and Laertes who wants to defend his honor; the duel begins and Hamlet scores the first hit, the king proposed to him to drink from the poisoned goblet, Hamlet declines, but his mother drinks, and she instantly fell dead. Laertes succeeds to wound Hamlet; and he has been hit by Hamlet when they exchanged the swords, and after revealing to Hamlet that Claudius is responsible for his mother's death, he dies. Hamlet stabbed his uncle with the poisoned sword, and forced him to drink from the poisoned wine. Hamlet dies after exacting his revenge. Fortinbras, the Prince of Norway, who has led his army to Denmark, enters the castle's room to find that the entire royal family dead, he moves to take power of the kingdom, Horatio fulfils Hamlet's wish and tells Fortinbras all the tragic story of Hamlet, Fortinbras orders to give him a funeral that a fallen soldier deserves.

### **3) Hamlet's setting:**

The story of Hamlet is set in the Middle Ages (14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries or 1300 to 1499) in a royal palace in Elsinore in Denmark.

### **4) Plot analysis**

#### **\*Exposition**

In this initial phase, Shakespeare introduces us to Hamlet the Prince of Denmark, who seems overwhelmed by grief over the death of his father and the hasty marriage of his mother queen Gertrude to his uncle Claudius the new king. We are also introduced to Polonius family, Ophelia the beloved of Hamlet, and Laertes her brother who prepares to return to France.

He also makes explicit the political situation of the country, with Fortinbras, the prince of Norway, preparing to invade Denmark. From another hand, he makes it clear that the Ghost of the late deceased king Hamlet is walking the rampart of Elsinore, seen by two

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guards, then by Horatio who joins them, then they all preferred to tell Prince Hamlet to watch with them. Therefore, this phase takes from scene 1 Act 1 to scene 4.

### **\*Raising action**

This phase begins with scene 5 Act 1, when the Ghost reveals to the Prince Hamlet the truth about his murder, and asks him to take revenge from his uncle Claudius. Hamlet tells Horatio that he will fake madness to discover the truth. From another part Ophelia's father asks her to end up her relation with Hamlet; while Hamlet acts as a lunatic; and the poor Ophelia frightened narrates to her father the transformation of Hamlet. The complication of the story comes when Hamlet does not act, but prefers first to confirm his uncle guilt, in that context the king and queen summoned the two friends of Hamlet Guildenstern and Rosencrantz to discover the cause of hamlet's lunacy. They also send for a troop of players to seer up Hamlet, which gave to Hamlet the brilliant idea to include the scene of the murder in the play performed and to watch his uncle's reaction, so this phase of the plot takes all the scenes of the second Act, and also scene 1, 2, 3. Of the third Act.

### **\*Climax**

The climax of the plot occurs when Hamlet mad stabs behind the curtain and kills an innocent Polonius, thinking it is Claudius, scene 5 of the third act.

### **\*Falling action**

All the events that followed the climax are taken as the falling action; the suspense builds we wonder what will happen to Hamlet. He is sent to England with the two pseudo-friends, with a note to kill him, but he discovers the note in the night when the two friends were slipping and exchanges it with another that bears the killing of both of them as soon as they arrive to England. We fear for the Hero when we know that now Laertes swears to take revenge from Hamlet that killed his father and caused the lunacy then the death of his sister, we see how Claudius plots to get rid of Hamlet, and we see when he returns to Denmark, he finds Ophelia's funeral. Therefore, this phase takes all the seven scenes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Act and the first scene of the 5<sup>th</sup> Act.

### **\*Resolution**

The resolution of our story is seen in the last scene of the last act, and the outcome of

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the fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes.

Finally, everybody gets his revenge, Laertes hits Hamlet, and before dying he gets his revenge from his uncle Claudius, and the Prince Fortinbras gets his revenge and takes the kingdom of Denmark without any effort, since he finds all the royal family on the floor. And Horatio narrates to him the tragic story.

## 5) Characterization

### a) Main characters

**Hamlet:** Prince of Denmark; the Protagonist of the story, a scholar and a man of honor, much caught in his thoughts and soliloquies, overwhelmed by his father's death and his mother's hasty marriages, he said: "bests would have mourned longer", he has always blamed his mother for not mourning his deceased father, who loved her and gave her everything. Devastated also to find out that his father did not die of a serpent's sting as his uncle reported, but had been coldly murdered by his own brother. An honest man, who seems more caught in his cogitations, and not quick to action.

**Claudius:** uncle of Hamlet; the **Antagonist** and villain of the story, obscured by his own greed and lust for power; wicked, treacherous, eloquent and manipulative, ready for anything to take the throne and keep it, including killing his own brother and plotting to kill his nephew.

**Gertrude:** Hamlet's mother, a weak woman, inconsistent, easily led and manipulated by Claudius.

**Ophelia:** Hamlet's beloved and daughter of Polonius, an obedient daughter, and a very sensitive and naive woman, she is innocent, she really loved Hamlet and could not stand both her separation from Hamlet and her father's death.

**Laertes:** son of Polonius. An honest man, who studied in France; more determined and decisive than Hamlet to take his revenge for the murder of his father.

**Horatio:** Hamlet's best friend. A loyal and faithful friend, supporting Hamlet and advising him, he has not let his friend down.

**Polonius:** lord chamberlain. Pompous and pretentious old man, too talkative and searching to be eloquent, he is ridiculed by Hamlet many times. A caring father for his

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children, and his advices to his son Laertes are very valuable.

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**Guildenstern and Rosencrantz:** Hamlet's pseudo friends. They came when summoned by the king and queen, who employed them to know the reason behind Hamlet's transformation and lunacy. Killed for their own greed.

### **a) Minor characters:**

**Marcellus** soldier

**Bernardo and Francisco,** the guards

**Reynaldo** servant to Polonius

**Fortinbras** prince of Norway

**Troop of players**

**Gravediggers**

**Osric**

**Volltimand and Cornelius** ambassadors to Norway.

### **b) Themes**

#### **a) Main theme**

The main theme of the story is revenge, the main plot of revenge is that of Hamlet, but there are two other sub plots of revenge; that of Laertes, who wants to kill Hamlet for both his father's and his sister's death; and that of Fortinbras, who wants to invade Denmark, because Hamlet's father killed his father. Hamlet's revenge is different from all the stories of revenge, since it is at each time delayed. Hamlet is caught more in thought than in action; at the beginning of the play, he decides to fake madness to discover the truth about his uncles' guilt. However, when he gets the idea to include the murder scene in the play, which he invites everybody to watch, and even when Claudius's reaction confirmed his guilt, he could not exact his revenge, because his uncle was praying. He went after that to confront his mother, and though then that Claudius was under the curtain, He stubbed recklessly to find out that he has killed an innocent: Polonius. Thus, sent to England for that murder, he could not exact his revenge until the last act and the last scene of the play. So did Laertes and Fortinbras, they all achieved their revenge by the last scene of the play.

## **b) Minor Themes**

There are many other themes, if we think about the characters and their actions; for instance, in the devotion of Polonius to the king and queen, we can think of **Loyalty**, he is killed to protect the queen.

In the relation of Horatio and Hamlet, we can speak of **Friendship**, Horatio was the true friend, who supported Hamlet from the beginning to the end, always by his side to the extent that by the end when his friend was to die, he wanted to suicide, but Hamlet's wish was that he lives and narrates the story.

We can also speak of **Real Madness** and **faked madness**, Hamlet chooses to fake madness to find out the truth about his uncle, but Ophelia the poor became mad when her father was killed by her beloved.

We may also talk about **Greed**; Claudius kills his own brother for greed and Guildenstern and Rosencrantz betray their friend Hamlet for greed.

## **6) Shakespeare's Style**

The two following extracts from the play of Shakespeare Hamlet illustrate his style, which gave his plays the universality that they enjoy today, most of what he writes is the expression of wisdom and common sense; the first passage is the famous soliloquy of Hamlet "to be or not to be", which we will explain and translate into modern English. The second passage is an extract of the advices of Polonius to his son, very wise piece of advice from a father to his son, which will be also translated to modern English.

### **HAMLET'S soliloquy 'To be or not to be' from Act III scene 3**

**HAMLET:**

**To be, or not to be:** that is the question:

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and

by opposing end them? To die: to sleep; No

more; and by a sleep to say we end

The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation



Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause: there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
when he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
to grunt and sweat under a weary life

But that the dread of something after death,  
the undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveler returns, puzzles the will  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus, conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus, the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
and enterprises of great pith and moment  
with this regard their currents turn awry, and  
lose the name of action. –Soft you now! The  
fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remembered.

(Shakespeare: 2001, pp. 63- 64)

### **Hamlet's Soliloquy in Modern English**

To live, or not to live: that is the question. Is it nobler to put up with all the difficulties that fate throws our way, or to fight against them, and, in fighting them, put an end to

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everything? Death is like sleeping, that is all. A kind of sleep that ends the countless heartaches and sufferings that are part of life – now that is something to be desired. To die, to sleep – and during this sleep, maybe we dream. However, that is the problem. In that sleep-like death, when we have finally been released from this painful life, who knows what dreams we will have? That is enough to make us hesitate, to keep on suffering, and to put up with a horrible existence for so long. Otherwise, who would put up with the slaps and insults we endure over time, the wrongs done to us by the powerful. The arrogance of proud men, the heartaches of rejected love, the bureaucracy in the courts, the rudeness of bureaucrats, and the offenses dished out by unworthy people that we patiently accept – when we could just settle our account with God by using a dagger on ourselves. Who would carry these heavy burdens, grunting and sweating under an exhausting life, if it were not for the fear of something worse in the afterlife, that unknown country from whose border nobody ever returns? This fear bewilders us, and makes us prefer the troubles we know, rather than run off to troubles we do not know. In the end, contemplating the afterlife makes us cowards, and the bright color of our bravery is turned pale by our contemplation. Moreover, all our ambitious plans are put on hold, while we think about this, and end up never being executed.

## **Polonius ‘advices to his son Laertes:**

### **ACT I SCENE 3**

Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,

And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!

And these few precepts in thy memory

See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,

nor any unproportioned thought his act.

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,

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Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;

But do not dull thy palm with entertainment

Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,

Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.

Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;

Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,

But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;

For the apparel oft proclaims the man,

And they in France of the best rank and station

Are of a most select and generous chief in that.

Neither a borrower nor a lender be;

For loan oft loses both itself and friend,

and borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.

This above all: to thine own self be true,

and it must follow, as the night the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man.

### **Polonius's advices to his son from Act 1 Scene 3 in Modern English**

#### **Polonius:**

'Still here, Laertes!' said Polonius. 'Aboard, aboard, for shame! The wind is fair and they're waiting for you.' He embraced his son. 'There,' he said. 'My blessing on you!'

Laertes kissed Ophelia again and as he took his father's hand Polonius nodded.

'And here are a few words of advice. Make sure that you keep them in mind.'

His son and daughter looked at each other. Ophelia raised her eyes up to the sky. The coachman shook his head vigorously and beckoned. Laertes sighed. Polonius, oblivious to the reaction his words had produced, continued.

‘Don’t ever say what you think,’ he began. Laertes could only stand and listen to the speech he had heard many times before.

‘And don’t do everything you feel like doing. Be friendly to people but on no account vulgar. When you have tested the loyalty of the friends you, already have, bind them to you with hoops of steel, but do not lower yourself by embracing every untried new companion. Be careful of getting into fights, but if you do make sure that your opponent will think twice before tangling with you again. Listen to everyone but give advice to only a few: accept criticism from all but reserve your judgment. Buy the clothes that you can afford, although not just everything you like – expensive, yes, but not gaudy because the clothes usually show what the man is – the top Frenchmen are good models for that. Never borrow or lend because lending often loses both the money and the friend, and borrowing makes you too extravagant.’ He paused, as though trying to remember something and Laertes nodded and turned away. The coachman was mouthing something and pointing towards the harbor. ‘But most of all,’ said Polonius, ‘be true to yourself and then it must follow, as night follows day, that you can’t be false to any man. So farewell, and take my blessing.’

### **Analysis of the Novel “Pride and Prejudice” by Jane Austen**

Jane Austen published six novels, so many in recent years were adapted to cinematographic versions; chief among them the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Babb (1962: p. 113) observed that few readers would question that *Pride and Prejudice* is the most brilliant of Jane Austen's novels. Perhaps, he argues, it is less neatly turned than *Emma*, but *Pride and Prejudice* has a vibrancy and a rich dramatic texture all its own. Especially through the first half of the novel: “Jane Austen recreates the quality of our social experience, that sense we often have of the ambiguities inherent in behavior”.

#### **1. Setting**

The novel is set in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century England, the opening scene is set in Hertfordshire. For her fictional world, Jane makes the Bennet family live at Longbourn House, in the village of Longbourn which is about a mile south of the imaginary market town of Meryton.

## 2. Overview of the Plot (Summary of the Novel)

*Pride and Prejudice*, (initially named *First Impressions*), is the story of love and marriage, of pride and prejudice, of English class system and class conflict. The story portrays the young, witty, strong willed, proud and prejudiced Elizabeth Bennett one of the five daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett that belong to the middle class, and the rich, aristocratic, proud, genteel Mr. Darcy. This latter, seems to be rather misunderstood, not only from Elizabeth the heroine, but from all the neighborhood, who thought him so high and conceited a person.

The novel is in sixty-one chapters; the opening scene is set in Hertfordshire, a county that nowadays has practically become part of Greater London. In the late eighteenth century, however, it was still a well-wooded countryside. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet have been married for twenty-three years; when the story opens their eldest daughter, Jane, is aged twenty - two, Elizabeth is twenty, Mary 18 or nineteen, Kitty 17 and Lydia 15. There was no son to inherit Longbourn and keep the estate safe for the Bennets under the terms of the entail, which stipulated that the property could descend only to a male heir. If there were no direct male heir, as in the Bennets' case, then the next nearest male collateral descendant of the owner who had originally created the entail would inherit. In such a case, it was Mr. Bennet's distant cousin Mr. Collins.

The story begins when Austen takes us straight into Longbourn House to listen to the Bennets' conversation. They are sitting in the drawing room after dinner, and Mrs. Bennet is making plans for husband hunting on her daughters' behalf with particular reference to the young Mr. Bingley who is soon coming to live in the neighborhood (Netherfield house). He arrives in Hertfordshire with his two elder sisters and his brother-in-law Mr. Hurst, his best friend Mr. Darcy, and a large income.

The Bennet family will meet him, his family and his friend Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy in

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one of the monthly assembly balls at Meryton. In the ball, Mr. Bingley is judged by the townspeople to be perfectly amiable and agreeable; whereas, his friend Mr. Darcy is pronounced to be a proud and disagreeable man because of his reserve and refusal to dance. His friend asked him to dance with Elizabeth; he said that she was tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt him, Elizabeth, who heard this sentence remained with no cordial feelings towards him.

It became clear after many interactions that Mr. Bingley liked Elizabeth's sister Jane, his partiality towards Jane is more obvious than hers; Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth's friend, will recommend her that Jane has to make her regard for him more obvious. Occupied in observing Mr. Bingley's attentions to her sister, Elizabeth was not aware of herself becoming the object of some interest in the eyes of his friend Mr. Darcy. This latter captivated by her fine eyes and lively wit, begins to admire her. Wishing to know more about her, he began to attend to her conversation with others.

An invitation was sent to Jane by Miss Bingley, for the Bingley sisters seemed to like Jane, this latter was all wet through as she was caught by the rain in her way to them, she fell ill and caught a terrible cold, the Bingley's offered her their hospitality and Mr. Bingley was very much concerned about her. Elizabeth came as soon as she received her sister's note, to wait on her until she recovers. Thus, Elizabeth stayed long enough in Netherfield (the Bingley's house) and Darcy was there too as the Bingley's guest, she increasingly gains his admiration, but she is blind to his partiality. Miss Bingley, who wanted to attract Mr. Darcy; was continually, referring to the poor manners of Elizabeth's mother, and younger sisters.

Mr. Collins, a distant cousin of Mr. Bennet and the one who is to inherit his estate, was a clergyman, his patroness Lady Catherine de Bourgh (Darcy's aunt) suggested that he

has to find a wife. He thus, came to visit Longbourn house and makes it clear that he hopes to find a suitable wife among the Miss Bennets. He is described as a silly man with pompous speeches. When Elizabeth's mother tells him that the oldest Jane will be engaged, he will think of Elizabeth.

Elizabeth sisters like to go to Meryton to see her Aunt Mrs. Philips and socialize with the militia's officers of the regiment stationed there. There, Elizabeth met Wickham; an officer who was brought from his childhood with Darcy, and as a perfect mentor he will make her believe that Darcy is a heartless man and that he is the cause of all his misery. Arguing that Darcy's father has left him a living since he was his Godson, and that Darcy did not fulfil his father's testimony.

In the meanwhile, the Bingley's give a ball at Netherfield where Mr. Collins pays particularly close attention to Elizabeth, and even reserves the first two dances with her. Elizabeth grows more prejudiced against Darcy after what she heard of Wickham when he asks her for a dance. She inadvertently accepts, but could not enjoy it. The next day, Mr. Collins proposes to her, she refuses him. The man after few days shifts his attention

to her friend Charlotte Lucas, who will accept to marry him. Elizabeth was angry with her friend who accepted to marry such a silly man only to have financial security.

Bingley goes to London for business and shortly after he leaves his sisters and Darcy departs for London as well. He had planned to return quickly to Netherfield, but Caroline Bingley writes to Jane and tells her that Bingley will almost definitely not return until after six months. Caroline also tells Jane that the family hopes Bingley will marry Darcy's younger sister Georgiana, and unite the fortunes of the two families. Jane is heartbroken thinking that Bingley did not love her. Elizabeth suspects that Darcy and Bingley's sisters somehow managed to convince Bingley to stay in London rather than to return to Netherfield and propose to Jane.

To help her to cheer up, the Gardiners (Elizabeth's uncle and aunt) who visited Longbourn, invited Jane to go with them to London. Mrs. Gardiner also warns Elizabeth against the imprudence of a marriage to Wickham because of his poor financial situation, and advises Elizabeth not to encourage his attentions so much. Soon Wickham transfers his attentions to Miss King, who acquired 10,000 pounds from an inheritance. While in London Jane will discover that Caroline Bingley is not a true friend, and assumes Bingley is no more partial to her since she does not hear of him.

Elizabeth will go with the Lucases to see her friend Charlotte (Mrs. Collins) in Kent, on their way they stop to see the Gardiners. Elizabeth, while staying with the Collinses was often invited with them to dine at Rosings (the estate of Mr. Collins patroness Lady Catherine). After a fortnight of her stay at the parsonage Darcy and his cousin Colonel Fitzwilliam will visit Rosings (the residence of Darcy's aunt Lady Catherine de Burgh), this latter will be a good friend to her, and Darcy seems to pay her much attention often visiting her and Charlotte. Colonel Fitzwilliam one day tells Elizabeth how Darcy



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recently saved a close friend from an imprudent marriage; she then was convinced that Darcy advised Bingley not to propose to Jane, she hated Darcy more for that.

Darcy visited Elizabeth, when the latter was alone in her friend's house, and proposes to her. He tells her that he loved her against his reason and despite her low family connections, referring to her inferiority shocked Elizabeth and she refuses him and rebukes him for the manner in which he proposed, for the way he treated Wickham, and for preventing Bingley's marriage from her sister. Though Darcy was shocked, he now understood all the reasons of her prejudices and decided to write her a letter to explain everything, which he gave her the following day.

After reading his letter, Elizabeth realized how bland she was. He had prevented Bingley from proposing to Jane, because it did not seem to him that Jane really loved Bingley, and as to Wickham, Darcy's father had asked Darcy to provide him with a living if he were to decide to enter the clergy. Wickham, however, did not want to enter the clergy. He asked Darcy for 3,000 pounds, purportedly for law school, and agreed not to ask for any more. Darcy gave Wickham the money and he squandered it all on dissolute living, then came back and told Darcy he would like to enter the clergy if he could have the living promised to him. Darcy refused. Later, with the help of her governess Miss Young, Wickham got Darcy's younger sister Georgiana to fall in love with him and agree to an elopement, in order to revenge himself on Mr. Darcy and get Miss Darcy's fortune. Fortunately, Darcy found out and intervened at the last minute.

Darcy, after explaining all in the letter, will leave for London, Elizabeth returns home and her sister Jane returns from her stay with the Gardiners as well, her younger sisters and mother were upset, because the regiment of officers will soon leave for Brighton, depriving them of most of their amusement. Lydia Elizabeth's frivolous sister received an invitation from Colonel Forster's wife to go to Brighton, but Elizabeth advises her father to prevent his daughter from going; Mr. Bennet unfortunately did not follow her advice.

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Elizabeth goes on vacation with the Gardiners. Their first stop is in the area of Pemberley, Mr. Darcy's estate. The Gardiners want to take a tour, and having found out that Mr. Darcy is away, Elizabeth agrees. During their tour of the estate, the housekeeper tells them about how kind and good-natured Darcy is. Elizabeth is impressed by this praise, and also thinks of how amazing it would be to be the mistress of such an estate. During their tour of the gardens, Elizabeth and the Gardiners run into Mr. Darcy, who has returned early from his trip. Darcy is extremely cordial to both Elizabeth and the Gardiners and tells Elizabeth that he wants her to meet his sister Georgiana as soon as she arrives.

Elizabeth and the Gardiners were staying at an inn, where Darcy and his sister Georgiana paid them a visit, he was very civil to Elizabeth and to the Gardiners, and before leaving he invited them to dine at Pemberley. Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst (Bingley's married sister) were there as well, and they thinly concealed their displeasure at seeing Elizabeth, but Mr. Bingley expressed his pleasure to see her again; it was obvious that he still has a regard for Jane. Elizabeth; unfortunately, received a letter from her sister Jane announcing the elopement of her younger sister Lydia with Wickham.

Elizabeth explains the situation to Darcy and the Gardiners, Darcy felt himself partially to blame for not having exposed Wickham's character publicly. Elizabeth and the Gardiners will depart for Longbourn immediately, and Mr. Gardiner will go with Mr. Bennet to London to search for Lydia. After many days of fruitless searches, Mr. Bennet returns home and leaves the search in Mr. Gardiner's hands, who will soon send a letter explaining that Lydia was found, and that Wickham will marry her if Mr. Bennet provides her with her equal share of his wealth. Knowing that, with his debts, Wickham would never have agreed to marry Lydia for so little money, Mr. Bennet thinks that Mr. Gardiner must have paid off Wickham's debts for him.

After their marriage, Lydia and Wickham come to visit Longbourn. Lydia is shameless and has no remorse for her conduct. Mrs. Bennet is very happy to have one of her daughters married. Elizabeth hears from Lydia that Darcy was present at the wedding. She writes to her aunt to ask

Designed by Dr. Nezzar Kenza

her why he was there. She responds explaining that it was Darcy who had found Lydia and Wickham and who had negotiated with Wickham to get him to marry her. Mrs. Gardiner thinks that Darcy did this out of love for Elizabeth.

After that, Bingley and Mr. Darcy return to Netherfield Park. They call at Longbourn frequently. After several days, Bingley proposes to Jane. She accepts and all are very happy. In the meantime, Darcy will go on a short business trip to London. While he is gone Lady Catherine comes to Longbourn and asks to speak with Elizabeth, she tells Elizabeth that she has heard Darcy is going to propose to her and attempts to forbid Elizabeth to accept the proposal. Elizabeth refuses to make any promises and Lady Catherine leaves very angry.

Darcy returns from his business trip. While he and Elizabeth are walking, he tells her that his affection for her is the same as when he last proposed, and asks her if her disposition toward him has changed. She says that it has, and that she would be happy to accept his proposal. They speak about how they changed since the last proposal. Darcy realized he had been wrong to act so proudly and place so much emphasis on class differences. Elizabeth realized that she had been wrong to judge Darcy prematurely and to allow her judgment to be obscured by her vanity.

Both couples marry. Elizabeth and Darcy go to live in Pemberley. Jane and Bingley, after living in Netherfield for a year, decide to move to an estate near Pemberley. Kitty begins to spend most of her time with her two sisters, and her education and character begin to improve. Mary remains at home keeping her mother company. Both Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are happy for their daughters, but Mrs. Bennet is also glad that her daughters have married so prosperously.

### **3.Characters**

#### **3.1. Major Characters**

**Fitzwilliam Darcy** (the hero): a handsome, wealthy young man, the best friend of Charles Bingley. Who appears first as a proud, rude, and unpleasant man; after falling in love with Elizabeth, he seems more amiable, discreet, shrewd, generous, and magnanimous; he eventually wins Elizabeth's heart and marries her?

**Elizabeth Bennet or Lizzy** (the heroine): the second daughter of the Bennets, who is described as a lively, intelligent, witty and sensible woman. She will only fall in love with Mr. Darcy when she gets rid of all her prejudices against him. Both characters are called **Protagonists**.

#### **George Wickham (Antagonist)**

A handsome, opportunistic militia officer, a seemingly charming man with attractive manners, who is really selfish, unprincipled, extravagant and prone to gambling; he is the villain of the novel.

#### **Charles Bingley (Darcy's best friend)**

A wealthy country gentleman, who is amiable, kind and charming. He falls in love with Jane Bennett and marries her.

#### **Jane Bennet (Elizabeth's sister)**

The eldest daughter of the Bennets, the gentle and naïve sister of Elizabeth, who is pretty, shy, calm, gentle and good natured; she falls in love with Darcy's best friend Mr. Bingley.

**Mrs. Bennet:** The mother of Elizabeth; a mother of five daughters, who is in a husband Hunt in behalf of her daughters. The wife of Mr. Bennet and "a woman of mean

understanding, little information, and uncertain temper," as Austen described her. She embarrasses her older daughters and entertains her husband with her ignorance.

**Mr. Bennet:** A country gentleman, the father of five daughters and the husband of Mrs. Bennet. He is cynical and sometimes an irresponsible father, he is fond of books and can be witty and amusing.

**Bennet (Elizabeth's sister)**

The eldest daughter of the Bennets, the gentle and naïve sister of Elizabeth, who is pretty, shy, calm, gentle and good-natured; she falls in love with Darcy's best friend Mr. Bingle.

**Mrs. Bennet:** The mother of Elizabeth; a mother of five daughters, who is in a husband Hunt in behalf of her daughters. The wife of Mr. Bennet and "a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper," as Austen described her. She embarrasses her older daughters and entertains her husband with her ignorance.

**Mr. Bennet:** A country gentleman, the father of five daughters and the husband of Mrs. Bennet. He is cynical and sometimes an irresponsible father, he is fond of books and can be witty and amusing.

### **3.2. Minor Characters**

**Marry Bennet:** the third daughter of the Bennets, who is described by Austen as; plain, bookish, tasteless, vain, and affected.

**Catherine Bennet (Kitty):** the fourth daughter of the Bennets, who is described as a silly girl, she is fascinated by the militia and likes watching their parades.

**Lydia Bennet:** the youngest daughter of the Bennets, who is silly, thoughtless, stupid, unprincipled, frivolous, she elopes with Wickham causing her family all the torments.

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**Mr. Collins:** Mr. Bennet's cousin and the one who is to inherit Mr. Bennet's property. A pompous clergyman, he is an undignified mixture of servility and self-importance, who is a real comic character in the story.

**Georgiana Darcy:** The younger sister of Mr. Darcy who is shy, reserved, and warmhearted.

**Mrs. Reynolds:** The trusted housekeeper of Mr. Darcy.

**Colonel Fitzwilliam:** The cousin of Mr. Darcy, who is handsome and well-mannered man.

**Lady Catherine de Bourgh:** Mr. Darcy's aunt who is the epitome of snobbism, she is arrogant, over bearing, domineering, interfering, vulgar, and affected; refers to Elizabeth as a girl of inferior birth.

**Ann de Bourgh:** Lady Catherine's daughter who is sickly and quiet, and coddled by her mother.

**Mrs. Jenkinson:** Ann de Bourgh's teacher.

**Caroline Bingley:** Mr. Bingley's unmarried sister, who is snobbish, conceited, scheming and jealous of Elizabeth. She does her best to separate her brother and Jane Bennet. She wanted Darcy to herself.

**Mrs. Hurst:** Bingley's married sister who lives a lazy, purposeless life.

**Mr. Hurst:** Bingley's brother-in-law, who is lazy and purposeless, like his wife.

**Sir William and Lady Lucas:** Neighbors and friends of the Bennet family and parents of Charlotte. They organize the first ball in the novel.

**Charlotte Lucas:** The eldest daughter in the Lucas family, who is plain, practical, intelligent and absolutely unromantic; she is a very close friend of Elizabeth, who accepts Mr. Collins's marriage offer after Elizabeth rejects him.

**Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner:** Mrs. Bennet's brother and his wife, who are sensible and refined; Mrs. Gardiner was a confidante of Jane and Elizabeth Bennet.

**Mrs. Philips:** Mrs. Bennet's sister, who is as vulgar and ridiculous as her sister is; her husband is an attorney.

**Mary King:** An acquaintance of the Bennet family.

#### **4. Themes**

Love and marriage, pride and prejudice are the central themes of the novel. We have also some minor themes like: class division, love, marriage, pride, prejudice, property, reputation, and family dynamics.

#### **5. Conflict**

There are two major conflicts in the novel, which develop the plot. The first conflict in the story centers on the attempts of Mrs. Bennet to find husbands for her daughters, her problem is how to get them good husbands. In this perspective, Bingley's unannounced departure is the first problem she encounters, since it hinders her plan of marrying Jane, the second problem is the rejection of Elizabeth to Mr. Collins' marriage offer. The climax of this conflict is the engagement of Darcy and Elizabeth, and that of Bingley and Jane. Thus, the outcome of this conflict is a happy one; Mrs. Bennets has two eldest daughters married to prosperous husbands, and thanks to Mr. Darcy's

interference Lydia's elopement, which is supposed to be a scandal turns into an organized marriage, and hence three of her daughters are married. The second conflict of the story centers around Mr. Darcy who falls in love with Elizabeth, was attracted by her fine eyes, her liveliness and quick wit, but struggles with the fact that they belong to different social classes, and objects to her family that lacks good manners and propriety.

He tries to get Elizabeth's love when she rejects his first marriage proposal by giving up some of his pride and overcoming her prejudice against him. The outcome of this conflict too is a happy one he gets the heart of Elizabeth's by his good actions, and marries her.

## 6. Point of view

The story is narrated from a third-person omniscient narrator point of view, where the narrator gives us sometimes the thoughts of the characters, but the narrator seems to stay with Elizabeth we see the story through her. Later Austen devotes chapter 36 to lead us in Elizabeth's mind and see her internal conflict and emotional transformation following the receipt of Darcy's letter.

Austen also uses with this third person narrator, a narrative technique she excelled in, which is the **free indirect speech**; and that is when characters thoughts or words are reported without quotation marks; the narrator reports what a character (protagonist, usually) thinks or says without switching over to the character's perspective. Therefore, the context remains in third person and past tense, but the narrator has intimate access to the character.

Here is an example from the novel, when Elizabeth was thinking about Lydia's action in eloping with Wickham:



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“She had never perceived while the regiment was in Hertfordshire, that Lydia had any partiality for him; but she was convinced that Lydia had wanted only encouragement to attach herself to anybody. Sometimes one officer, sometimes another, had been her favorite, as their attentions raised them in her opinion. Her affections had been continually fluctuating, but never without an object. The mischief of neglect and mistaken indulgence towards such a girl! oh! How acutely did she now feel it?” P&P (1994: p. 214)

We, however, notice that at the very end of the novel Austen switches to another narrator point of view, she steps in and uses the **first-person point of view** for the first time in the novel, when she writes about Mrs. Bennet

“I wish I could say, for the sake of her family, that the accomplishment of her earnest desire in the establishment of so many of her children produced so happy an effect as to make her a sensible, amiable, well-informed woman for the rest of her life.” P&P (1994: p. 297)

## **American literature**

### **Introduction**

Like any other nation, America's Literature was shaped by its history. Following the discovery and the exploration of the continent; America as a new nation was continuing its growth and expansion to become one of the most powerful nations of the world. The history of American literature starts with the **Colonial Literature**, which is mainly constituted of the poems, journals, letters, narratives, and histories written by the early settlers and the religious and historic figures like **John Smith, William Bradford, and Ann Bradstreet**. The main characteristic of this literature is its religious aspect; specifically with the puritans who saw themselves as the elect, and were really strict in all matters of religion.

**The Romantic Period** in American Literature started in the early nineteenth century. With works such as the short stories of **Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper**. This literature was characterized by giving more value to the individual's emotional experience over reason. Poets like **Walt Whitman** and **Emily Dickinson** wrote beautiful and intense romantic poems.

After the Civil War in America and the destruction and disillusion; a **Realistic literature**, then followed, this literature depicted the realities of a devastating war. Writers such as Mark Twain and Stephan Crane and poets like Robert Frost wrote about the everyday American life with all its hardships.

In this part of our course, we will be concerned with those three literary periods; trying to study a sample from each period: The Colonial, The Romantic, and the early Realistic literature.

### **A Sample poem from the Colonial Period**

In this first period of American literature, women could not write or publish their writing; it was seen as a shame for a woman to write poetry. **Ann Bradstreet**, was the first American woman poet, who dared publish her poems. Below is one of her most famous poems written for her husband.

### **Assignment IV**

Designed by Dr. Nezzar Kenza

**Read her poem, and analyze it in terms of form and sense.**

### **To my dear and loving husband**

If ever two were one, then surely, we.  
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee.  
If ever wife was happy in a man,  
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.  
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold,  
or all the riches that the East doth hold.  
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,  
Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.  
Thy love is such I can no way repay;  
The heavens reward thee manifold; I pray.  
Then while we live, in love let's so persevere,  
that when we live no more, we may live ever.

**Selected by Dr. Nezzar**

### **Assignment V**

EDGAR ALLAN POE belongs to the romantic trend, he is a towering figure in American literature; known for his horror short stories that are set in a gothic context; like the "Black Cat", "The Mask of the Red Death", "The Fall of the House of Usher", but also for his poems such as *Reven*, and *Annabel Lee*.

**Read the following poem by Edgar Allan Poe and analyze it thoroughly in terms of form and sense. What is particular about its meter and Rhythm?**

#### *Annabel Lee*

It was many and many a year ago  
in a kingdom by the sea,  
That a maiden there lived whom you may know  
by the name of ANNABEL LEE;  
And this maiden she lived with no other thought  
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child  
in this kingdom by the sea;  
But we loved with a love that was more than love-  
I and my Annabel Lee;  
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven  
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,  
In this kingdom by the sea,  
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling  
My beautiful Annabel Lee;  
So that her highborn kinsman came  
and bore her away from me,  
To shut her up in a sepulcher  
in this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,  
went envying her and me-  
Yes! -that was the reason (as all men know,  
In this kingdom by the sea)  
That the wind came out of a cloud by night  
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love  
of those who were older than we -  
Of many far wiser than we-  
And neither the angels in heaven above  
nor the demons down under the sea  
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams  
of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
And the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes  
of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
And so, all the night tide, I lie down by the side  
of my darling- my darling – my life and bride,  
In the sepulcher there by the sea,  
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

Adapted from Bode (1995: p. 42)

## Analysis

### I. Analysis of Form

#### 3. Form and structure

The poem under study is a ballad.

#### 2. Rhyme Scheme

The rhyme scheme in this poem goes

(a,b,ab,c,b) in the first stanza

It was many and many a year ago, **a**  
In a kingdom by the sea, **b**  
That a maiden there lived whom you may know **a**  
By the name of Annabel Lee; **b**  
And this maiden she lived with no other thought **c**  
Than to love and be loved by me. **B**

Which changes in some of the following stanzas.

#### 3. Rythm and Meter

The poem is a mixture of two rhythms and two meters the **iambic and anapestic** rhythms, **the trimeter** and **tetrameter** in term of Meter,

It was **ma/ny** and **ma/ny** a **year/ ago/**, a tetrameter.

In a **king/**dom **by/** the **sea/**. A trimeter.

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Example:

#### 4. Sound devices

we have **an assonance**: chilling and killing

We have also **an anaphora** in: my darling, my darling

There is a **pun** also in: But we **loved** with a **love** that was more **than love**-

We have also **alliteration** in: her **h**ighborn, and **d**emons **d**own.

## II. Analysis of sense

### 3. Sense of the poem

The poem of Edgar Allan Poe is very emotional, since it is real in that he narrates his strong bond to his wife and cousin Virginia Clemm; whom he loved dearly and he lost her while she was still young; he could never get over her loss. She appears in many of his short stories and poems; here he described their childhood love who seemed so big and pure that even the angels envied, he narrates the loss of his beloved that had a sudden death: by implying that a wind came from the clouds and shilled her. He ends his poem by saying that even if her body is in a sepulcher by the sea, their souls cannot be dissevered, and that every night he lies besides her tomb as if she is still alive.

### 4. Sense Devices

The poem is full of images: we have **two hyperboles** in:

With a love that the winged seraphs of  
heaven coveted her and me.

The angels, not half so happy in  
heaven, went envying her and me-

**Metaphor**: A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling My beautiful Annabel Lee.

## Assignment VI

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Barrish (2011: p. 2) argues that **Literary Realism** became a salient feature of the US literary scene in the decades following the Civil War (1861–65), a period scholar Stanley Corkin has identified with “the birth of the modern United States.” Although the United States was born as a formal nation on July 4, 1776, what Corkin means is that a great many of the economic structures, cultural forms, and social and political conflicts, as well as modes of everyday life, that we think of as characteristic of contemporary America first took shape in the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s. America’s Industrial Revolution was well under way by the middle of the nineteenth century, but its acceleration after the Civil War changed the United States.

-

**Read the following poem by Robert Frost and analyze it thoroughly in terms of form and sense and answer the questions below.**

### *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods, fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
to stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
to ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound’s the sweep  
of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
and miles to go before I sleep.

## QUESTIONS

- 1) What are your first impressions upon reading?
- 2) How do you find the **tone** of the poem?
- 3) What is the **form** of this poem?
- 4) Define the **Rhyme Scheme**.
- 5) What is the **meter** of this poem?
- 6) What are the **sound devices** that you can see and hear in this poem?
- 7) What do you think of staying to watch snowflakes falling?
- 8) The Horse is a **symbol** in this poem. What does it stand for?
- 9) What do woods represent? Something good? Something bad?
- 10) What does he mean by **miles to go**?
- 11) The use of the word sleep too is symbolic. What does **sleep** connote?
- 12) What are the images “**sense devices**” you can find in this poem?

## ANSWERS

1. The poet speaks about the need to rest, and the impossibility to do that with all the obligations and responsibilities.
1. We feel a melancholic tone, when we first read.
2. The form of the poem is the ballad.
3. The rhyme scheme goes as follows:  
a, b, a, a    b, c, b, b    c, d, c, c    d, e, d, d
4. The rhythm of this poem is the **iambic tetrameter**.
5. The sound devices we can find in the poem are **Alliteration**:  
**His** house.    **his** harness.  
**Assonance**:  
Whose **woods**.    **see** me.



6. Staying there in the woods to see snow falling is an indication that the writer is really in need of rest.
7. The **horse** in the poem symbolizes society.
8. **Woods** represent a force that is trying to pull the writer, then may be seen as bad, a temptation to suicide and rest there in the forest.
9. **Miles to go** symbolizes the journey of life.
10. **Sleep** is here the last sleep which is a connotation of **death**.
11. **The Sense devices** we can find in this poem are:

**Personifications:**

-My little horse must think it queer; he gives to the horse a human quality: thinking.

*-to ask if there is some mistake.*

Another human quality; he gives to the horse is: asking.

**Assignment VII**

**Read the following poem by T.S. Eliot and analyze it thoroughly in terms of sense.**

***Journey of the Magi***

“A cold coming we had of it,

Just the worst time of the year

For a journey, and such a long journey:

The ways deep and the weather sharp,

The very dead of winter.”

And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,

Lying down in the melting snow.

There were times we regretted

The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,

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And the silken girls bringing sherbet.

Then the camel men cursing and grumbling

And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,

And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,

And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly

And the villages dirty and charging high prices:

A hard time we had of it.

At the end we preferred to travel all night,

Sleeping in snatches,

With the voices singing in our ears, saying

That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,

Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;

With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,

And three trees on the low sky,

And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.

Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,

Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,

And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.

But there was no information, and so we continued

And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon

Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,

And I would do it again, but set down

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This set down

This: were we led all that way for

Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,

We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,

But had thought they were different; this Birth was

Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.

We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,

But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,

With an alien people clutching their gods.

I should be glad of another death.

Selected by Dr. Nezzar

## **Analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter"**

### **About the author**

Nathaniel Hawthorne one of the most famous American Authors, and one whose origins and puritan ancestry made a true chronicler of the puritan society and the early days of America's settlement. He was born in Salem Massachusetts in 1804, famous for his novel 'The Scarlet Letter' (1850) and also The House of the Seven Gables (1851), Hawthorne's writings brought him fame and praise, but they earned him little money and he had to take different jobs to sustain himself financially. Hawthorne formed friendships with transcendentalist writers and thinkers (the transcendentalists believed in spiritual truths that lay beyond sense perceptions and material things, they also believed one could glimpse these truths through communion with nature) like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Branson Alcott. In 1853 President Franklin Pierce appointed him to the post of American Consul at Liverpool, England, where he served four years before moving his family to Italy for a year. After his return to the United States, his mental and physical health declined dramatically. He died in 1864, leaving several unfinished works. His work continued to be appreciated and he is today considered one of the best American fiction writers.

### **The Historical Context of the Novel**

For over twelve centuries, the major religion of Europe was Christian Catholicism. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a German monk named **Martin Luther** started a movement that overthrew the power of the Catholic church and split Europe into two major groups- the Catholics and the Protestants. Luther's ideas led to a bloody revolt against the Catholic Authority known as the **Protestant Reformation**. In England king Henry VIII broke with Catholicism and formed the Anglican church, because this latter wouldn't allow him to divorce. Some Protestants in England did not accept the Anglican Church and wished to purify it by simplifying services and enforcing stricter moral codes, facing persecution in England, these puritans fled to Holland and then decided to settle America where they hoped to establish colonies based on their religious principles. "America is a poem in our eyes: its ample geography dazzles the imagination, and it will not wait long for metres." Those words are those of Ralph Waldo Emerson, they really show how the first settlers cherished the land in which they will live to worship freely (Gray: 2012, p. 1)

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The first colonies of **New England** were **Plymouth** founded by those **Pilgrims** (as they are often referred to) in 1620, and **Massachusetts Bay Colony** in 1630. The Puritans in New England believed they were chosen by God to build an ideal colony “a city upon a hill” as it is described in the New Testament, they strongly believed in the importance of community as a whole; hence, the societies that they created were theocracies ruled by strict religious principles. They hold the idea that people are wicked and could only be saved by the Grace of God, therefor they maintained steady and humble watch over their lives for proof that they were among the **elect**. Hawthorne’s work the *Scarlet Letter* is set in this atmosphere in 1640’s in Massachusetts Bay Colony. when ‘The *Scarlet Letter*’ appeared, Nathaniel Hawthorne was already a man of forty-six, and a tale writer of some twenty-four years’ standing.

### **A plot Overview**

The story takes place in June 1642, a crowd gathers in the town of Boston, to witness the official punishment of Hester Prynne, a young woman found guilty of adultery. She is forced to wear a Scarlet A on her dress as a sign of shame, she had also to stand on the scaffold, for three hours, exposed to public humiliation. Many women in the crowd were angered by her quiet dignity, she was a woman of a rare beauty. She refuses to give the name of the father of her child.

When Hester looks out over the crowd, to her great surprise she notices a small, misshapen man, her long lost husband who has been presumed lost at sea. He asks a man in the crowd about her and he is told the story of his wife’s adultery. He angrily said that the father of the child should also be punished, and he vows to find the man, for that he chooses to change his name to Roger Chillingworth a physician. Reverend Wilson and the minister of her church, Arthur Dimmesdale ask Hester to name her lover. She refuses and is taken back to her prison cell, the jailer brings in Roger Chillingworth, as a physician to calm Hester and her baby with his roots and herbs, Hester is choked to see him, he first treat’s Pearl the baby girl of Hester, and then demands to know the name of the father of the baby. She refuses, and he insists that she has to keep his identity secret and will never reveal that he is her long-awaited husband, she agrees to his terms, but she knows she will regret it.

When she was released from prison, she settles in a cottage at the edge of town and earns

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her living by needlework, which she mastered. Living a quiet and somber life with her daughter. She is troubled by her daughter's character who grows as a capricious and unruly child. Her conduct led the church members to suggest that Pearl should be taken away from her mother. When Hester hears the rumors, she goes to speak to Governor Bellingham, there she finds Reverend Wilson and Dimmesdale. When the Reverend Wilson questions Pearl about her catechism, the latter refuses to answer, although she knows the answers, thus putting her mother in a difficult situation. Hester then appeals to Reverend Dimmesdale in desperation, and the minister persuades the Governor to let Pearl remain in her mother's care. Tormented by his guilty conscience, Dimmesdale's health has begun to fail, the townspeople, who loved him, wanted the newly arrived physician Chillingworth, to take care of him by taking lodgings with him.

Chillingworth began to suspect that the minister's illness is the result of some unconfessed guilt, and so he applies psychological pressure on him as he finally suspects him to be Pearl's father. One night, after pulling the sleeping minister's vestment aside he discovers a scarlet A that the minister drew in his pale chest. Thus, he continues his pressure on him. One night the minister seeing Hester and Pearl climbs the scaffold and calls them to join him, he admits his guilt to them, but could not find the courage to confess publicly. Hester, choked by Dimmesdale's health deterioration, decides to obtain a release from her vow of silence from Chillingworth. Several days later Hester meets Dimmesdale in the forest, removes the scarlet letter from her dress and identifies her husband and his desire for revenge; she convinces Dimmesdale to leave Boston in secret on a ship to Europe where they can start a new life, this plan made the minister gain a new energy.

Dimmesdale loses heart in their plan, when he returns to town, he knew he was dying; in the meanwhile, Hester is informed by the captain of the ship that Chillingworth would also be a passenger. Dimmesdale, gives one of his most inspired sermons on the Election Day, beholding Hester and Pearl in the crowd; he climbs the scaffold and confesses his sin, dying in Hester's arms, kissed by his child Pearl, Chillingworth dies shortly after and leaves Pearl enabling her to go to Europe with her mother and make a wealthy marriage there. Many years later, Hester returns to Boston, resumes wearing the scarlet letter. When she died, she was buried near the grave of Dimmesdale.

## **Plot Analysis**

### **Exposition**

The exposition of our story is set namely in the 4 first chapters whereby Hawthorn sets the mood for the story. In the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter he introduces the setting of the tale of human frailty and sorrow, which is the city of Boston in Massachusetts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, where a cluster of puritans were standing in front of the prison door. In this chapter, Hawthorn aims at acquainting his readers with the pilgrim Puritan society, and the set of ethics as well as the severity and rigidity of the Puritans back then (as he perceives it), affecting the life of the protagonist. He presents the story as an example of the contradiction and hypocrisy of these founders of a new utopia. In the following chapter, entitled 'The Marketplace', the major character and protagonist of the story 'Hester Prynne', was a young woman holding her 3 months old baby. She is out of the prison door, heading to the scaffold or a platform in which she was ashamed and held guilty of adultery. She was forced to wear a scarlet letter A on her dress, which stands for "adultery" or "adulterer" for the remaining days of her life.

Hester refuses to expose the father and is exposed to a different variety of comments that are harsh and revolving mostly around the embroidered symbol on her breast and around her punishment. The woman goes bare-minded and has beautiful memories of the life younger self. In chapter 3: The Recognition. Hester recognizes her husband dressed in a peculiar way. She was thunder-struck that he is still alive, she thought he was dead, he was absent for a period of 2 years. However, the much-older husband was solely lost in sea and brought back in a ship by the Indians. He asks a man in the crowd about her sin and punishment. The stranger informs him that her husband kept her long alone and she committed adultery with an unknown man. Then we are introduced to other characters who are the town fathers sitting in the judgment of Hester. Governor Bellingham, Reverend Wilson and the Minister Dimmesdale a religious and eloquent man who urges Hester to reveal the identity of the baby's father and that she ought to be neither affectionate nor pitiful in such issue and that in this case she is the sole and only sufferer. In the scene, the cries and wines of the baby do not cease. Hester rejects the minister's

order and is taken back to prison.

In chapter 4, back in her prison cell, Hester is in an unstable mental state and her daughter does not keep from crying. Chillingworth, her husband claims seek no revenge against her. Yet, he is eager to discover the identity of the father of Pearl regardless of all circumstances. He then asks Hester not to reveal his identity as her husband. She agrees. The scholar helps her to heal by giving her some drinks both her and baby Pearl. The reader is informed that Chillingworth could acquire much of knowledge from the Indians who taught him how to use herbs as a means of medication. After being suspicious of his aid, Hester is finally convinced by his speech and is, eventually, relieved. In the following chapters, Hawthorne mirrors Hester as such a robust and courageous mother who chooses to keep raising her child Pearl on her own despite her peculiar and hard character. Using her great talent of embroidery and sewing allowed her to find as a means of subsistence. Moreover, she also takes the initiative to help the poor with the garments she makes. Hence and thereof, she gains many citizens' respect and recognition.

### **Rising action**

The rising action takes place as soon as Hester's secret lover, Dimmesdale and Pearl's father, is found to be whipping himself and inflicting self-harm out of intense feelings of guilt. The minister is found ill and in a miserable state of being as he is unable to confess his sin to people and perceiving his lover and daughter experiencing all the bitter sufferings alone whilst he is still prized by the Puritans as a man of religion and virtue. Chillingworth, as a physician and also doctor is still disguising his identity and proposes to take a good care of Dimmesdale. In chapter 9 and 10 and some of the following chapters, the leech (physician) attempts to diagnose and cure the minister. His help is much appreciated by the citizens.

Chillingworth investigates the identity of Pearl's father for the sake of taking revenge. As he was digging into the minister's personal life, they abruptly glance Hester and Pearl in the graveyard, Dimmesdale confirms to Chillingworth that Hester is relieved with her sin publicly known than she would be with it veiled and hidden and admits that his suffering is not physical as it stems from his sick soul. However, he says he is never taking the step to reveal his secret to the physician. He wails and runs out of the chamber as Chillingworth was smiling and joyous that he could find out the concealed secret. One



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day as Dimmesdale was in a deep sleep, the seemingly doctor, pulls his clothing and looks at the minister's chest where he saw the letter 'A' that Dimmesdale scratched on his chest. He is then, displayed in state of fused emotions. He is both shocked and euphoric as he could unveil the big secret.

### **Climax**

When Pearl is about seven years old, Hester can see that the minister is getting worse, and she decides to stop it. She urges to Chillingworth and begs him to stop adding to Dimmesdale's pain and torment. Chillingworth refuses. Hester then plans a meeting with Dimmesdale in the forest, and reveals to him the identity of Chillingworth. The couple decides to run away to Europe, where they can live peacefully with Pearl as one family. They decide to take a ship from Boston in a period of four days. Hester takes off her scarlet letter, and releases her hair. Thus, the daughter is unable to recognize her mother without the letter. The day before their departure, the townsfolk gather for a holiday and Dimmesdale gives a sermon. Meanwhile, Hester has learnt that Chillingworth is aware of their plan and has booked a place on the same ship.

### **Falling action**

The revelation; provides us with the falling action; Dimmesdale, leaves the church after his best sermon ever as listeners were murmuring, glances Hester and Pearl standing before the town scaffold. He mounts the scaffold with his lover and his daughter, and confesses to everyone the hidden truth, exposing the scarlet letter into his breast. He falls dead, as Pearl kisses him for the first time as her father, and Chillingworth definitively loses his chance for revenge.

### **Resolution**

Chapter 24 provides us with the resolution of the story: Chillingworth dies a year after the minister's death leaving all his fortune to pearl. Hester and Pearl finally leave Boston. Years later, Hester comes back to live in her ancient small house. She receives special letters from her daughter, Pearl, she is now married to a European noble aristocrat and has lastly a family of her own. When Hester dies, her grave is next to Dimmesdale with a scarlet "A."

## **Analysis of major characters**

### **Hester Prynne**

In our novel, Hester is the heroine, a woman of strong character, while the author does not give a great deal of information about her life before, he shows her remarkable character revealed during her public humiliation and her secluded life at the outskirts of Boston, her inner strength, honesty and compassion are displayed in the novel. She is physically described in the first scaffold scene as a woman of rare beauty “The young woman was tall, with a figure of perfect elegance on a large scale. She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam, and a face which, besides being beautiful from regularity of features and richness of complexion, had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes” Hawthorne (2009: p.44), she has a rich complexion, her eyes are dark and deep and her regular features give her a beautiful face; her most impressive feature is her hair “dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam”, the author said that her beauty shone out, and made a halo of the misfortune and ignominy in which she was enveloped.

Hester came from “a genteel but impoverished English family.” Of notable lineage, she married a man much older who spent long hours over his books and experiments, when they left Amsterdam for the new world, he sent her ahead. She waited for him in the puritan colony of Boston, but he was reportedly lost at sea, Hester turns to Arthur Dimmesdale, the town’s beloved young minister, for comfort and spiritual guidance. During this period of time their solace becomes passion and results in the birth of Pearl.

We first meet the incredible strong Hester on the scaffold with Pearl in her arms; she displays a sense of irony and contempt, the first description of the heroine notes “her natural dignity and force of character” and mentions the haughty smile and strong glance that reveal no self-consciousness of her plight. While she felt agony as Hawthorne describes in the following passage: “her heart had been flung into the street for them all to spurn and trample upon” her face displayed nothing of her suffering.

Hester’s self-reliance and inner strength are revealed in her determination not to give the name of her partner, and the father of her baby and to stand alone. This defiance becomes stronger and will be carried in the interviews with both her former husband Roger Chillingworth and Governor Bellingham, and also later when she confronts

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Bellingham over the issue of Pearl's guardianship she said: 'God gave me the child!' cried she. 'He gave her in requital of all things else which ye had taken from me. She is my happiness—she is my torture, none the less! Pearl keeps me here in life! Pearl punishes me, too! See ye not, she is the scarlet letter, only capable of being loved, and so endowed with a millionfold the power of retribution for my sin? Ye shall not take her! I will die first!'

Another quality of Hester is her honesty, she acknowledges her sin, and she hates lies, "A lie is never good, even though death threatens on the other side" and she told her former husband "Thou knowest that I was frank with you. I felt no love nor feigned any." This life of public repentance, although bitter and difficult, helps her retain her sanity while Dimmesdale seems to be losing his. By the end of the story, Hester becomes known for her charitable deeds; she offered comfort to the poor and sick.

## **Arthur Dimmesdale**

Is the young puritan minister, whose voice consoles his town's people, he had an ability to sway audiences, his parishioners seek his advice; he definitely excels at his profession and mission to guide them, he enjoys a good reputation among his congregation and other ministers. He is described by the writer as a young, pale and physically delicate person; he has large melancholic eyes and a tremulous mouth, suggesting great sensitivity, he is well educated, and he has a philosophical turn of mind. He is devoted to God, and passionate, he proves to be very effective in the pulpit, his town's people adore him to the extent that they thought to order Chillingworth the physician to lodge with him, when they saw his health decaying, not suspecting of course that they put with him, the only enemy he has.

Unlike, Hester he could not confess publicly, because his people think him their example, however his effectiveness betrays his desire to confess; the more he suffers the better his sermons are. He fasts, and he secretly whips himself as an act of redemption, for him by committing this sin of adultery, he fell short of both his God's standards and his own. He is caught between his knowledge of his sin and his inability to disclose it to the puritan society. Returning from the forest, after his meeting with Hester and Pearl and Hester's plan of flaying and starting anew, he realizes that he is only human and should ask forgiveness and do penance openly. On his way home, he decides to write his Election Day sermon with the passion of his struggle and his humanity. And on the Election Day he decides after this very successful sermon to climb the scaffold and confess publicly;

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that is the action that ensured his salvation, while he dies in the arms of his beloved kissed by his child.

## **Roger Chillingworth**

Hester's husband, who was supposed to be lost at sea, was captivated by the Indians for over a year. He is described as a small, thin and slightly deformed man, with one shoulder higher than the other" although he "could hardly be termed aged" he has a wrinkled face and appears "well stricken in years", his eyes are deeming and bleared, but he has a look of calm intelligence, he spent his life reading and studying.

In the novel, he is a figure obsessed with revenge, arriving in Massachusetts Bay colony, and finding his wife on the scaffold suffering public shame for an act of adultery, he vows to find her partner and to punish him his own way. He pursues his aim with the techniques and motives of a scientist; lodging with Dimmesdale and acting like his friend and physician. He is not a puritan, during his stay with the Indians he learnt about the herbs they were using for medicine. Hawthorne wrote: "he begun an investigation as he imagined with the severe and equal integrity of a judge, desirous only of truth, even as if the question involved no more than the air-drawn lines and figures of a geometrical problem, instead of human passions, and wrongs inflicted on itself."

This is what makes Chillingworth diabolic and the greatest sinner in the eyes of the author, and even the readers. He violates Dimmesdale's heart and soul to see how he will react; he has no compassion. When Dimmesdale climbs the scaffold and confesses Chillingworth cries "thou hast escaped me... thou hast escaped me!". His mental torture of the minister, was his only reason for living, we discover at the end that his obsession with revenge and his hatred consumed him; he dies shortly after Dimmesdale's health and decides to leave all his fortune for Pearl in an act to redeem his sin.

## **Pearl**

Is at the same time a symbol of an act of love and passion, and a symbol of sin "adultery", she appears three times in the story once as an infant, in the first scaffold scene, then at the age of three, and finally at the age of seven, she is described by Hawthorne as an elf child; she was very beautiful, intelligent, imaginative, inquisitive, and determined. Her mother suffered a lot in raising her because of her abstinent character; she was moody and sometimes unruly. Hawthorne described her as a mixture

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of strong moods, with a fierce temper and a capacity for the bitterest hatred that can be supposed to rankle in a childish bosom. So unusual is her behavior some of the puritan's believe that she is a "demon offspring."

As a symbol, Pearl functions as a reminder of Hester's passion and of her sin, she is in fact seen by Hester as the personification of her sin, even as a baby Pearl is fascinated by the scarlet letter. She instinctively reaches for it.

## **A study of themes in 'The Scarlet Letter'**

### **Main theme**

#### **The effect of sin on the soul or the feeling of guilt**

The story illustrates the fact that the feeling of guilt may kill the person even if his/her sin is not discovered by others; this is clearly what our protagonist Hester escapes, when she is found guilty of adultery and she is punished by the puritans of Boston. Being publicly judged and ashamed during her stay in the prison where she gave birth to her child, and later on the scaffold in front of all the town's people, though very hard for her to bear, liberated her soul. While Dimmesdale, who retained public respect, couldn't lead a normal life and his feeling of guilt has eaten his soul, since he didn't find the courage to confess. Feeling hypocrite, because he preaches the commands of God and he transgressed them, and yet very desirous to confess his sin and liberate his soul, but his profession and his status as an example of faith made him unable to do so. Hence, he preferred to do penance on his own, by fasting, or whipping himself. Eventually, he couldn't rest until he confessed and died asking forgiveness for himself and for Chillingworth.

### **Other themes**

#### **Judgement**

The theme of Judgement, is one of the themes that the story underlies, depicting a society of puritans that kept a steady watch over each other's behavior, and could judge Hester, the

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woman, because she couldn't hide her sin, but couldn't discover and judge her partner. The puritans judged her, while God is the true judge, so many of the ministers who preached strictness were living a hypocrite life hiding their sins from every body and feeling free to judge any person, who is caught with a sin as a transgressor, while they transgress God's commands and they live hiding their sins. That belief in the **Elect**, who are the only ones to get salvation, turned them into persecutors, when they themselves fled from persecution.

### **Punishment**

The notion of punishment is clearly experienced by our protagonists; Hester had been punished in many ways, her sin was known to everybody by forcing her to wear the scarlet letter A, which is only a symbol of adultery, she had to endure prison, and to endure bitter than that, when she was publicly ashamed on the scaffold, Hawthorne describes how she felt mortified he said that she felt as if "her heart had been flung into the street for them all to spurn and trample upon", living as a secluded when she was released. She endured all the contempt of that society; she and her daughter were always pointed at. Dimmesdale's punishment was self-inflicted, since nobody knew about his sin, but he felt bitter for hiding his transgression from people while God knew it; so, he kept fasting and whipping himself in an attempt to redeem his deed, that punishment of his guilty consciousness was harder than any and it eventually killed him. Chillingworth also decided to punish him his own way, by torturing him psychologically, thus destroying his health and forces.

### **Gender Inequality**

Hawthorne in this novel also highlights gender inequality; Hester, the woman is caught and punished, because she is a woman and can't hide her sin while she is pregnant, but the father of the child is never discovered and never punished, he is a man and he could go on living without anyone discovering his transgression, hadn't he confessed by the end of the story. Hawthorne uses this disparity between the experiences of the two sexes to make the point about gender inequality.

## **Point of View in the Scarlet Letter:**

The story is narrated from a third person omniscient narrator point of view; where the writer leads us into the minds of his different characters to understand what is going on in their minds and souls. The narrator's description of the characters and their feelings shapes our perception of the story; we see for instance how Dimmesdale is suffering secretly, and how he feels hypocrite by letting all the blame on Hester, we also see how much in need of salvation he was, by fasting long days; he only wanted redemption from God. We also get to know the thoughts of Hester; our protagonist and also the villain or antagonist Dr. Chillingworth.

### **Questions about the scarlet letter**

- 1) What does the narrator claim happened when he put the scarlet letter against his breast?
- 2) What plant surprisingly grows outside the prison? why does it grow there.
- 3) How do the puritans feel and act towards transgressors?
- 4) How does the narrator characterize the women of old English birth?
- 5) How will Hester Prynne be punished?
- 6) What is surprising about Hester's appearance?
- 7) What inner qualities does her appearance reveal?
- 8) According to you, why does Hester remain serene despite her agony?
- 9) With whom does the narrator contrast Hester Prynne?
- 10) What important public figures witness Hester's punishment?
- 11) What physical feature does Hester notice when looking at the strangely dressed man?
- 12) What gesture does the stranger make?
- 13) What does the town's man reveal about Hester's history?

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- 14) Why might Hester see the stranger rather in a crowd than alone?
- 15) What do you think about the character of Pearl in the story?
- 16) How did Pearl react when she was in the house of Governor Bellingham when she was asked about her catechism?
- 17) What is the famous sentence Hester said when she was told that her daughter could be taken from her?
- 18) How was the meeting in the forest?
- 19) What did Hester tell Chillingworth when she saw the deterioration of Dimmesdale's health?
- 20) What did Chillingworth say, when Dimmesdale confessed publicly?
- 21) What do you think about Chillingworth's last act of giving all his fortune to Pearl, is he making amends?
- 22) How do you explain that Hester returns to Boston when her daughter marries in England? And what about resuming to wear the scarlet letter again



## **Analysis of the short story of O' Henry 'The Gift of the Magi'.**

### **1. Life and Works of O' Henry**

His real name is **William Sydney Porter** (September 11, 1862 – June 5, 1910), he is an American writer better known for his pen name, famous for his short stories. His narration is characterized by twists and surprising endings. He was born in **North Carolina**, where he first worked as a pharmacist, then he moved to Texas, and worked as a drafter for the Texas General Land Office, there he met his first wife, later he worked for the First National Bank of Austin, and he published a weekly periodical, *The Rolling Stone*. He fled to Honduras, when he was charged with embezzlement, returning to America when he heard that his wife is dying with tuberculosis, he takes care of her until her death in 1897. He was sent to the prison of Ohio; in Prison he wrote 14 stories. He is released from Prison for good behaviour and moves to New York city with his daughter, where he wrote hundreds of short stories, it was the most prolific period for him. He remarried in 1907, he was a heavy drinker, after years of struggling with bad health, he died in 1910.

### **2. Overview of the Plot**

The story is set in a day before Christmas. A young woman named Della is counting her savings. She lives with her husband, Jim, in a cheap, furnished rental apartment. They live in poverty. Della has been trying to save some cents after buying groceries for many months. She cries because, she has not saved enough money to buy a present for Jim.

She suddenly catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror on the wall and gets an idea. Della's hair, notable for its beauty, is her prized possession. She goes to a shop that buys and sells hair. The shopkeeper, Madame Sofronie, agrees to cut and buy Della's hair for 20 dollars. Della spends the rest of the day searching the city shops for the perfect gift for Jim. He had a gold pocket watch that has been passed down through his family. She thought it would be great to buy a for him a chain for his watch, she finds the perfect platinum chain. It cost is all the money she got from selling her hair, and her savings. Della returns home feeling very excited waiting for Jim to give him the present.

When Jim sees Della has cut her hair, he was surprised. Della goes to him and told him she sold

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her hair to buy a Christmas present for him, and she looked anxious, repeating to him that her hair will grow quick, that he has not to worry. In response, Jim hugs her and tells her he loves her no matter how her hair looks like. He then gives her Christmas present: a set of jewelled tortoiseshell combs she once admired in a shop window. Della loves the present, but she quickly bursts into tears when realizing she is unable to use Jim's thoughtful gift. Jim tried to comfort her. She then excitedly gives him the platinum watch chain. Jim laughs and reveals he sold his watch to pay for the combs.

The author concludes the story by praising the young couple for their true love, each trying to sacrifice his best possession to buy the Christmas present for the other. They were really generous and wise to the extent that the writer compares them to the three wise magi of the bible who brought gifts to the baby Jesus on the first Christmas Eve. He said: "And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi".

### **3. Characters Analysis**

#### **1. Protagonists**

##### **Della Dillingham Young**

is a woman who loves her husband deeply, but struggles to afford a Christmas present for him, she is poor and the savings she had made cannot buy a present for her dear Jim. She decides then to sacrifice the most valuable thing she has 'her long beautiful hair' that she sells to the present for her husband.

##### **James Dillingham Young**

A young man trying to provide a decent life for him and his dear wife Della, whom he loves very much, he sacrifices the most valuable thing he has to buy her Christmas present, he sells his watch to get Della the combs she longed to have.

#### **3.2. A static character**

**Mme Sofronie** a shopkeeper who buys hair of all kinds and sells it to hairdressers, she bought the hair of Della for 20 dollars.

#### 4. Theme

**Love** and **generosity** seem to be the main themes of our story, both Della and Jim are so generous, they give away the most valuable of their possessions to make the other happy, though they live in poverty, they together have what is more precious than money: true love.

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