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імені А.С.Макаренка**

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**ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЯ
ХУДОЖНЬОГО ТЕКСТУ
В ТЕОРІЇ ТА ПРАКТИЦІ
(англійською мовою)**

**Навчальний посібник
для студентів старших курсів
факультетів іноземних мов
вищих навчальних закладів освіти**

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- Б 14** Інтерпретація художнього тексту в теорії та практиці (англійською мовою): Навчальний посібник для студентів старших курсів факультетів іноземних мов вищих навчальних закладів освіти. – Суми: ФОП Цьома С.П., 2017. – 280 с.

Посібник спрямований на систематизацію базового теоретичного матеріалу інтерпретації художнього тексту, а також на формування умінь студентів-філологів ефективно аналізувати англійськомовні художні тексти. Матеріалом для практичних завдань різного рівня складності було обрано здебільше короткі оповідання сучасних англійських та американських авторів (представників літератури ХХІ століття), що сприяє не лише формуванню інтерпретативних умінь студентів, але й знайомить їх із творчістю представників новітньої англійської та американської літератури.

Для студентів вищих навчальних закладів.

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FOREWORD

When you have finished working with this book, you will no longer be the same person.

You can't be.

If you read every page, if you fulfil every assignment, if you delve deep into every story, if you follow every principle investigated, you will go through an intellectual experience that will effect a qualitative change in you.

For if you persevere with your efforts to interpret literary texts effectively, you will also sharpen and enrich your thinking; push back your intellectual horizons; and acquire a better understanding of the world of fiction in general and of yourself in particular.

To interpret a literary text does not mean merely to memorize scores of unrelated terms. What it means is to become acquainted with the multitudinous and fascinating phenomena of human experience extrapolated through the individualized prism of the fictional world.

And surely such an experience will have a discernible effect on your practical skills in critical reading – that is the ability to elicit and decipher a writer's message. What is more, you will be challenged to generate your own axiological thought about the fictional world of a story, expressing it in an appropriate metalanguage.

A GUIDE TO CRITICAL READING

designed by Professor John Lye

An analysis explains what a work of literature means, and how it means it. It is essentially to realize that interpretation shows how the resources of literature are used to create the meaningfulness of the text. There are people who resist analysis, believing that it 'tears apart' a work of art; however a work of art is an artifice, that is, it is made by someone with an end in view: as a made thing, it can be and should be analyzed as well as appreciated. There are several main reasons for analyzing literature:

1. The ultimate end of analysis is, first and foremost, **a deeper understanding and a fuller appreciation of the literature** – you learn to see more, to uncover or create richer, denser, more interesting meanings.

2. Secondly, as literature uses language, images, the essential processes of meaning-making, analysis can lead to **a more astute and powerful use of the tools of meaning** on the reader's part.

3. Thirdly, analysis should also teach us **to be aware of the cultural delineations of a work, its ideological aspects**. Art is not eternal and timeless but is situated historically, socially, intellectually, written and read at particular times, with particular intents, under particular historical conditions, with particular cultural, personal, gender, racial, class and other perspectives. Through art we can see ideology in operation. This can be of particular use in understanding our own culture and time, but has historical applications as well.

4. A fourth function of analysis is to help us, through close reading and through reflection, **understand the way ideas and feelings are talked about in our culture or in other times and cultures** – to have a sense both of communities of meaning, and of the different kinds of understanding there can be about matters of importance to human life. Art can give us access to the symbolic worlds of communities: not only to the kinds of ideas they have about life, but also to the way they feel about them, to the ways they imagine them, to the ways they relate them to other aspects of their lives.

UNIT 1.

LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF TEXT INTERPRETATION (Theoretical Basics)

Literature:

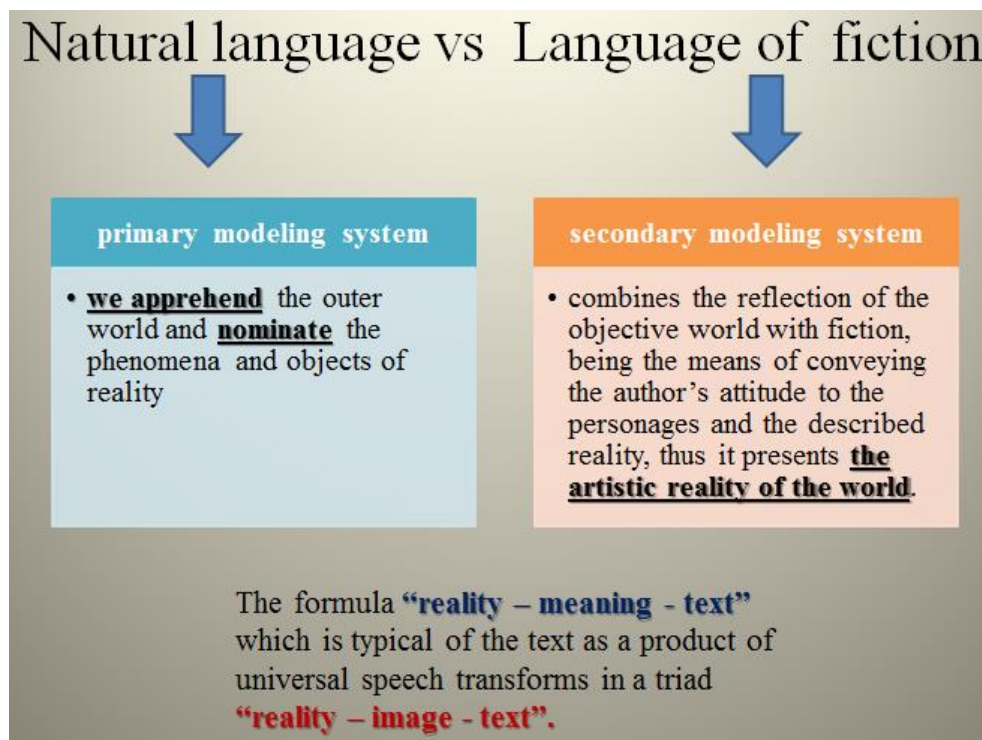
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BASIC NOTIONS

A **text** (Lat. *textum* "fabric, connection") is any sequence of words ordered according to the rules of a given language system.

In *linguostylistics* text is usually understood as a communicative event originally created in the written mode but apt to be presented both in written and oral forms. From this viewpoint, text – and written text in particular – is defined as the highest communicative unit of speech.

The notion of text embraces different objects: text as a product of the natural language (the primary modeling system) and text as a work of art (the secondary modeling system).



An **elementary text** is a supraphrasal unity – a segment of speech comprising no less than two sentences and having a semantic, communicative and structural coherence.

Rigid texts correspond to strict requirements set to their graphical layout, selection of grammar structures, vocabulary units and rule out to a great extent the verbal expression of the author's individuality.

Partially **standardized** texts comply with a number of formal and content regularities, though allowing a certain degree of creative freedom.

Free texts allow the highest degree of improvisation and the author's involvement.

A **literary (fictional, belles-lettres) text** stands apart from other types of texts due to the specific code – language of fiction – it employs, which is regarded as secondary in relation to the natural language (primary code) used in texts of other registers. A literary text creates an imaginary picture of the world through poetic images.

*Non-fictional texts can be also termed *artefactual texts*, in which representation of events has a tendency towards maximum authenticity. The main purpose of *mentafactual* (literary) *texts* is to present the author's individual interpretation of reality; the communicative function of such texts is primarily aesthetic, which integrates emotive, volitional, and other functions.

Text linguistics studies different aspects of a literary text:

1. **ontological aspect** – the character of the text existence, its status, its difference from oral speech;
2. **gnosiological** – the way the objective reality is reflected in a text, and in the case of a literary text – the way the real world is reflected in the ideal world of aesthetic reality;
3. **linguistic aspect** proper – the character of linguistic make-up of the text;
4. **pragmatic aspect** – the way the author of the text treats the objective reality.

Interpretation (Lat. "explication") is an act, process, or result of interpreting, i.e. explaining the meaning and elucidating the sense, which is often multifaceted.

The content of text is a hierarchy of its senses, which embraces textual meaning (the universal sense) relatively independent of the communicants, the author's sense and the receptive sense, or the reader's sense evoked by the textual message.

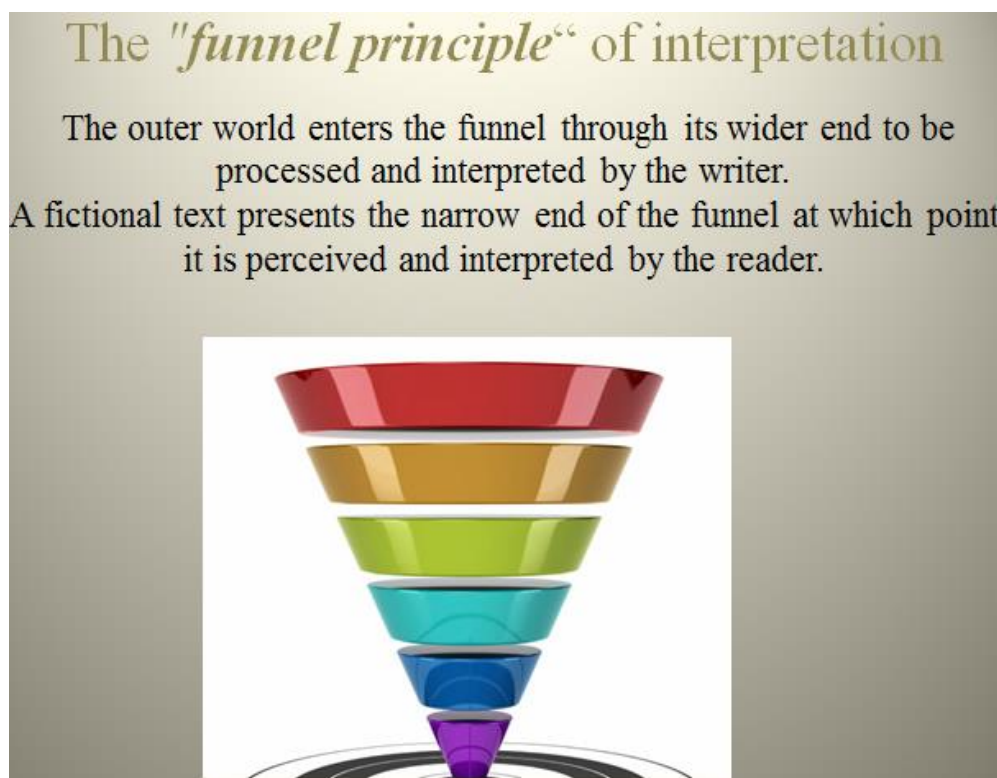
The meaning of text constitutes its explicit content, i.e. the information rendered directly by language signs as its components and perceived more or less uniformly by speakers of this language.

The author's sense is contained in the implicit content of text and further elicited by its reader. The textual message is prone to various understandings that produce receptive senses.

The receptive sense is never the same as the author's sense, due to the writer's and the reader's senses being disassociated both physically and

referentially. The greater the difference between the writer and the reader with regard to their historical, ethnic and cultural, social, educational and other identities, the more distanced they become from each other in the textual referential space. Thus, there is a considerable gap between the author's and reader's senses, which causes idiosyncratic understanding of a text.

Thus, **text interpretation** results in comprehension of the content of a literary text and its emotional, aesthetical and ideological information by construing the author's vision of the world.



Scholarly approaches to text interpretation can be roughly divided by the criterion of preference given to one of the textual senses, i.e. universal, the author's or the reader's sense. Accordingly, the following trends, or paradigms of literary text interpretation are distinguished:

- 1) **objectivist paradigm:** treats the sense attributed to the text by its author as objective and explicable, thus being the major purpose of research;
- 2) **subjectivist paradigm:** literary text interpretation is not determined by the text itself but relies completely on its readers' perspectives;
- 3) **balanced, or rational paradigm:** proceeds from the assumption that the sense of a literary text can be elicited from the dialogue between the text and its reader.

Within the paradigms of literary text interpretation it is possible to distinguish a number of perspectives.

The hermeneutic perspective advocates the active role of the interpreter and an "open-ended reading", i.e. potentially unlimited elucidation of a text;

The psychological (psychoanalytical) perspective is based upon the Freudian and Jungian treatment of a literary text as a form of sublimation of the writer's subconscious, primarily sexual, desires and archetypal images. Using this approach, an interpreter looks for hidden connections between the writer's style and his/her psychological traits.

The pragmatic perspective of literary text interpretation is aimed at the exploration of implied relationships between the author and the addressee; in other terms, the author's expectations about the reader and his/her literary response.

The allegoric-symbolical perspective treats the literary text as an ambiguous (twofold) construction that conceals hidden ("dark", obscure) senses under the cover of its images.

The philological perspective integrates linguostylistic and literary stylistic approaches to the analysis of fiction. The goal of this interpretation is to decode both the author's and reader's senses of a fictional text through the study of the text genesis and its impact upon the reader.



FOR FURTHER RESEARCH WORK

1. Comment on M.Turner's vision of the role of narrative imagining in human evolutionary framework. Why do you think it is considered to be a fundamental target value for the developing human mind?

At conception, an individual human being carries an individual genetic endowment (genotype) that arose under evolutionary pressures of selection and that guides her individual brain as it develops in its changing environments. That genotype cannot determine the fine specifics of point-to-point wiring and activity in the individual brain, but it can (and must) contribute to setting up a nervous system that will reach certain target values under experience. That genotype must do this because of Darwinian pressures: Genes that lead to less competent brains will be selected against. The genes implicitly provide target values for the developing brain. Those values derive implicitly from the history of selection on our ancestors. The particular target values that have arisen in our species are, at a minimum, stable regulation of homeostasis and metabolism, dispositions toward survival and reproduction, bodily movement in space, perceptual categorization, and the recognition and execution of small spatial stories. The combined operation of genetic influence and necessary experience of the sort inevitable for any normal human infant with a human body in a human environment leads to the ability to recognize and execute small spatial stories.

Seen in this way, narrative imagining, often thought of as literary and optional, appears instead to be inseparable from our evolutionary past and our necessary personal experience. It also appears to be a fundamental target value for the developing human mind.

(M.Turner Literary Mind)

2. Consider the approach offered by J.D.Jonansen which is aimed at facilitating the multi-perspectival literary text interpretation. The answers on which of the questions, suggested in the table, help to recreate the images of the author, the character, the reader? Correlate the questions that follow with the perspectives of literary text interpretation they help to investigate.

Interpretations are, so to speak, *text-driven*, because the center of attention is the text, or corpora of texts, conceived as an individual, historical utterance. Hence, interpreting literary texts means analyzing them as speech. Such interpretation is normally *multi-perspectival* because a literary text is both over- and underdetermined, and the objective of interpretation is *sense making*, i.e., explaining how the diverse elements and dimensions of the text-as-utterance work together, or oppose each other to the effect that a certain, often heterogeneous meaning potential is indicated. [...]

The seven questions should be applied to the writing about both what allegedly happened during the action and during its verbal negotiation. Consequently, to get access to the text, the questions should be tripled:

WHO did it?	WHO spoke about it?	WHO wrote about it?
For WHOM was it done?	For WHOM were they speaking?	For WHOM was it written?
Against WHOM was it done?	Against WHOM were they speaking?	Against WHOM were they writing?
WHAT happened?	WHAT was said?	WHAT was written?
WHERE did it happen?	WHERE was it negotiated?	WHERE was it written?
BY WHICH MEANS was it done?	BY WHICH MEANS was it talked about?	BY WHICH MEANS was it written?*
WHY was it done?	WHY was it negotiated?	WHY was it written about?
HOW was it done?	HOW was it discussed?	HOW was it written about?
WHEN was it done?	WHEN was it discussed?	WHEN was it written about?

*There is a difficulty in the distinction between by WHICH MEANS (QUIBUS AUXILIIS) and HOW (QUOMODO), but it has to do with two things. On the one hand, it is a question of the level of generality (HOW did he get rid of him? By murder. By WHICH MEANS did he murder him? With a dagger.) On the other hand, in medieval editorial practice, QUIBUS AUXILIIS also meant “with what material is the text composed?” Thus, this question concerns the relations of the text in question to other texts, i.e., it is about intertextuality. And even concerning action this question may be relevant, because actions, as well as texts, may be imitated or quoted.

(*J.D.Jonansen Theory and/vs. Interpretation in Literary Studies*)

3. Read the excerpts from J.Gavins’s article about Text World Theory in literary text interpretation and fill in the table that follows.

The basic theoretical premise underlying Text World Theory is that human beings understand all discourse by constructing mental representations, or *text worlds*, of it in their minds. Regardless of the type of discourse under scrutiny, both the text and the context surrounding its production and reception must be fully investigated. [...] Human communication can be split into three manageable levels: the discourse world, the text world, and the sub-world.

The discourse world deals with the immediate situation surrounding at least one speaker or writer and one more listener or reader. These sentient beings are referred to as the *participants*, the conscious presence of whom is essential for a discourse world to exist. This is because the discourse world contains not only the participants and the objects and entities which surround them, but all the personal and cultural knowledge the participants bring with them to a language situation. [...]

Text World Theory introduces the principle of *text-drivenness* in order to provide a manageable route into the systematic examination of context. This principle specifies that, from the vast store of knowledge and experience available to the participants, it is the *text* produced in the discourse world that determines which areas are needed in order to process and understand the discourse at hand.

This is not to say, however, that the exchange of information during the discourse process will necessarily run smoothly and efficiently. In literary discourse readers are frequently led up the garden path by mischievous narrators, fed red herrings in the search for coherent plot, and dealt all kinds of obstructive hands by their authorial co-participants.

As the participants in the discourse world communicate with one another, they construct mental representations of the discourse in their minds, in which the language being produced can be conceptualized and understood. These mental representations are known as *text worlds*.

The deictic and referential expressions contained within a text establish the spatial and temporal boundaries of the text world and specify whether any entities or objects are present. These details, known as the *world-building* elements of the text, can be seen to form a kind of static conceptual background against which certain events and activities may be played out.

Once a text world has been created, any number of departures from its initial world-building parameters may occur during the discourse process. These departures cause new worlds to be created in the minds of the participants. They constitute the third and final layer at text world theory, and are known as *sub-worlds*. A sub-world may be created by one of the participants at the discourse-world level. [...]

Sub-worlds are created for a variety of reasons, but generally fall into one of two broad categories. *World-switches* occur when the temporal or spatial parameters of the text world change. The text may flash backwards or forwards to a different time zone, or it may switch the spatial location of the world, as a concurrent scene is referred to or described. [...] Instances of direct speech and direct thought representation also cause world-switches, as present time discourse is injected into a past tense narrative. In each case, a new world is created appropriate to the new time or scene.

Slightly more complex are *modal worlds*, which occur whenever some form of modalisation is used in a discourse. Modal expressions are usually separated into three categories: deontic, boulomaic, and epistemic. In Text World Theory, the use of each of these creates a corresponding modal world.

Deontic modal worlds are created whenever a degree of obligation is attached to a proposition. This category of modality includes such modal auxiliaries as *may*, *should* and *must*, which can be seen to form a continuum of commitment from permission through to requirement. Adjectival and participial constructions such as *it is necessary that, you are obliged to* and *you are forbidden to* are also possible. For example, if you say that someone “*must keep off the grass*”, a new sub-world is created in which the activity of “*keeping off the grass*” is taking place. [...]

Boulomaic modal worlds operate in a similar manner. Whenever a speaker or writer expresses a degree of desire, a separate modal world is created in which the proposition in question can be conceptualized. This category of modality includes such modal lexical verbs as *hope*, *wish* and

want. Again, adjectival and participial constructions are also possible, including *hopefully, it is hoped that, it is good that*. For example, if you say “*I wish I had more days in the week*”, the boulomaic modal verb *wish* causes a new world in which “more days in the week” exist. This situation is, of course, unrealized and therefore remains in a mental space separate from the main discourse. [...]

Epistemic modal worlds allow us to conceptualise expressions of remoteness in discourse and can occur for a number of different reasons. The epistemic modal system reflects a speaker’s or writer’s confidence, or lack of confidence, in the truth of particular proposition. Varying degrees of epistemic distance may be expressed through epistemic modal auxiliaries such as *must, could, might*, as well as certain modal lexical verbs, such as *think, suppose* and *believe*. It is also possible to express epistemic distance through adjectival constructions, such as *it is certain that, it is sure that, it is doubtful that*, as well as through the use of a number of epistemic modal adverbs, including *maybe, perhaps, possibly, certainly, arguably*. The hypothetical situations are described, though these events may never occur in the main text world, so a new sub-world is needed for a reader to conceptualise their possibility.

(J.Gavins Text World Theory in Literary Practice)

Text Worlds by J.Gavins's

The type of the World	The definition	The mode of its representation in a literary text	The role in literary text interpretation
THE DISCOURSE WORLD			
THE TEXT WORLDS			
SUB-WORLDS ↓			
WORLD SWITCHES			
MODAL WORLDS			



UNIT 2.

BASIC NOTIONS OF LITERARY TEXT INTERPRETATION: THE MAIN CATEGORIES OF THE TEXT

Literature:

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BASIC NOTIONS

Literary text as a communicative unit is determined by a number of categories: integration, conceptuality, implicitness, discreteness, modality, (im)personality, intentionality, acceptability, contextuality, situationality, intertextuality.

1. **Integration** represents unification of all parts of a literary text for the sake of achieving its wholeness. The two interrelated facets of integration are cohesion and coherence.

Cohesion designates an outer (or formal) organization of a text based on lexical, grammatical and other links between words, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, etc.

A writer is able to hold together meanings in the related sentences in a number of ways, and cohesion is created to establish the structure of meaning. Cohesion is a factor that indicates whether a text is well-connected or merely a group of unrelated sentences. Though being involved with meaning between sentences, cohesion does not deal with content of a text. Cohesion does not concern what a text means; it concerns how the text is constructed as a semantic edifice.

Coherence is a feature of the internal (or semantic) organization of text based on logical links between successive ideas. Thus, a coherent text has an under-lying logical structure that acts to guide the reader through the text so that it ‘sticks together’ as a unit.

A text “makes sense” because there is a continuity of senses among the knowledge activated by the expressions of the text. A “senseless” or “nonsensical” text is one in which text receivers can discover no such continuity, usually because there is a serious mismatch between the configuration of concepts and relations expressed and the receivers prior knowledge of the world. This continuity of senses is the foundation of coherence, being the mutual access and relevance within a configuration of concepts and relations.

2. At the heart of a belles-lettres work lies an organizing idea (**concept**) which ensures the semantic unity of the text. **Conceptuality** as organization of a text around a certain idea is the most fundamental textual category.

*The reader's comprehension of the main idea of the literary work results from the profound analysis of different textual components, primarily – the theme and the message.

Theme (Gr. *thema* "something that lies in the foundation") is the general content of a text presented in condensed way. The theme of any literary work is an answer to the question WHAT IS THIS LITERARY TEXT ABOUT?

Message is defined as an inference to be drawn from the theme or a problem to be pondered as a result of reading the text. The message of any literary work addresses the question WHAT CONCLUSION(S) CAN I (AS A READER) DRAW FROM THE TEXT or WHAT PROBLEM(S) DOES THE TEXT POSE?

3. The concept of a literary work should be traced both in the textual (explicit, verbal) and subtextual (implicit, deep-lying) layers. The main idea of any belles-lettres text is predominantly **implicit**, as its abstract sense is expressed by means of concrete images that may evoke various interpretations.

4. **Discreteness** of a literary text refers to its formation from distinct parts; it is the reverse-side of integration.

In order to define the text as discrete the reader has to first isolate compositional structure and partitioning.

Text partitioning (архітектоніка) concerns a spatial arrangement of its syntactical, graphical and logical units – sentences, paragraphs, chapters, etc.

Text composition designates a logical and aesthetic unity of plot elements.

Plot of the text is a well-ordered series of events that are logically connected within a literary work.

*The classical plot structure includes such compositional elements, as the exposition, the beginning of the plot, plot complications, the climax or culmination, the denouement (resolution), the conclusion or ending.

Subplot as a secondary plot is usually connected to the main plot in some way, most often through the relationships between the characters or by mirroring features of the main plot.

Plot development within any literary text is triggered by a **conflict** – a struggle between opposing forces.

External conflict is the struggle between two or more characters, characters and society, characters and natural elements, characters and fate or the unknown.

Internal conflict is the struggle within the character's conscience.

The apex of a conflict constitutes *the climax*, which may occur several times within the plot. If the climax is also a turning point in the story, it is called *crisis*.

5. **Modality** of a literary text is understood, on the one hand, as a logical correspondence of textual content to the objective reality (*objective modality*), and, on the other, as the author's attitude to the narrated events which reveals itself in the narrative method, as well as in the author's selection of language resources, images, stylistic devices and other textual elements (*subjective modality*).

6. **Personality / impersonality** of a literary text depends on the explicitness / implicitness of its author's personality as it stands out from the pages. The degree of personality / impersonality varies in accordance with the genre, narrative technique (subjectivized, objectivized) and perspective (unlimited / limited, constant / variable), as well as the form of presentation (the author's narrative, reported speech, direct speech).

*An author reveals his/her attitude toward the characters, events or ideas through the *tone (slant)* imparted to a literary text. Tone, regarded as a vehicle of the author's

mood, is conveyed by means of specially selected words, syntactical structures, stylistic nuances, as well as macroimages and settings.

7. **Intentionality** and **acceptability** are generally regarded as ‘pair’ categories. Intentionality concerns the text producer's attitude and intentions to attain a goal specified in a plan. Acceptability concerns the text receiver's expectations about the text being worth accepting.

8. **Contextuality** focuses on the crucial role the context plays in any form of communication, as any text production is conditioned by its immediate nonverbal context. Thus, in every situation in which language is used, the quality and effect of the communication is determined by the contextual knowledge shared by the participants.

9. **Situationality** is a general designation for the factors which render a text relevant to a current or recoverable situation. Very rarely are the effects of a situational setting exerted without *mediation*: the extent to which one feeds one's own beliefs and goals into one's *model* of the current communicative situation. The accessible evidence in the situation is fed into the model along with our prior knowledge and expectations about how the “real world” is organized. If the dominant function of a text is to provide a reasonably unmediated account of the situation model, **situation monitoring** is being performed. If the dominant function is to guide the situation in a manner favourable to the text producer's goals, **situation management** is being carried out. The borderline between monitoring and managing is naturally fuzzy and can vary according to the views of the individual participants.

10. **Intertextuality** is a universal phenomenon that elucidates the communicative interconnections between a text and the other, a text and the context. Thus, a text is a permutation of texts, intertextuality in the given text, where several utterances, taken from other texts intersect and neutralize one another.

In **the horizontal dimension**, the communication takes place between the author and the reader and in **the vertical dimension**, the text communicates with a frontal and synchronic literary corpus. This conversation which the author enters into is a creative dialogue where meaning is arranged or composed rather than created. Therefore meaning of the text finds a wider and complex characterization beyond what is inscribed

in a text. The 'text that is' is 'texts within' and the 'meaning that is' is 'meanings beyond.' (J.Kristeva)

Transtextuality is basically G.Genette's version of intertextuality. G.Genette identifies five kinds of transtextuality: **intertextuality**, **paratextuality**, **metatextuality**, **hypertextuality**, and **architextuality**.

Intertextuality is reduced to a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts and to the actual presence of one text within another. Intertextuality consists of quotation, plagiarism, and allusion, thus providing a pragmatic and determinable intertextual relationship between specific elements of individual texts.

Paratextuality or paratext is the elements at the entrance of the text, which help to direct and control the reception of a text by its readers. A paratext comprises a peritext and an epitext. The **peritext** includes elements such as titles, chapter titles, prefaces, captions and notes. It also involves dedications, illustrations, epigraphs and prefaces. The **epitext** consists of elements outside of the text in question, such as interviews, publicity announcements, reviews by and addressed to critics, private letters, and other authorial and editorial discourse. The paratext is thus the sum of the peritext and the epitext.

Metatextuality denotes explicit or implicit references of one text on another text. It unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it, in fact sometimes even without naming it.

Hypertextuality involves any relationship uniting a text B (a *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (a *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary. Thus, hypertextuality represents the relation between a text and a text or genre on which it is based but which it transforms, modifies, elaborates or extends (including parody, spoof, sequel, translation).

Architextuality relates to the designation of a text as a part of a genre or genres. The architextual nature of texts also includes thematic and figurative expectations about texts. A crucial factor of this type is the reader's expectations, and thus their reception of the work.

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH WORK

1. *Consider the approach offered by Leonardo Mozdzenski to studying intertextual relationships in literary texts. How does this approach fit into the general framework of the problem under the analysis?*

In order to present a new analytical model of intertextual relationships, I initially seize upon the notion of *explicitness*, as elaborated by Marcuschi (2007): "to make explicit means to offer a discursive formulation that contains the conditions of appropriate or intended interpretability". Accordingly, to make explicit implies to promote forms to make a text *interpretable* in contexts of use by creating some access conditions.

From an intertextual perspective, this means to state that the role of the speaker/writer is to gradually offer (or to refuse to offer) discursive-cognitive clues that make the text interpretation possible. Such clues are given according to the interlocutors' *contexts*, that is, their shared knowledge, their (inter)subjective interpretation of the communicative situation, their proposals, etc. In synthesis, as to the *form* that intertextuality might assume in a text, I propose the typological *continuum*. Therefore, in terms of the source text's *explicitness*, a text may ideally vary from *plagiarism* (a fraudulent presentation of other people's work as if it were one's own), where deliberately there are not explicit identification marks of the source text or its author, to *authorized copies* (a full reproduction, legally permitted, of an already existent text), as in the case of a compilation of scientific articles previously published in different academic journals.

It is crucial to emphasize that those traditional categories listed in this continuum (plagiarism, allusion, indirect mention, etc.) are merely illustrative and non-discretized. In other words, a single text may simultaneously present one or more occurrences of any of these types of intertextuality, or any combination between these more or less stabilized categories and other 'intermediate' classes.

The other criterion to observe the intertextual relationships regards the *function* performed by each intertextuality occurrence. More specifically, this criterion is linked to the *positioning* of the quoting author's voice in relation to the quoted author's voice in order to build his or her own discourse.

This idea of different voices inhabiting discourse is borrowed from the notion of *polyphony* in Bakhtin (1984), concerning the existence of several polemical voices in polyphonic dialogic genres, which are retaken, resignified, ratified, confronted and ironized all the time. Therefore, a quoting text may ideally vary from the situation when the other's voice is disqualified until the moment it is used with the function of authority to guarantee the validity of the new utterance. The first case (disqualification) typically occurs in political and scientific debates, as well as in trials, where the defendant's discourse is retaken by the prosecutor to defend the victim, or in journalistic articles, where the less privileged's speech is made illegitimate through strategies of access – or the absence of access – to the discourse space.

(L. Mozdzenski Verbal-visual intertextuality: how do multisemiotic texts dialogue? A New View of Intertextuality: Proposing an Analytical Model)

2. Read the excerpt from the article *Modality – Literary Studies and Cognitivism* by Włodzimierz Bolecki about the category of modality in its ontogenesis. Draw a mindmap that illustrates the key ideas of the excerpt and your understanding of the problem.

Essentially, the term “modality” has two basic meanings. The first one can be encountered in philosophical works dedicated to so called modal logics deeply rooted in Aristotle’s Prior Analytics. It is a classification of sentences with respect to how categorically it is asserted what they assert – these are sentences described by logicians as assertive, authoritative, and problematic.

Modality as a logical problem became particularly popular after Lukasiewicz developed many-valued logics, triggering today’s evolution of modal logic. The notion of modality, therefore, was extended beyond classical types of modal sentences referring to expression of necessity and possibility and started to embrace such categories as obligation, consent, prohibition (deontic modality), and cognitive acts such as: knowing, believing, acknowledging, understanding (epistemic modality), as well as existential modality and temporal modality (never, always, someday). Another tendency in the field of modal logics matured under the name of – following Leibniz’s wording – the philosophy of possible worlds. This investigation led to metaphysical issues (ontology), logic and logical semantics, general knowledge theory, and literature theory.

In the 1960's, French theorists such as C. Bremond and J. Greimas, influenced by V. Propp's dissertation entitled *Morphology of the Folktale*, looked for a possibility to create a generative text model (plots, narrations), and suggested considering modal logic's categories as the grounds for the new narration theory. Greimas, for instance, put forward a proposition to build narration's grammar, and base it on such modal verbs as "can," "know," "want," and "must." The theoretical assumption here was a conviction that after specifying a limited number of basic units (agents, modi, plots, etc.), all possible ties between them could be characterized. This way modal logic was turning into the foundation of the theory of all "possible" narrations or plots.

The French generativists' concept was further developed by the Czech narration theoretician L. Doležel, who based his analyses on the assumption that modalities "are abstract semantic notions which could be established and examined independently of their narrative modalities' manifestation." The most appealing definition formulated by Doležel concerned the contradiction between modality in a sense of modal logics and linguistic, statement modality he called "anthropological" modality. "Notions related with modality should be differentiated from anthropological ones [which] are used to express human skills, emotions, desires, hopes, etc.," however, he added, anthropological and modal notions are linked with each other: for instance, the former are manifestations of the latter [i.e., logical modalities] (ibid.). The theory of modal logics (modal narrative categories) was, according to generativists' assumptions, opposed to "imprecise anthropological language used in critical interpretations." The generative theory of narration, directed against the impressionism or subjectivism of interpreters, revealed anthropological ambitions, but in a different sense. According to Doležel, the importance of modal logic for narration theory lied in the fact that modal systems (based on such modalizers as consent, prohibition, and obligation) were connected with human behavior because "all modal systems can be understood as restraints to which human activities are subdued.

Secondly, modality belongs to the standard linguistic nomenclature and, as it has a wider range than the term "mode" (*modus*), it has appeared in linguistic papers for a while meaning "a subjective attitude of the speaker towards the content of his or her statement (uncertainty, doubt, supposition)." From the linguistic perspective, therefore, modality is a part of the communication process responsible for expressing feelings and attitudes of speakers. Although linguists formulate various definitions of modality and

its criteria, it might be schematically ascertained that research on modality concerns the relation between a statement's content and the reality, as well as the attitude of the speaker to the subject of his or her statement. Currently, linguistic studies of modality are a full-blown branch of general, historical, and comparative linguistics. It comprises dozens of works analyzing modal constructions in almost every language in the world. The core questions of those analyses concern grammatical, syntactic, lexical and stylistic exponents of modality (formal modalizers). Another question concerns informal modalizers, i.e. non-grammatical or even non-linguistic factors, which affect so called modalization of statements. "Modal moods," "modalizers," and "modalities" have different designates and ranges. In some national languages and texts, there are more modalities and modalizers than modal moods. In the last decades, modality studies - earlier on the margin of structural linguistics - obtained new, very strong stimuli that made them one of central issues in modern linguistics. The principal impulse was development of cognitive linguistics, in view of which, modalization as a mental effect of speakers' linguistic operations and their linguistic activity related with creating images of the world, are nowadays not a peripheral aspect of the language but its essence.

(W. Bolecki Modality – Literary Studies and Cognitivism)

THE BASIC NOTIONS OF LITERARY TEXT INTERPRETATION (Practical Assignment)

1. *To perceive a text written in the stream-of-consciousness style as coherent is often a difficult task. This type of narrative imitates a character's interior monologue, in which loosely connected ideas and incohesive fragments are rather frequent. The short story "The White Room" (2002) by J. Winterson is an example of stream-of-consciousness narrative technique.*

Comment upon what makes this short story a coherent and cohesive piece of writing. Make use of the directed-study questions following the short story.

The White Room

J. Winterson

The room is not mine.

One window frames an ash tree. One window lenses the world.

From the wide lens of your window I can see an album of ordinary life. There's a woman unfolding a music stand with metallic determination. She picks up a flute, begins to play, and soap bubbles of notes break against your glass. The music is floating but the woman is standing very still. The strange thing about her is that she is naked. Yes, quite naked, her spine as long and straight as her flute, her vertebrae like the keys of the flute.

I pushed up the window to let in the music. We were floating Mozart. Why is it that the real things are fragile and tough, destroyed so easily, but never damaged? Lost to us endlessly – stupidly, unknowingly – but in themselves always found again, when time opens like a door.

I walked into you.

Where is the green door in the green hill? Summer and winter I marked paths that led me nowhere, blind trails that tunnel ground the way moles do, sniffing it, scenting it, digging it sideways with both hands, reading the ground like the palm of my hand.

Upturned, I have tried to follow the heart line, but the way has been closed. Wait patiently, without hope, for the miracle that cannot be coaxed.

All the stories advise me that one day the hill will open, in the shining hour, when time and space and desire hinge the solid world into a door.

The white room is a chapel.

Like all sacred spaces, it does and does not exist. It has joists and floorboards and damp and doorjambs. It can be bought and sold. At the same time, what is valuable here cannot be traded in the market place. What is valuable here is a quality of light. Light that changes as we do. Light as subtle and uncatchable as human beings.

We are fallen angels netted in light.

The white room is a hospital.

It happens on the borders between healing and pain. The light is as surgical as a laser. The light finds me out. My soft tissue is exposed. Parts of me have been cut away.

I had a wound that would not heal. You rummaged your hands through it and it bled again. It bled clean this time, and the poison left me. That wound has been infected for years. It will never heal but it is not infected anymore.

My body is clean.

The white room is a rendezvous.

Past and future meet here, if not as friends, that at least not those old enemies, the hostile brothers, warring over the same girl.

I am jealous of the present. The present is a lover always slipping away. The present comes chaperoned by memory, and lottery to desire. The present is a bartered bride.

How to love what is now? How to make love to time?

Time is what stops everything from happening at once.

It's a good explanation but not enough. My life is simultaneous – whatever the artificiality of time. I experience life as calendar, as diary, as anniversary, as event, but when I remember it, – the walls between are as thin as stud partitions.

The house and its staircase and its rooms have been divided to provide a number of apartments. Here I am in the basement. Here I am on the top floor. Here my lives are living quietly apart, but always in earshot. Here I am subdivided into tenancies that call themselves separate but remain one house. One staircase is all I have – forget the dividing doors. One staircase, and these locks and keys.

Past, present and future are separate apartments in the same house.

The white room is a mystery.

The owner is often away. Time sleeps here – among the sixteenth century furniture and the twenty first century life. Some people buy antiques because they are old – other people buy them because they are still alive.

Time can be caught in objects.

When I touch this table where a woman counted out her past like money, I too start to bargain with life – what will this cost me? What can I expect in return?

She tells me the old story, her fingers stroking her memories. Time is tarnished, but not where she touches it – where she touches it, time is worn thin from being turned over Time thin enough to lose between floorboards. Time worn bright with love.

Love is the story. This story. This time.

The white room is where we made love.

What is desire?

Desire is a restaurant. Desire is watching you eat. Desire is pouring wine for you. Desire is looking at the menu and wondering what it would be like to kiss you. Desire is the surprise of your skin.

Look – in between us now are the props of ordinary life – glasses, knives, cloths, Time has been here before. History has had you – and me too. My hand has brushed against yours for centuries. The props change, but not this. Not this single naked wanting you.

Sacrifice time to desire.

This current of desire was underground and cold.

Love has sun-warmed me.

I had been subterranean for too long. I didn't know it, but the river was moving towards the surface. There was a space, an opening, and you were there. The river burst out of its secret waterway, and you were there.

My body is a river – swim in me. My body is deep enough for diving.

She's beautiful – oh yes. Golden and dappled and played over with light. Touch her, and together we unclothe time. Kiss her, and time yields.

Put out my hand, and time is bone – life's frame, but not its flesh. The flesh is here – on her body – this living moment – and ours because we claim it.

[...]

We lie together, skin close enough for grafting. When I kiss you, I give you all the words that room in the roof of my mouth. When you kiss me, you give me the shape of silence.

The theatre is empty. Everyone has gone home. Shall we go home now, to the place where no one is watching? To the place where time stops?

I love you.

Combing the hill, I loved you.

[...]

Enchantment is subject to no release but the breaking of a spell.

The enchanted can cook bacon and eggs like anybody else. The enchanted can fill in their tax forms and bet on a winner at the races. The enchanted bear children – who sing in choirs. The enchanted are just the same as the rest of us, unless you catch them by chance – staring into the water as if it were a crystal ball.

You called me and I came. You unstoppered the bottle and I flew out. I was imprisoned in a tree. I was lost on an island. I had only the memory of desire to guide me. I could not free myself.

I was walking round and round in circles. The circles of enchantment that are magic and cliché. They are so known, so predictable, even the language we use to describe them is worn.

Round and round in circles. And then I found the place I had lost. The place where the enchantment started. The place where I sacrificed desire.

The place where I sacrificed desire to time.

I thought it would come right. I thought the clock would bring it – as if time ever carries anything in its hands except itself. I thought the seasons might unfold it, but spring can only prompt what is already sown. Summer can only flower what is grown. No tree, no harvest. No stirrings of desire when there is no desire.

I do not believe that desire is better than love. Desire is not life either. But when desire is so mixed with love and life, that to sever one is to injure all, the wound is too deep.

I should have kept the pain I had, – pain of loss, pain of memory.

I know I loved and lost. Then I made the mistake of not loving enough, and won.

How shall I conjure with this? What shall I make of these fragments – each one sharp enough to cut me again?

When I met you I was moving like a blind arrow shot in time of need. I was flint-sharp, flint-primitive. I was aim, arrow, and target. I wanted to be wounded again. I did not want to seal myself against life. I would rather be cut than dry.

Is everything in this life about love or its lack?

[...]

Time passed. It always does. In the white room there are no clocks. The white room is a lover's room, and we keep time on the run.

How long have I got? I don't know. The beating heart of our love may stop at any time. How can we hold what cannot be held? How can we measure what cannot be known?

How long is a spell?

But though you enchant me, I am not enchanted. I am free.

The white room is a place of freedom.

No longer love's exile, I claim a closed land. The door is open – pass freely. I never thought to be inside love again. I never thought to kiss the homeland of your body. I know this place so well – I used to live here. My house fell down and I was captured. Where have I been in these heavy clothes that exiles wear? I am naked now, in the sun of my own land.

My own land. Not you, love, who none but love can own; but love itself, and you its emblem. Let me wear you on my shield.

Love has rescued me. Love has carried me home. There is music in the room. You are in the room. Lie down with me under this skin-white love. This love is ours...



Directed-study questions:

- a) Which **theme** dominates in the story? Does the title add to its understanding? In what way?
- b) What **image** is recurrent in the story? Fill in the table that follows to make sure you haven't missed a single detail.
- c) Can you pinpoint **the climactic moment** of the narration? Explain why if not. Define the type of the composition structure of the story.
- d) Is there **an underlying idea** that unifies the character's meditations?
- e) Does the main character experience **an inner conflict**? How is it represented in the story?
- f) What are **the most salient stylistic features** of the tone in which the main character's monologue is written?

The recurrent images of the story

Image of the WHITE ROOM	What does it stand for?	What are the key language means to describe it?	What are the supporting images to create it?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

2. *If you have never been to the Amalfi Coast of Italy, suffice it to say that people live on what is essentially the sheer face of a steep mountainside. Joe Hill sets his murder story “The Devil on the Staircase” in this country, where a boy makes a Faustian deal to save himself from*

prosecution for his crime. Though what makes this story really special is not its content only, but its construction (form) as well.

Explain the ways the categories of integration, discreteness, conceptuality, implicitness and intertextuality are realized in the story. Make use of the directed-study questions following the story.

The Devil on the Staircase

J.Hill

I was
born in
Sulle Scale
the child of a
common bricklayer.

The
village
of my birth
nested in the
highest sharpest
ridges, high above
Positano, and in the
cold spring the clouds
crawled along the streets
like a procession of ghosts.
It was eight hundred and twenty
steps from Sulle Scale to the world
below. I know. I walked them again and
again with my father, following his tread,
from our home in the sky, and then back again.
After his death I walked them often enough alone.

The
cliffs
were mazed
with crooked
staircases, made
from brick in some
places, granite in others.
Marble here, limestone there,
clay tiles, or beams of lumber.

When there were stairs to build my
father built them. When the steps were
washed out by spring rains it fell to him
to repair them. For years he had a donkey to
carry his stone. After it fell dead, he had me.

I
hated
him of
course.
He had his
cats and he
sang to them
and poured them
saucers of milk and
told them foolish stories
and stroked them in his lap
and when one time I kicked one-
I do not remember why-he kicked me to
the floor and said not to touch his babies.

So I
carried
his rocks
when I should
have been carrying
schoolbooks, but I cannot
pretend I hated him for that.
I had no use for school, hated to
study, hated to read, felt acutely the
stifling heat of the single room schoolhouse,
the only good thing in it my cousin, Lithodora, who
read to the little children, sitting on a stool with her
back erect, chin lifted high, and her white throat showing.

I
often
imagined
her throat
was as cool as
the marble altar

in our church and I
wanted to rest my brow
upon it as I had the altar.
How she read in her low steady
voice, the very voice you dream of
calling to you when you're sick, saying
you will be healthy again and know only the
sweet fever of her body. I could've loved books
if I had her to read them to me, beside me in my bed.

I
knew
every
step of
the stairs
between Sulle
Scale and Positano,
long flights that dropped
through canyons and descended
into tunnels bored in the limestone,
past orchards and the ruins of derelict
paper mills, past waterfalls and green pools.
I walked those stairs when I slept, in my dreams.

The
trail
my father
and I walked
most often led
past a painted red
gate, barring the way
to a crooked staircase.

I thought those steps led to
a private villa and paid the gate
no mind until the day I paused on the
way down with a load of marble and leaned
on it to rest and it swung open to my touch.

My
father,
he lagged
thirty or so

stairs behind me.
I stepped through the
gate onto the landing to
see where these stairs led.
I saw no villa or vineyard below,
only the staircase falling away from
me down among the sheerest of sheer cliffs.

“Father,”
I called out
as he came near,
the slap of his feet
echoing off the rocks and
his breath whistling out of him.
“Have you ever taken these stairs?”

When
he saw
me standing
inside the gate
he paled and had my
shoulder in an instant
was hauling me back onto
the main staircase. He said,
“How did you open the red gate?”

“It was
open when
I got here,”
I said. “Don’t
they lead all the
way down to the sea?”

“No.”
“But it
looks as if
they go all the
way to the bottom.”

“They go
farther than
that,” my father
said and he crossed
himself. Then he said

again, “The gate is always
locked.” And he stared at me,
the whites of his eyes showing. I
had never seen him look at me so, had
never thought I would see him afraid of me.

Lithodora
laughed when
I told her and
said my father was
old and superstitious.
She told me that there was
a tale that the stairs beyond
the painted gate led down to hell.
I had walked the mountain a thousand
times more than Lithodora and wanted to
know how she could know such a story when
I myself had never heard any mention of it.

She said
the old folks
never spoke of it,
but had put the story
down in a history of the
region, which I would know
if I had ever read any of the
teacher’s assignments. I told her
I could never concentrate on books when
she was in the same room with me. She laughed.
But when I tried to touch her throat she flinched.

[...]
After
my father
died-he was
walking down the
stairs with a load
of tiles when a stray
cat shot out in front of
him and rather than step on
it, he stepped into space and
fell fifty feet to be impaled upon

a tree-I found a more lucrative use
for my donkey legs and yardarm shoulders.
I entered the employ of Don Carlotta who kept
a terraced vineyard in the steeps of Sulle Scale.

I hauled
his wine down
the eight hundred
odd steps to Positano,
where it was sold to a rich
Saracen, a prince it was told,
dark and slender and more fluent
in my language than myself, a clever
young man who knew how to read things:
musical notes, the stars, a map, a sextant.

Once I
stumbled
on a flight
of brick steps
as I was making my
way down with the Don's
wine and a strap slipped and
the crate on my back struck the
cliff wall and a bottle was smashed.
I brought it to the Saracen on the quay.
He said either I drank it or I should have,
for that bottle was worth all I made in a month.
He told me I could consider myself paid and paid well.
He laughed and his white teeth flashed in his black face.

I was
sober when
he laughed at
me but soon enough
had a head full of wine.
Not Don Carlotta's smooth and
peppery red mountain wine but the
cheapest Chianti in the Taverna, which
I drank with a passel of unemployed friends.

Lithodora
found me after

it was dark and she
stood over me, her dark
hair framing her cool, white
beautiful, disgusted, loving face.
She said she had the silver I was owed.
She had told her friend Ahmed that he had
insulted an honest man, that my family traded
in hard labor, not lies and he was lucky I had not-

“-did
you call
him friend?”
I said. “A monkey
of the desert who knows
nothing of Christ the lord?”

The way that
she looked at me
then made me ashamed.
The way she put the money in
front of me made me more ashamed.
“I see you have more use for this than
you have for me,” she said before she went.

I almost
got up to go
after her. Almost.
One of my friends asked,
“Have you heard the Saracen
gave your cousin a slave bracelet,
a loop of silver bells, to wear around
her ankle? I suppose in the Arab lands, such
gifts are made to every new whore in the harem.”

I came
to my feet
so quickly my
chair fell over.
I grabbed his throat
in both hands and said,
“You lie. Her father would
never allow her to accept such
a gift from a godless blackamoor.”

But
another
friend said
the Arab trader
was godless no more.
Lithodora had taught Ahmed
to read Latin, using the Bible
as his grammar, and he claimed now
to have entered into the light of Christ,
and he gave the bracelet to her with the full
knowledge of her parents, as a way to show thanks
for introducing him to the grace of our Father who art.

When
my first
friend had
recovered his
breath, he told
me Lithodora climbed
the stairs every night
to meet with him secretly
in empty shepherds' huts or in
the caves, or among the ruins of
the paper mills, by the roar of the
waterfall, as it leapt like liquid silver
in the moonlight, and in such places she was
his pupil and he a firm and most demanding tutor.

He
always
went ahead
and then she
would ascend the
stairs in the dark
wearing the bracelet.
When he heard the bells he
would light a candle to show her
where he waited to begin the lesson.

I
was
so drunk.

I set
out for
Lithodora's
house, with no
idea what I meant
to do when I got there.

I came up behind the cottage
where she lived with her parents
thinking I would throw a few stones
to wake her and bring her to her window.
But as I stole toward the back of the house
I heard a silvery tinkling somewhere above me.

She was
already on
the stairs and
climbing into the
stars with her white
dress swinging from her
hips and the bracelet around
her ankle so bright in the gloom.

My
heart
thudded,
a cask flung
down a staircase:
doom doom doom doom.

I knew the hills better
than anyone and I ran another
way, making a steep climb up crude
steps of mud to get ahead of her, then
rejoining the main path up to Sulle Scale.
I still had the silver coin the Saracen prince
had given her, when she went to him and dishonored
me by begging him to pay me the wage I was properly owed.

I put
his silver
in a tin cup
I had and slowed
to a walk and went
along shaking his Judas
coin in my old battered mug.
Such a pretty ringing it made in
the echoing canyons, on the stairs,
in the night, high above Positano and the
crash and sigh of the sea, as the tide consummated
the desire of water to pound the earth into submission.

At
last,
pausing
to catch my
breath, I saw
a candleflame leap
up off in the darkness.
It was in a handsome ruin,
a place of high granite walls
matted with wildflowers and ivy.
A vast entryway looked into a room
with a grass floor and a roof of stars,
as if the place had been built, not to give
shelter from the natural world, but to protect a
virgin corner of wildness from the violation of man.

Then
again it
seemed a pagan
place, the natural
setting for an orgy hosted
by fauns with their goaty hooves,
their flutes and their furred cocks.
So the archway into that private courtyard
of weeds and summer green seemed the entrance
to a hall awaiting revelers for a private bacchanal.

He
waited
on spread
blanket, with
a bottle of the
Don's wine and some
books and he smiled at
the tinkling sound of my
approach but stopped when I
came into the light, a block of
rough stone already in my free hand.

I
killed
him there.

I did
not kill
him out of
family honor
or jealousy, did
not hit him with the
stone because he had laid
claim to Lithodora's cool white
body, which she would never offer me.

I
hit
him with
the block of
stone because I
hated his black face.

After
I stopped
hitting him,
I sat with him.
I think I took his
wrist to see if he had
a pulse, but after I knew
he was dead, I went on holding
his hand listening to the hum of the
crickets in the grass, as if he were a

small child, *my* child, who had only drifted
off after fighting sleep for a very long time.

What
brought
me out of
my stupor was
the sweet music
of bells coming up
the stairs toward us.

I leapt
up and ran
but Dora was
already there,
coming through the
doorway, and I nearly
struck her on my way by.
She reached out for me with
one of her delicate white hands
and said my name but I did not stop.
I took the stairs three at a time, running
without thought, but I was not fast enough and
I heard her when she shouted *his* name, once and again.

I
don't
know where
I was running.
Sulle Scale, maybe,
though I knew they would
look for me there first once
Lithodora went down the steps and
told them what I had done to the Arab.
I did not slow down until I was gulping for
air and my chest was filled with fire and then
I leaned against a gate at the side of the path-

you know
what gate-

and it
swung open

at first touch.
I went through the
gate and started down
the steep staircase beyond.
I thought no one will look for
me here and I can hide a while and-

No.

I
thought,
these stairs
will lead to the
road and I will head
north to Napoli and buy
a ticket for a ship to the U.S.
and take a new name, start a new-

No.
Enough.
The truth:

I
believed
the stairs
led down into
hell and hell was
where I wanted to go.

The
steps
at first
were of old
white stone, but
as I continued along
they grew sooty and dark.
Other staircases merged with
them here and there, descending
from other points on the mountain.
I couldn't see how that was possible.
I thought I had walked all the flights of
stairs in the hills, except for the steps I
was on and I couldn't think for the life of me
where those other staircases might be coming from.

The
forest
around me
had been purged
by fire at some time
in the not so far-off past,
and I made my descent through
stands of scorched, shattered pines,
the hillside all blackened and charred.
Only there had been no fire on that part of
the hill, not for as long as I could remember.
The breeze carried on it an unmistakable warmth.
I began to feel unpleasantly overheated in my clothes.

I
followed
the staircase
round a switchback
and saw below me a boy
sitting on a stone landing.

He
had a
collection
of curious wares
spread on a blanket.
There was a wind-up tin
bird in a cage, a basket of
white apples, a dented gold lighter.
There was a jar and in the jar was light.
This light would increase in brightness until
the landing was lit as if by the rising sun, and
then it would collapse into darkness, shrinking to a
single point like some impossibly brilliant lightning bug.

He
smiled
to see me.
He had golden
hair and the most
beautiful smile I have
ever seen on a child's face

and I was afraid of him-even
before he called out to me by name.
I pretended I didn't hear him, pretended
he wasn't there, that I didn't see him, walked
right past him. He laughed to see me hurrying by.

The
farther
I went the
steeper it got.
There seemed to be
a light below, as if
somewhere beyond a ledge,
through the trees, there was
a great city, on the scale of Roma,
a bowl of lights like a bed of embers.
I could smell food cooking on the breeze.

if
it was
food-that
hungry-making
perfume of meat
charring over flame.

Voices
ahead of me:
a man speaking
wearily, perhaps
to himself, a long
and joyless discourse;
someone else laughing, bad
laughter, unhinged and angry.
A third man was asking questions.
[...]

At
last
I returned
the way I had
come on shaky legs.
The boy awaited me with
his collection of oddities.

“Why
not sit
and rest your
sore feet, Quirinus
Calvino?” he asked me.
And I sat down across from
him, not because I wanted to but
because that was where my legs gave out.

Neither of us spoke at first. He smiled across the blanket spread with his goods, and I pretended an interest in the stone wall that overhung the landing there. That light in the jar built and built until our shadows lunged against the rock like deformed giants, before the brightness winked out and plunged us back into our shared darkness. He offered me a skin of water but I knew better than to take anything from that child. Or thought I knew better. The light in the jar began to grow again, a single floating point of perfect whiteness, swelling like a balloon. I tried to look at it, but felt a pinch of pain in the back of my eyeballs and glanced away.

“What is that? It burns my eyes,” I asked.

“A little spark stolen from the sun. You can do all sorts of wonderful things with it. You could make a furnace with it, a giant furnace, powerful enough to warm a whole city, and light a thousand Edison lights. Look how bright it gets. You have to be careful though. If you were to smash this jar and let the spark escape, that same city would disappear in a clap of brightness. You can have it if you want.”

“No, I don’t want it,” I said.

“No. Of course not. That isn’t your sort of thing. No matter. Someone will be along later for this. But take something. Anything you want,” he said.

“Are you Lucifer?” I asked in a rough voice.

“Lucifer is an awful old goat who has a pitchfork and hooves and makes people suffer. I hate suffering. I only want to help people. I give gifts. That’s why I’m here. Everyone who walks these stairs before their time gets a gift to welcome them. You look thirsty. Would you like an apple?” Holding up the basket of white apples as he spoke.

I was thirsty-my throat felt not just sore, but singed, as if I had inhaled smoke recently, and I began to reach for the offered fruit, almost reflexively, but then drew my hand back for I knew the lessons of at least one book. He grinned at me.

“Are those-” I asked.

“They’re from a very old and honorable tree,” he said. “You will never taste a sweeter fruit. And when you eat of it, you will be filled with ideas. Yes, even one such as you, Quirinus Calvino, who barely learned to read.”

“I don’t want it,” I said, when what I really wanted to tell him was not to call me by name. I could not bear that he knew my name.

He said, “Everyone will want it. They will eat and eat and be filled with understanding. Why, learning how to speak another language will be as simple as, oh, learning to build a bomb. Just one bite of the apple away. What about the lighter? You can light anything with this lighter. A cigarette. A pipe. A campfire. Imaginations. Revolutions. Books. Rivers. The sky. Another man’s soul. Even the human soul has a temperature at which it becomes flammable. The lighter has an enchantment on it, is tapped into the deepest wells of oil on the planet, and will set fire to things for as long as the oil lasts, which I am sure will be forever.”

“You have nothing I want,” I said.

“I have something for everyone,” he said.

I rose to my feet, ready to leave, although I had nowhere to go. I couldn’t walk back down the stairs. The thought made me dizzy. Neither could I go back up. Lithodora would have returned to the village by now. They would be searching the stairs for me with torches. I was surprised I hadn’t heard them already.

The tin bird turned its head to look at me as I swayed on my heels, and blinked, the metal shutters of its eyes snapping closed, then popping open again. It let out a rusty cheep. So did I, startled by its sudden movement. I had thought it a toy, inanimate. It watched me steadily and I stared back. I had, as a child, always had an interest in ingenious mechanical objects, clockwork people who ran out of their hiding places at the stroke of noon, the woodcutter to chop wood, the maiden to dance a round. The boy followed my gaze, and smiled, then opened the cage and reached in for it. The bird leaped lightly onto his finger.

“It sings the most beautiful song,” he said. “It finds a master, a shoulder it likes to perch on, and it sings for this person all the rest of its days. The trick to making it sing for you is to tell a lie. The bigger the better. Feed it a lie, and it will sing you the most marvelous little tune. People love to hear its song. They love it so much, they don’t even care they’re being lied to. He’s yours if you want him.”

“I don’t want anything from you,” I said, but when I said it, the bird began to whistle: the sweetest, softest melody, as good a sound as the laughter of a pretty girl, or your mother calling you to dinner. The song

sounded a bit like something played on a music box, and I imagined a studded cylinder turning inside it, banging the teeth of a silver comb. I shivered to hear it. In this place, on these stairs, I had never imagined I could hear something so right.

He laughed and waved his hand at me. The bird's wings snapped from the side of its body, like knives leaping from sheaths, and it glided up and lit on my shoulder.

"You see," said the boy on the stairs. "It likes you."

"I can't pay," I said, my voice rough and strange.

"You've already paid," said the boy.

Then he turned his head and looked down the stairs and seemed to listen. I heard a wind rising. It made a low, soughing moan as it came up through the channel of the staircase, a deep and lonely and restless cry. The boy looked back at me. "Now go. I hear my father coming. The awful old goat."

I backed away and my heels struck the stair behind me. I was in such a hurry to get away I fell sprawling across the granite steps. The bird on my shoulder took off, rising in widening circles through the air, but when I found my feet it glided down to where it had rested before on my

shoulder

and I began

to run back up

the way I had come.

I
climbed
in haste for
a time but soon
was tired again and
had to slow to a walk.
I began to think about what
I would say when I reached the
main staircase and was discovered.
"I will confess everything and accept
my punishment, whatever that is," I said.
The tin bird sang a gay and humorous ditty.

It
fell
silent
though as

I reached the
gate, quieted by
a different song not
far off: a girl's sobs.
I listened, confused, and
crept uncertainly back to where
I had murdered Lithodora's beloved.
I heard no sound except for Dora's cries.
No men shouting, no feet running on the steps.
I had been gone half the night, it seemed to me but
when I reached the ruins where I had left the Saracen
and looked upon Dora it was as if only minutes had passed.

I
came
toward
her and
whispered
to her, afraid
almost to be heard.

The second time I spoke
her name she turned her head
and looked at me with red-rimmed
hating eyes and screamed to get away.
I wanted to comfort her, to tell her I was
sorry, but when I came close she sprang to her
feet and ran at me, striking me and flaying at my
face with her fingernails while she cursed my name.

I meant
to put my
hands on her
shoulders to hold
her still but when I
reached for her they found
her smooth white neck instead.

Her
father
and his
fellows and
my unemployed

friends discovered
me weeping over her.
Running my fingers through
the silk of her long black hair.
Her father fell to his knees and took
her in his arms and for a while the hills
rang with her name repeated over and over again.

Another
man, who held
a rifle, asked me
what had happened and
I told him-I told him-
the Arab, that monkey from the
desert, had lured her here and when
he couldn't force her innocence from her
he throttled her in the grass and I found them
and we fought and I killed him with a block of stone.

And
as I
told it
the tin bird
began to whistle
and sing, the most
mournful and sweetest
melody I had ever heard
and the men listened until
the sad song was sung complete.

I
held
Lithodora
in my arms as
we walked back down.
And as we went on our way
the bird began to sing again as
I told them the Saracen had planned
to take the sweetest and most beautiful
girls and auction their white flesh in Araby-
a more profitable line of trade than selling wine.
The bird was by now whistling a marching song and the

faces of the men who walked with me were rigid and dark.

Ahmed's
men burned
along with the
Arab's ship, and
sank in the harbor.
His goods, stored in a
warehouse by the quay, were
seized and his money box fell
to me as a reward for my heroism.

No
one
ever
would've
imagined when
I was a boy that
one day I would be
the wealthiest trader
on the whole Amalfi coast,
or that I would come to own the
prized vineyards of Don Carlotta, I
who once worked like a mule for his coin.

No
one
would've
guessed that
one day I would
be the beloved mayor
of Sulle Scalle, or a man
of such renown that I would be
invited to a personal audience with
his holiness the pope himself, who thanked
me for my many well-noted acts of generosity.

The
springs
inside the
pretty tin bird
wore down, in time,
and it ceased to sing,

but by then it did not matter
if anyone believed my lies or not
such was my wealth and power and fame.

However.
Several years
before the tin bird
fell silent, I woke one
morning in my manor to find
it had constructed a nest of wire
on my windowsill, and filled it with
fragile eggs made of bright silver foil.
I regarded these eggs with unease but when I
reached to touch them, their mechanical mother
nipped at me with her needle-sharp beak and I did
not after that time make any attempt to disturb them.

Months
later the
nest was filled
with foil tatters.
The young of this new
species, creatures of a new
age, had fluttered on their way.

I
cannot
tell you
how many birds
of tin and wire and
electric current there
are in the world now-but I
have, this very month, heard speak
our newest prime minister, Mr. Mussolini.
When he sings of the greatness of the Italian
people and our kinship with our German neighbors,
I am quite sure I can hear a tin bird singing with him.
Its tune plays especially well amplified over modern radio.

I don't
live in the
hills anymore.
It has been years

since I saw Sulle Scale.
I discovered, as I descended
at last into my senior years, that
I could no longer attempt the staircases.
I told people it was my poor sore old knees.

But in truth I
developed a
fear of
heights.



Directed-study questions:

a) *What is the key concept of the story? At what levels is it actualized in the story?*

b) *What is the correlation between **the title** ↔ **the key concept** ↔ **the composition** ↔ **the partitioning** of the story?*

c) *What stands behind the symbolic images of “**the staircase**”, “**the boy – the devil’s son**”, “**the red gate**”, “**the cats**” as they are represented in the story? Fill in the table offered to make sure you can decipher these symbolic images correctly:*

The symbolic images of the story

Key images	What do they symbolize?	How do you interpret them in the story?	How are they described in the story?
STAIRCASE			
BOY – THE SON OF THE DEVIL			
RED GATES			
CATS			
Extra images you found out...			

d) Identify the cases of *allusions* and dwell upon their intertextual relations.

e) Specify the role of *antithesis* in the story. Supply examples to support your point of view.

3. *J.K.Rowling inserted a kind of a fairy tale into Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, the seventh and last Harry Potter tome. In his will, Professor Dumbledore leaves Hermione Granger his copy of “The Tales of Beedle the Bard”, a collection of children's stories, and she later reads one out. It is a thin volume, with just four more brief tales added to the reprinted "Three Brothers", and bulked out with Dumbledore's "notes".*

The interesting thing about “The Tales of Beedle the Bard” (2008) is that J.K.Rowling has essentially already reviewed each tale through the commentary provided by "Albus Dumbledore". In a stroke of brilliance, she provides these tales – translated by "Hermione Granger" – with commentary from "Dumbledore" that is in turn interspersed with footnotes from J.K.Rowling herself.

Trace all kinds of intertextual relations the author of the book incorporates in an ingenious and meta way as one of the stories “The Wizard and the Hopping Pot” unfolds. Make use of the directed-study questions following the story.

Introduction

The Tales of Beedle the Bard is a collection of stories written for young wizards and witches. They have been popular bedtime reading for centuries, with the result that the Hopping Pot and the Fountain of Fair Fortune are as familiar to many of the students at Hogwarts as Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty are to Muggle (non-magical) children.

Beedle’s stories resemble our fairy tales in many respects; for instance, virtue is usually rewarded and wickedness punished. However, there is one very obvious difference. In Muggle fairy tales, magic tends to lie at the root of the hero or heroine’s troubles – the wicked witch has poisoned the apple, or put the princess into a hundred years’ sleep, or turned the prince into a hideous beast. In *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, on the other hand, we meet heroes and heroines who can perform magic themselves, and yet find it just as hard to solve their problems as we do. Beedle’s stories have helped generations of wizarding parents to explain this painful fact of life to their young children: that magic causes as much trouble as it cures.

Another notable difference between these fables and their Muggle counterparts is that Beedle’s witches are much more active in seeking their

fortunes than our fairy-tale heroines. Asha, Altheda, Amata and Babbitty Rabbitty are all witches who take their fate into their own hands, rather than taking a prolonged nap or waiting for someone to return a lost shoe. The exception to this rule – the unnamed maiden of “The Warlock’s Hairy Heart” – acts more like our idea of a storybook princess, but there is no “happily ever after” at the end of her tale.

Beedle the Bard lived in the fifteenth century and much of his life remains shrouded in mystery. We know that he was born in Yorkshire, and the only surviving woodcut shows that he had an exceptionally luxuriant beard. If his stories accurately reflect his opinions, he rather liked Muggles, whom he regarded as ignorant rather than malevolent; he mistrusted Dark Magic, and he believed that the worst excesses of wizardkind sprang from the all-too-human traits of cruelty, apathy or arrogant misapplication of their own talents. The heroes and heroines who triumph in his stories are not those with the most powerful magic, but rather those who demonstrate the most kindness, common sense and ingenuity.

One modern-day wizard who held very similar views was, of course, Professor Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, Order of Merlin (First Class), Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards, and Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot. This similarity of outlook notwithstanding, it was a surprise to discover a set of notes on *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* among the many papers that Dumbledore left in his will to the Hogwarts Archives. Whether this commentary was written for his own satisfaction, or for future publication, we shall never know; however, we have been graciously granted permission by Professor Minerva McGonagall, now Headmistress of Hogwarts, to print Professor Dumbledore’s notes here, alongside a brand new translation of the tales by Hermione Granger. We hope that Professor Dumbledore’s insights, which include observations on wizarding history, personal reminiscences and enlightening information on key elements of each story, will help a new generation of both wizarding and Muggle readers appreciate *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*. It is the belief of all who knew him personally that Professor Dumbledore would have been

delighted to lend his support to this project, given that all royalties are to be donated to the Children’s High Level Group, which works to benefit children in desperate need of a voice.

It seems only right to make one small, additional comment on Professor Dumbledore’s notes. As far as we can tell, the notes were completed around eighteen months before the tragic events that took place at the top of Hogwarts’ Astronomy Tower. Those familiar with the history of the most recent wizarding war (everyone who has read all seven volumes on the life of Harry Potter, for instance) will be aware that Professor Dumbledore reveals a little less than he knows – or suspects – about the final story in this book. The reason for any omission lies, perhaps, in what Dumbledore said about truth, many years ago, to his favourite and most famous pupil:

“It is a beautiful and terrible thing, and should therefore be treated with great caution.”

Whether we agree with him or not, we can perhaps excuse Professor Dumbledore for wishing to protect future readers from the temptations to which he himself had fallen prey, and for which he paid so terrible a price.

J K Rowling
2008

A Note on the Footnotes

Professor Dumbledore appears to have been writing for a wizarding audience, so I have occasionally inserted an explanation of a term or fact that might need clarification for Muggle readers.

JKR

The Tales of Beedle the Bard: “The Wizard and the Hopping Pot”

J. K. Rowling

There was once a kindly old wizard who used his magic generously and wisely for the benefit of his neighbours. Rather than reveal the true source of his power, he pretended that his potions, charms and antidotes sprang ready-made from the little cauldron he called his lucky cooking pot. From miles around people came to him with their troubles, and the wizard was pleased to give his pot a stir and put things right.

This well-beloved wizard lived to a goodly age, then died, leaving all his chattels to his only son. This son was of a very different disposition to his gentle father. Those who could not work magic were, to the son's mind, worthless, and he had often quarrelled with his father's habit of dispensing magical aid to their neighbours.

Upon the father's death, the son found hidden inside the old cooking pot a small package bearing his name. He opened it, hoping for gold, but found instead a soft, thick slipper, much too small to wear, and with no pair. A fragment of parchment within the slipper bore the words "In the fond hope, my son, that you will never need it."

The son cursed his father's age-softened mind, then threw the slipper back into the cauldron, resolving to use it henceforth as a rubbish pail.

That very night a peasant woman knocked on the front door.

"My granddaughter is afflicted by a crop of warts, sir," she told him. "Your father used to mix a special poultice in that old cooking pot –"

"Begone!" cried the son. "What care I for your brat's warts?"

And he slammed the door in the old woman's face.

At once there came a loud clanging and banging from his kitchen. The wizard lit his wand and opened the door, and there, to his amazement, he saw his father's old cooking pot: it had sprouted a single foot of brass, and was hopping on the spot, in the middle of the floor, making a fearful noise upon the flagstones. The wizard approached it in wonder, but fell back hurriedly when he saw that the whole of the pot's surface was covered in warts.

"Disgusting object!" he cried, and he tried firstly to Vanish the pot, then to clean it by magic, and finally to force it out of the house. None of his spells worked, however, and he was unable to prevent the pot hopping after him out of the kitchen, and then following him up to bed, clanging and banging loudly on every wooden stair.

The wizard could not sleep all night for the banging of the warty old pot by his bedside, and next morning the pot insisted upon hopping after him to the breakfast table. *Clang, clang, clang*, went the brass-footed pot, and the wizard had not even started his porridge when there came another knock on the door.

An old man stood on the doorstep.

"'Tis my old donkey, sir," he explained. "Lost, she is, or stolen, and without her I cannot take my wares to market, and my family will go hungry tonight."

"And I am hungry now!" roared the wizard, and he slammed the door upon the old man.

Clang, clang, clang, went the cooking pot's single brass foot upon the floor, but now its clamour was mixed with the brays of a donkey and human groans of hunger, echoing from the depths of the pot.

"Be still. Be silent!" shrieked the wizard, but not all his magical powers could quieten the warty pot, which hopped at his heels all day, braying and groaning and clanging, no matter where he went or what he did.

That evening there came a third knock upon the door, and there on the threshold stood a young woman sobbing as though her heart would break.

"My baby is grievously ill," she said. "Won't you please help us? Your father bade me come if troubled –"

But the wizard slammed the door on her. And now the tormenting pot filled to the

brim with salt water, and slopped tears all over the floor as it hopped, and brayed, and groaned, and sprouted more warts.

Though no more villagers came to seek help at the wizard's cottage for the rest of the week, the pot kept him informed of their many ills. Within a few days, it was not only braying and groaning and slopping and hopping and sprout-ing warts, it was also choking and retching, crying like a baby, whining like a dog, and spewing out bad cheese and sour milk and a plague of hungry slugs.

The wizard could not sleep or eat with the pot beside him, but the pot refused to leave, and he could not silence it or force it to be still.

At last the wizard could bear it no more. "Bring me all your problems, all your troubles and your woes!" he screamed, fleeing into the night, with the pot hopping behind him along the road into the village. "Come! Let me cure you, mend you and comfort you! I have my father's cooking pot, and I shall make you well!" And with the foul pot still bounding along behind him, he ran up the street, casting spells in every direction.

Inside one house the little girl's warts van-ished as she slept; the lost donkey was Summoned from a distant briar patch and set down softly in its stable; the sick baby was doused in dittany and woke, well and rosy. At every house of sickness and sorrow, the wizard did his best, and gradually the cooking pot beside him stopped groaning and retching, and became quiet, shiny and clean.

"Well, Pot?" asked the trembling wizard, as the sun began to rise.

The pot burped out the single slipper he had thrown into it, and permitted him to fit it on to the brass foot. Together, they set off back to the wizard's house, the pot's footstep muffled at last. But from that day forward,

the wizard helped the villagers like his father before him, lest the pot cast off its slipper, and begin to hop once more.



Albus Dumbledore on

“The Wizard and the Hopping Pot”

A kind old wizard decides to teach his hard-hearted son a lesson by giving him a taste of the local Muggles’ misery. The young wizard’s conscience awakes, and he agrees to use his magic for the benefit of his non-magical neighbours. A simple and heart-warming fable, one might think – in which case, one would reveal oneself to be an innocent nincompoop. A pro-Muggle story showing a Muggle-loving father as superior in magic to a Muggle-hating son? It is nothing short of amazing that any copies of the original version of this tale survived the flames to which they were so often consigned.

Beedle was somewhat out of step with his times in preaching a message of brotherly love for Muggles. The persecution of witches and wizards was gathering pace all over Europe in the early fifteenth century. Many in the magical community felt, and with good reason, that offering to cast a spell on the Muggle-next-door’s sickly pig was tantamount to volunteering to fetch the firewood for one’s own funeral pyre.¹ “Let the Muggles manage without us!” was the cry, as the wizards drew further and further apart from their non-magical brethren, culminating with the institution of the International Statute of Wizarding Secrecy in 1689, when wizardkind voluntarily went underground.

Children being children, however, the grotesque Hopping Pot had taken hold of their imaginations. The solution was to jettison the pro-Muggle moral but keep the warty cauldron, so by the middle of the sixteenth century a different version of the tale was in wide circulation among wizarding

families. In the revised story, the Hopping Pot protects an innocent wizard from his torch-bearing, pitchfork-toting neighbours by chasing them away from the wizard's cottage, catching them and swallowing them whole. At the end of the story, by which time the Pot has consumed most of his neighbours, the wizard gains a promise from the few remaining villagers that he will be left in peace to practise magic. In return, he instructs the Pot to render up its victims, who are duly burped out of its depths, slightly mangled. To this day, some wizarding children are only told the revised version of the story by their (generally anti-Muggle) parents, and the original, if and when they ever read it, comes as a great surprise.

As I have already hinted, however, its pro-Muggle sentiment was not the only reason that "The Wizard and the Hopping Pot" attracted anger. As the witch-hunts grew ever fiercer, wizarding families began to live double lives, using charms of concealment to protect themselves and their families. By the seventeenth century, any witch or wizard who chose to fraternise with Muggles became suspect, even an outcast in his or her own community. Among the many insults hurled at pro-Muggle witches and wizards (such as fruity epithets as "Mudwallower", "Dunglicker" and "Scumsucker" date from this period), was the charge of having weak or inferior magic.

Influential wizards of the day, such as Brutus Malfoy, editor of *Warlock at War*, an anti-Muggle periodical, perpetuated the stereotype that a Muggle-lover was about as magical as a Squib.² In 1675, Brutus wrote:

This we may state with certainty: any wizard who shows fondness for the society of Muggles is of low intelligence, with magic so feeble and pitiful that he can only feel himself superior if surrounded by Muggle pigmen.

Nothing is a surer sign of weak magic than a weakness for non-magical company.

This prejudice eventually died out in the face of overwhelming evidence that some of the world's most brilliant wizards³ were, to use the common phrase, "Muggle-lovers".

The final objection to "The Wizard and the Hopping Pot" remains alive in certain quarters today. It was summed up best, perhaps, by Beatrix Bloxam (1794-1910), author of the infamous *Toadstool Tales*. Mrs Bloxam believed that *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* were damaging to children because of what she called "their unhealthy preoccupation with the most horrid subjects, such as death, disease, bloodshed, wicked magic, unwholesome characters and bodily effusions and eruptions of the most disgusting kind". Mrs Bloxam took a variety of old stories, including several

of Beedle's, and rewrote them according to her ideals, which she expressed as "filling the pure minds of our little angels with healthy, happy thoughts, keeping their sweet slumber free of wicked dreams and protecting the precious flower of their innocence".

The final paragraph of Mrs Bloxam's pure and precious reworking of "The Wizard and the Hopping Pot" reads:

Then the little golden pot danced with delight – hoppitty hoppitty hop! – on its tiny rosy toes! Wee Willykins had cured all the dollies of their poorly tum-tums, and the little pot was so happy that it filled up with sweeties for Wee Willykins and the dollies!

"But don't forget to brush your teethy-pegs!" cried the pot.

And Wee Willykins kissed and hugged the hop-pitty pot and promised always to help the dollies and never to be an old grumpy-wumpkins again.

Mrs Bloxam's tale has met the same response from generations of wizarding children: uncontrollable retching, followed by an immediate demand to have the book taken from them and mashed into pulp.

1 It is true, of course, that genuine witches and wizards were reasonably adept at escaping the stake, block and noose (see my comments about Lisette de Lapin in the commentary on "Babbitty Rabbitty and her Cackling Stump"). However, a number of deaths did occur: Sir Nicholas de Mimsy-Porpington (a wizard at the royal court in his lifetime, and in his death-time, ghost of Gryffindor Tower) was stripped of his wand before being locked in a dungeon, and was unable to magic himself out of his execution; and wizarding families were particularly prone to losing younger members, whose inability to control their own magic made them noticeable, and vulnerable, to Muggle witch-hunters.

2 [A Squib is a person born to magical parents, but who has no magical powers. Such an occurrence is rare. Muggle-born witches and wizards are much more common. JKR]

3 Such as myself.

Directed-study questions:

- 1. What is the message of the fairy-tale? What makes it really special?***
- 2. How do all of the intertextual elements add to interpretation of the fairy-tale?***
- 3. Fill in the table that follows to make sure you have sorted all things out.***

The intertextual elements of the story

Types	Examples	The effect they create
INTERTEXTUAL elements		
PARATEXTUAL elements:		
PERITEXT		
EPITEXT		
METATEXTUAL elements		
HYPertextUALITY		
ARCHITEXTUALITY		



FINAL CONTROL ASSIGNMENT THE STORY FOR INTERPRETATION:

THE CHILD'S STORY

Charles Dickens

Once upon a time, a good many years ago, there was a traveller, and he set out upon a journey. It was a magic journey, and was to seem very long when he began it, and very short when he got half way through.

He travelled along a rather dark path for some little time, without meeting anything, until at last he came to a beautiful child. So he said to the child, "What do you do here?" And the child said, "I am always at play. Come and play with me!"

So, he played with that child, the whole day long, and they were very merry. The sky was so blue, the sun was so bright, the water was so sparkling, the leaves were so green, the flowers were so lovely, and they heard such singing-birds and saw so many butteries, that everything was beautiful. This was in fine weather. When it rained, they loved to watch the falling drops, and to smell the fresh scents. When it blew, it was delightful to listen to the wind, and fancy what it said, as it came rushing from its home — where was that, they wondered! — whistling and howling, driving the clouds before it, bending the trees, rumbling in the chimneys, shaking the house, and making the sea roar in fury. But, when it snowed, that was best of all; for, they liked nothing so well as to look up at the white flakes falling fast and thick, like down from the breasts of millions of white birds; and to see how smooth and deep the drift was; and to listen to the hush upon the paths and roads.

They had plenty of the finest toys in the world, and the most astonishing picture-books: all about scimitars and slippers and turbans, and dwarfs and giants and genii and fairies, and blue- beards and bean-stalks and riches and caverns and forests and Valentines and Orsons: and all new and all true.

But, one day, of a sudden, the traveller lost the child. He called to him over and over again, but got no answer. So, he went upon his road, and went on for a little while without meeting anything, until at last he came to a handsome boy. So, he said to the boy, "What do you do here?" And the boy said, "I am always learning. Come and learn with me."

So he learned with that boy about Jupiter and Juno, and the Greeks and the Romans, and I don't know what, and learned more than I could tell — or he either, for he soon forgot a great deal of it. But, they were not always learning; they had the merriest games that ever were played. They rowed upon the river in summer, and skated on the ice in winter; they were active afoot, and active on horseback; at cricket, and all games at ball; at prisoner's base, hare and hounds, follow my leader, and more sports than I can think of; nobody could beat them. They had holidays too, and Twelfth cakes, and parties where they danced till midnight, and real Theatres where they saw palaces of real gold and silver rise out of the real earth, and saw all the wonders of the world at once. As to friends, they had such dear friends and so many of them, that I want the time to reckon them up. They were all young, like the handsome boy, and were never to be strange to one another all their lives through.

Still, one day, in the midst of all these pleasures, the traveller lost the boy as he had lost the child, and, after calling to him in vain, went on upon his journey. So he went on for a little while without seeing anything, until at last he came to a young man. So, he said to the young man, "What do you do here?" And the young man said, "I am always in love. Come and love with me."

So, he went away with that young man, and presently they came to one of the prettiest girls that ever was seen — just like Fanny in the corner there — and she had eyes like Fanny, and hair like Fanny, and dimples like Fanny's, and she laughed and coloured just as Fanny does while I am talking about her. So, the young man fell in love directly — just as Somebody I won't mention, the first time he came here, did with Fanny. Well! he was teased sometimes — just as Somebody used to be by Fanny; and they quarrelled sometimes — just as Somebody and Fanny used to quarrel; and they made it up, and sat in the dark, and wrote letters every day, and never were happy asunder, and were always looking out for one another and

pretending not to, and were engaged at Christmas-time, and sat close to one another by the fire, and were going to be married very soon — all exactly like Somebody I won't mention, and Fanny!

But, the traveller lost them one day, as he had lost the rest of his friends, and, after calling to them to come back, which they never did, went on upon his journey. So, he went on for a little while without seeing anything, until at last he came to a middle-aged gentleman. So, he said to the gentleman, "What are you doing here?" And his answer was, "I am always busy. Come and be busy with me!"

So, he began to be very busy with that gentleman, and they went on through the wood together. The whole journey was through a wood, only it had been open and green at first, like a wood in spring; and now began to be thick and dark, like a wood in summer; some of the little trees that had come out earliest, were even turning brown. The gentleman was not alone, but had a lady of about the same age with him, who was his Wife; and they had children, who were with them too. So, they all went on together through the wood, cutting down the trees, and making a path through the branches and the fallen leaves, and carrying burdens, and working hard.

Sometimes, they came to a long green avenue that opened into deeper woods. Then they would hear a very little, distant voice crying, "Father, father, I am another child! Stop for me!" And presently they would see a very little figure, growing larger as it came along, running to join them. When it came up, they all crowded round it, and kissed and welcomed it; and then they all went on together.

Sometimes, they came to several avenues at once, and then they all stood still, and one of the children said, "Father, I am going to sea," and another said, "Father, I am going to India," and another, "Father, I am going to seek my fortune where I can," and another, "Father, I am going to Heaven!" So, with many tears at parting, they went, solitary, down those avenues, each child upon its way; and the child who went to Heaven, rose into the golden air and vanished.

Whenever these partings happened, the traveller looked at the gentleman, and saw him glance up at the sky above the trees, where the day was beginning to decline, and the sunset to come on. He saw, too, that his hair was turning grey. But, they never could rest long, for they had their journey to perform, and it was necessary for them to be always busy.

At last, there had been so many partings that there were no children left, and only the traveller, the gentleman, and the lady, went upon their way in

company. And now the wood was yellow; and now brown; and the leaves, even of the forest trees, began to fall.

So, they came to an avenue that was darker than the rest, and were pressing forward on their journey without looking down it when the lady stopped.

“My husband,” said the lady. “I am called.”

They listened, and they heard a voice a long way down the avenue, say, “Mother, mother!”

It was the voice of the first child who had said, “I am going to Heaven!” and the father said, “I pray not yet. The sunset is very near. I pray not yet!”

But, the voice cried, “Mother, mother!” without minding him, though his hair was now quite white, and tears were on his face.

Then, the mother, who was already drawn into the shade of the dark avenue and moving away with her arms still round his neck, kissed him, and said, “My dearest, I am summoned, and I go!” And she was gone. And the traveller and he were left alone together.

And they went on and on together, until they came to very near the end of the wood: so near, that they could see the sunset shining red before them through the trees.

Yet, once more, while he broke his way among the branches, the traveller lost his friend. He called and called, but there was no reply, and when he passed out of the wood, and saw the peaceful sun going down upon a wide purple prospect, he came to an old man sitting on a fallen tree. So, he said to the old man, “What do you do here?” And the old man said with a calm smile, “I am always remembering. Come and remember with me!”

So the traveller sat down by the side of that old man, face to face with the serene sunset; and all his friends came softly back and stood around him. The beautiful child, the handsome boy, the young man in love, the father, mother, and children: every one of them was there, and he had lost nothing. So, he loved them all, and was kind and forbearing with them all, and was always pleased to watch them all, and they all honoured and loved him. And I think the traveller must be yourself, dear Grandfather, because this what you do to us, and what we do to you.

THE TASKS TO FULFIL:

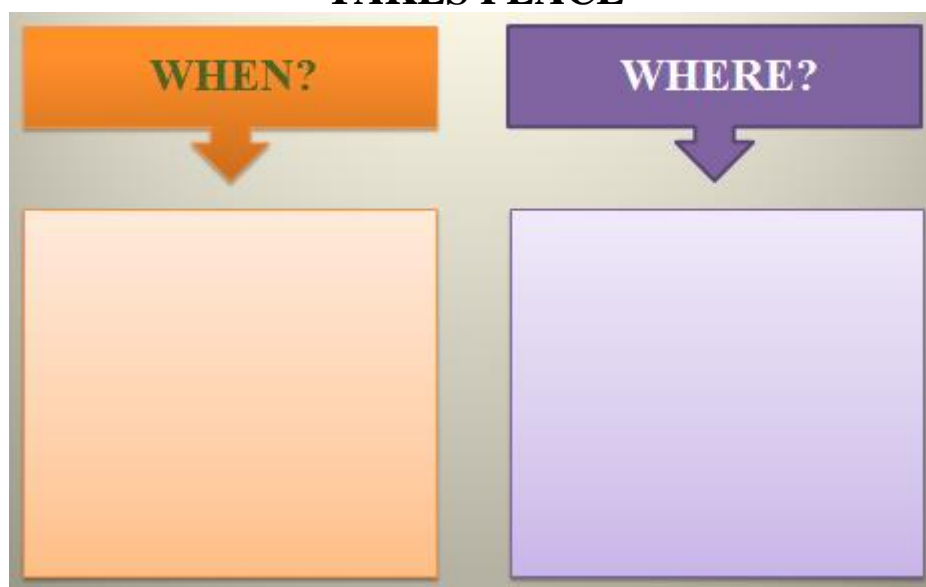
1. Provide brief information about the author, historical and cultural background of the story, that is closely related to your thoughts regarding the content and stylistic qualities of the text under analysis.

Charles Dickens: autobiographical notes	Historical conditions of the epoque	Cultural background of the story

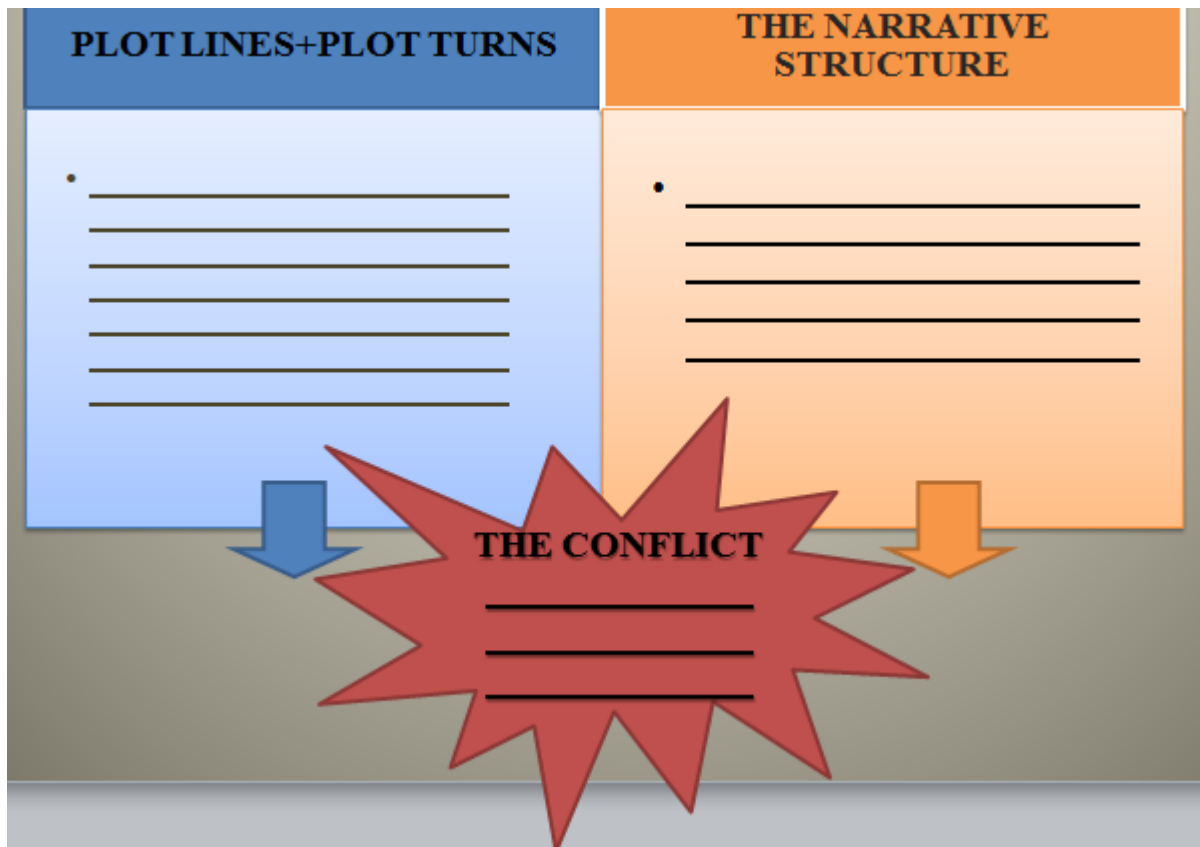
2. Outline the theme of the story in a compressed and exhaustive manner.
THE THEME of the story is _____

3. Identify the temporal and spatial settings of the story.

THE ACTION OF THE STORY TAKES PLACE



4. Present the plot lines, plot turns and the conflict of the story in a concise form, focusing on the compositional parts (*exposition, beginning of the plot, plot complications, climax or culmination, denouement, conclusion or ending*) and the narrative structure (*straight-line, inverted, complex, circular, frame*).



5. What does the title of the story suggest? What are the other means to support the very idea of the story?
6. Identify the stylistic means of a complicated nature that serves as a vehicle to make the story cohesive and coherent. Specify its structural components and provide language means of their representation.

LIFE is a JOURNEY+ ONE is a TRAVELLER	What does the image stand for?	The key language means to describe it?	The supporting images to create it?
CHILD			
.....			
YOUNG MAN			
.....			
.....			

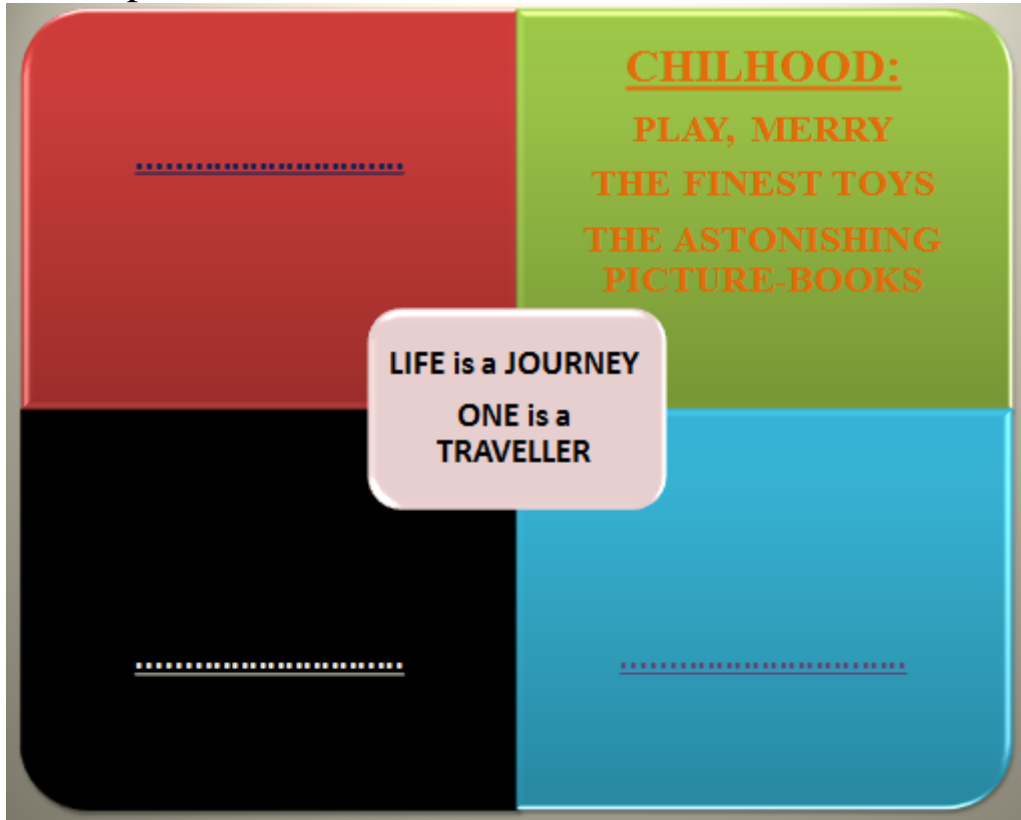
What are the peculiar features of each of the periods in one's life?

7. Analyze the language means of each of the periods of the main character's life verbalization from the axiological point of view. What is the crucial tendency you've noticed? What does it account for?

LIFE PERIOD	LANGUAGE MEANS	
	“+”	“-”
CHILDHOOD		
.....		
MATURE AGE		
.....		
OLD AGE		

8. Work out the conceptual framework of the story. Regarding the findings from the previous assignment, make it multicoloured, revealing the major emotions and emotive states depicted in the story. How does it add to your understanding of the message of the story?

See the example offered:



9. Create the weather map of the story. How does it add to your understanding of the message of the story?

LIFE PERIOD	SEASON OF THE YEAR	NATURE LANDSCAPES DESCRIPTIONS	WEATHER CONDITIONS
CHILDHOOD			
.....			
MATURE AGE			
.....			
OLD AGE			

10. Define the message of the story, which should be defined as a conclusion from the overall analysis of the text.

You should strive to expose the main problem(s) suggested by the author by means of various textual elements, especially those of the implicit layer.

One's attempt to derive the message from the text can be facilitated by the following techniques:

- You start interpretation by making a note of all possible ideas and associations that arise either during or after reading; this facilitates spontaneous revelations of the underlying meaning.
- You single out key words or phrases (recurrent or stylistically marked units) that either explicitly or implicitly refer to the main problems of the text.
- You study puzzling or ambiguous places that may contain important implications.



UNIT 3.
BASIC NOTIONS OF LITERARY TEXT
INTERPRETATION:
TYPES OF ARTISTIC (POETIC) DETAILS

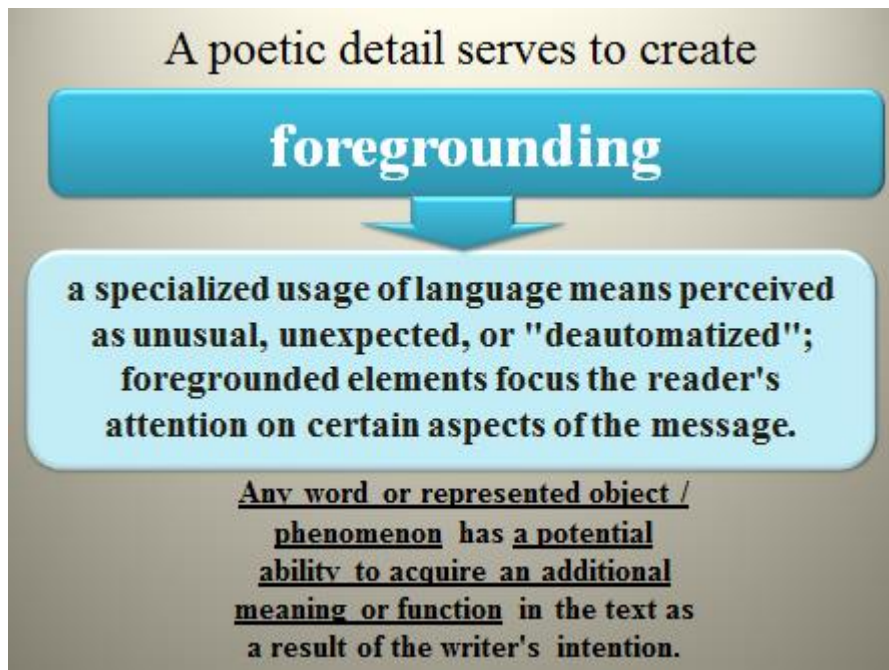
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BASIC NOTIONS

An **artistic (poetic) detail** is a condensed, laconic and very expressive representation in the text of a complicated, multifaceted phenomenon, fact or idea.

An artistic detail names the trait or quality determined by the author to be the most essential part of the whole.



Artistic details are divided into the following types on the basis of their functions:

- 1) **depicting details** that recreate visual images of nature and human appearance; they are usually mentioned no more than once within a text;
- 2) **characterological details** that reveal a personage's psychological properties, traits and habits (both through direct and indirect characterization) and are usually found throughout the text;
- 3) **authenticity details** that make the reader believe in real existence of the described things and events; they are names of countries, streets, titles, dates, etc.;
- 4) **implicit details (implications / implicates)** that point to hidden meanings through external features of the objects or phenomena represented.

*Implications are differentiated into:

a) **implicit title** – a title that can be properly understood only if the reader is acquainted with the macrocontext of the literary work. This type of title usually expresses in a capacious way the message of the whole text, moreover it indicates different facets of the main idea.

b) **implication of precedence** refers to such a compositional structure of a literary text which gives the reader the impression that he/she is a witness to an on-going story, the preceding events of which are supposed to be familiar to him/her.

c) **implicit detail** is an umbrella term embracing various hidden meanings evoked by literary images.

According to their complexity and significance in the text, implicit details are classified into: superficial, trite, local, deep and dark.

Superficial implicates refer to economy of speech and embrace all manner of elliptical utterances, unfinished sentences, aposiopesis, etc. This type of implicitness does not require special decoding, since the missing parts are restored in a semiautomatic way.

Trite implicates include trivial stylistic devices and expressive means such as dead epithets, metaphors, hyperboles, etc.

Local implicates are microimages (figures of speech) or macroimages bearing the author's stylistic idiosyncrasies and having significance for the correct understanding of a textual fragment.

Deep implicates are microimages (figures of speech) or macroimages whose decoding is important for understanding of the entire literary work.

Dark implicates require from the reader additional cultural and philological competence for their decoding.

In literary stylistics dark implicates are differentiated into reminiscences and allusions.

Reminiscence is a reference to some other literary work in the fictional text.

Reminiscences can be classified into *direct* ones (quotations from literary works), and *indirect* ones (paraphrased quotations or their semantic and stylistic elements).

Allusion may be defined as a mention of the name of a real person, historical event, or literary character, which is not just a straightforward reference but which conjures up some additional meaning, pointing to a quality or characteristic for which the word has come to stand.

*Among dark implicit details we can also single out **ethnocultural implications** – textual units that bear hidden meanings related to realia, customs, traditions, stereotypes, beliefs or popular facts shared within a certain cultural community.



FOR FURTHER RESEARCH WORK

1. *Read the excerpt from the article **Literary processing and interpretation: Towards empirical foundations** by Peter Dixon, Marisa Bortolussi, Leslie C. Twilley and Alice Leung about the nature of literary effects. How does this approach fit into the general framework of the problem under the analysis?*

A crucial premise in our framework for studying literary reception is that literary processing is, in some way, different from text processing in general. More precisely, we assume that literary processing produces literary effects, and that such effects can be distinguished in principle from other classes of text effects. At the moment, we prefer to be relatively agnostic about the essential characteristics of literary effects; at least some properties of these effects are likely to emerge with continued theoretical development and empirical investigation. However, as a step in this direction, we propose that one characteristic of literary effects is that they emerge over time. In other words, the hallmark of at least some literary effects is that they do not occur spontaneously on the first casual reading of the text, but are generated only later through study and reflection. This characteristic of literary effects may be related to the intuition that good literature lingers with the reader and continues to be processed over an extended period of time after the initial reading. We refer to effects that are produced later, after the initial reading, as emergent effects. Although all emergent effects are not literary effects and all literary effects are not emergent effects, our position is that the two tend to go together: Most emergent effects are literary and vice versa. The notion of literary effects suggests a natural view of literariness: A text is literary if it generates a large number of (common) literary effects.

*(Peter Dixon, Marisa Bortolussi, Leslie C. Twilley and Alice Leung
Literary processing and interpretation: Towards empirical foundations)*

2. *Read the excerpt from the article **Foregrounding, Defamiliarization, and Affect Response to Literary Stories** by David S. Miall and Don Kuiken about the nature, means and effects of foregrounding in literary texts. Draw a mindmap that will illustrate the key ideas of the excerpt and your understanding of the problem.*

If highly foregrounded passages of literary texts are striking and affectively evocative, such passages may, in Shklovsky's phrase, "increase the difficulty and length of perception." For several reasons, readers may be expected to dwell on foregrounded passages. First, at the phonetic level, such features as alliteration or rhyme may produce a slight "drag" on reading, particularly if a reader engages in sub-vocal articulation. Such prolonged reflection on phonetic features may allow realization of their feeling connotations (cf. Fónagy, 1989). Second, at the grammatical level, such features as inversion or ellipsis may produce comprehension difficulties. As research on "garden-path" sentences has shown (eg., Frazier and Rayner, 1987), deviations in normal syntax impede processing and increase reading time. Extended reflection on those complexities may enable recognition of implicit emphases or evaluations. Third, at the semantic level, such features as metaphor or irony may refer to less salient attributes of textual referents. Lengthy reflection may be necessary to identify those less salient -- and often affective -- attributes. In general, foregrounding may motivate an attentional pause that allows emergence of related feelings. Fourth, the hierarchical arrangement of foregrounding around a dominant (Jakobson, 1987) may require the integration of reactions to complexes of phonetic, grammatical and semantic features of a text. In general, foregrounding may motivate an attentional pause that allows emergence of related feelings.

In addition, during an encounter with foregrounded text, the reader may engage in what we have called "refamiliarization": the reader may review the textual context in order to discern, delimit, or develop the novel meanings suggested by the foregrounded passage (a process that Harker [1996] has described as the reader's "reattentional" activity). At the phonetic level, the reader may reconsider the context that enables identification of the feeling connotations of alliterative or assonant passages (Brown, 1958, pp. 110-139). At the grammatical level, the reader may reconsider the context that helps to identify the "absent" referent of an ellipsis. At the semantic level, the reader may recall other passages that extend or embellish a metaphor. We propose that, in general, such reconsideration of the text surrounding foregrounded features will be guided by the feelings that have been evoked in response to those features. As de Sousa (1987, p. 196) has argued, accentuated feelings set the "patterns of salience among objects of attention." Thus, the feelings accentuated while reading foregrounded passages sensitize the reader to other passages having similar affective connotations. Furthermore, such accentuated feelings sensitize the reader to

other "texts" (e.g., personal memories, world knowledge) having similar affective connotations (see Kuiken, 1991, for a review). With such affectively congruent intra- and extra-textual resources, the reader "refamiliarizes" or "thematizes" the textual subject matter.

Since foregrounding often occurs in clusters of closely related phonetic, grammatical, and semantic features, the sheer density of the processes by which refamiliarization occurs suggests that it takes time to unfold. In fact, as the preceding discussion suggests, the complexity of those processes exceeds that proposed by the now widely discredited model according to which non-literal expressions are more complex and require longer to comprehend than literal expressions (cf. Glucksberg, 1991). We are referring to the extended reading time that may occur in response to texts that require an integrated response to structured complexes of foregrounding features, such as occurs most evidently in poetry. While we know of no direct evidence that foregrounding in this sense increases reading time, there is some evidence that the "refamiliarizing" activities just reviewed occur in response to foregrounded text. In a study with readers of a Woolf short story, Miall (1989) found that, while phrases describing the relationships in the opening section of the story were at first judged more important, defamiliarizing phrases describing the setting were judged as more important at a second reading -- after readers had begun to doubt their initial, conventional interpretation. In another study, based on think-aloud data from readers of another Woolf story (Miall, 1990), defamiliarizing phrases provided the main focus for readers' constructive activities: such phrases elicited more interpretive reflection, they participated more often in perceived relationships between passages in the story, and they resulted in more explicit anticipations of overall story direction and meaning than other phrases. Although foregrounding was not systematically assessed in these studies, the findings lend plausibility to the notion that readers take longer to interpret foregrounded passages, to savour their affective implications, and to evaluate the contributions of those passages to understanding the story as a whole.

(David S. Miall and Don Kuiken Foregrounding, Defamiliarization, and Affect Response to Literary Stories)

TYPES OF ARTISTIC (POETIC) DETAILS (Practical Assignment)

1. In her short story "Into Deep" (2000) Virginia Muzik dwells upon the main character's searching for a dream. Though when the time comes and the desired goal is achieved, he doesn't seem to be ready for it either.

Comment on the implications evoked by the image of the SHE in the story. Why is SHE never nominated? What is the message of the story?

Into Deep

V. Muzik

To this day, he waits on the sand. Staring out over the waves as the white foam rolls in and tickles his toes. The water's coldness registers in a small part of his mind that isn't consumed with the memory. He could be standing on hot coals and still, he wouldn't move. Wouldn't even shift from foot to foot.

There was once a pattern to his vigil. Each day, he stood on the beach at the same time, peering across to the horizon. Watching. Searching. Waiting. At the same time every day. Six o'clock, regardless of the season.

That's what time it was when she first came to him.

Three seasons have come and gone since and as the weather cooled, he decided to vary his guard. He's been there at dawn. At noon. At midnight. He's charted the cycles of the sun and moon with his patient pattern. Shooting stars have dropped through the blackness at night. Clouds have darkened the sky and rain obscured his vision. He's even been there for a lunar eclipse. But he wouldn't know. These are superfluous.

Tomorrow, he'll go there again at night. Eleven. He might catch her then. He sighs and turns to walk away from the water, looking back, and looking back. Just in case.

"I chose you," she told him that first time. "I knew you would wait for me."

And he knew too. He would walk to the beach and stare out to the horizon until the sea became a glittering blur in the foreground. He knew he was waiting. Searching. Asking.

On a May evening she came. As the sun slipped down between the pale and deep blues, she saw him come to the shore. She watched a smile play at

his lips as the waves broke gently and swirled at his feet. Her heart swelled as she prepared to meet him.

Blinking in the confusion of that twilight time, he noticed a stirring of water midway out near the island. A breeze whispered at his ear and made his skin goosepimply. He tasted the fine layer of salt left behind on his mouth as his gaze stayed fixed and he waded further into the surf. Adjusting his eyes to the steel blue haze of early evening, he watched as the slippery vision rolled in with the next wave.

Her long golden hair swam in the shallow water and caressed his calves as she knelt in front of him with an arm stretched up. A shudder surged through his body as he took her cold hand and helped her to her feet. She came up to his shoulders, this tiny, blue-skinned sea nymph, and laughing gently at his puzzled look, she answered his silent question.

"These legs appear when I will myself to the shore. What use is a tail on land?"

He covered her nakedness with his jumper, which itched her clammy skin, and they waded onto the sand.

"Do you know that we willed this to happen?" She asked, as they sat on the sand.

He wanted to nod in agreement. Wanted to let out a self-assured "yes." Instead, he stared out to the blackness. But he did know.

There were long silences in their togetherness. So much he wanted to say. So much she already knew. She touched his face softly and traced around his mouth with a finger. "Speak," she beckoned without a sound.

He didn't. Instead, he sighed and slipped an arm around her waist and drew her closer to him. They stayed this way until the moon was high in the sky. Casting his eyes now and then over her delicate form, his heart was full with something like love. His head heavy with thoughts he could not express. The silence was broken only by their breathing. Sighing.

And then she left him.

"Tomorrow, at dusk," she said. He nodded.

The next night, he was there with a dress for her and a towel to dry her wet skin. Again, the tide rose and she swam in to him. His own heart swelled as she again stood before him. She smiled warmly, touched by his thoughtfulness, as she tried on the aqua blue gown.

"It matches my skin!" She giggled, bringing a smile to his lips too. He wrapped his arms around her and held her for an eternity, feeling her coolness fade. Soon, her skin softened into a rosy golden tone. "Please stay," he thought.

"I'd like to show you my world," she sighed, looking deep into his eyes. "But I wonder if you are ready."

Startled by her frankness, he was again struck silent and returned her searching gaze. He shrugged.

"Try?" She asked.

And again, she left him.

"Tomorrow, at dusk," she said once more.

On the third night, when the tide was highest, she came in with a wave that rattled his lanky frame. He laughed nervously as salt water sprayed his face. His feet had sunk deep into the sand and he tried to free himself as she languored invitingly in the shallow surf. For a moment, he was seized by a resistance. He stood his ground, ankle deep, against the pull of the undertow and she was drawn out deeper as the sand was dragged from around his feet with the tide. He hesitated. But when another wave brought her closer, she touched him, and he let go.

That night, he went with her to her world, where his breath didn't matter. Feeling safe in her cool embrace, the ocean welcomed him with a depth of promise and for a while he lost himself in trusting her. But the deeper they went, the dizzier he became. Dizzy with the pressure of the deep. His need to breathe returned with an urgency that frightened him and when she saw this, she let him go, seeing him safely to the surface.

She nodded as he started saying, "you answer questions I haven't yet asked."

"When you're ready, I'll return," she promised, with a deep sadness in her voice.

"How will I know when that is?" He asked aloud.

But she was gone.



2. Within the short story “The Family Portrait” (1999) by Thomas Ledin there are examples of depicting details. Explain why these depicting details can be regarded as implicit characterological ones and how that contributes to conveying the message of the story.

The Family Portrait

Th.Ledin

Christmas day, 1977 my family posed for a picture taken by Mr. Bellows, our next door neighbor. That photo has become the benchmark for all family portraits taken of my family since, not a single one has equaled its magnificence. In that wonderful picture my family is much smaller than it is today, there are no sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, or grandchildren, just my father, my mother, my brother, my sister, and me. We're all sitting up amazingly straight, and our smiles are so perfect they almost look drawn on. This photo is entirely beautiful in its simplicity, and truly impressive in its rarity.

I admit that a good family portrait doesn't seem like anything to get too excited about, but consider the fact that every year since 1977 my poor mother has tried unsuccessfully to improve upon that masterpiece. My mom has that picture hanging in an ugly gold frame, large as life, opposite the front door in her house. It hangs there as a trophy for all to see. "My perfect little family," she says every time I follow her in the front door.

I can recall with more than a little guilt the years my mother tried to corral us into neat little two rowed formations for a photo, and the grief we all gave her. We never made it easy on her, whether it was bunny ears behind Julie's head, or Josh pinching the sensitive part on the back of my arm, or my dad's favorite, passing gas a second before the picture was snapped. From 1977 on, no picture that contained my entire family came out well. We got some nice pictures of individuals, even a group of two or three, but when any more than that were told to sit still and smile somebody inevitably messed it up.

It wasn't always our fault, in 1991 we thought for sure the curse had been broken. It was the day before my sister's wedding, and mom arranged to have the photographer at the rehearsal dinner to make a valiant attempt to break her slump. We had two additions to the family, my sister-in-law, and my soon to be brother-in-law. The introduction of these new variables increased the difficulty level considerably, but we were prepared. The photographer posed us like we were modeling for the cover of Perfect Family Monthly, and we all behaved ourselves. Aunt Lucy stood by the photographer and snapped a few pictures with her Polaroid camera. After our photo shoot we gathered around Lucy's magically appearing Polaroids, which came out terribly blurry, however, our faces could be made out, and nobody was doing anything stupid. My mother was so happy she almost cried. She knew in about three weeks the professional's proofs would arrive,

and she would be able to hang another perfect family portrait opposite the front door near the stairs.

I was there the day the proofs came, the pictures of the wedding were beautiful, but there were no rehearsal pictures in the package. During the phone call with the photographer to find out where they were, my mom burst into tears and hung up. "He lost the negatives," she said in a flat voice as she left the kitchen. I heard her pause by the '77 wonder picture, and then proceed upstairs. I vowed then that I would join my mother's cause and cooperate at every single photo-op.

It's been eight years since the rehearsal dinner, and a second decent portrait has yet to be taken. We've had plenty of opportunities, my wedding, Dad's retirement party, and eight Christmases. During that eight years five grandkids have arrived, and the difficulty of getting the perfect picture has increased exponentially. My mom had almost completely given up on her quest and I was not the champion of her cause I had hoped to be.

There we were the entire family together, twenty-two years after the perfect portrait was taken. There were no smiles to photograph that day. As I walked into my mother's house with my son on my hip, we stopped and starred at the portrait, and my son asked, "Who are they Daddy?" I couldn't answer him, I recognized no one. Standing over my dad's casket with my brother and sister, I could not stop thinking about the second perfect portrait my mom never got.

My mother did not make much of an appearance the day of the wake; she came downstairs for a bit, mainly to thank everyone for coming. My brother, sister and I went to her house the next day, before making the various trips to the airport. As we opened the front door we noticed immediately that the perfect portrait of 1977 was gone, and in its place was a portrait from 1995. It was the worst picture ever taken of my family. In it, my eyes are closed, my brother is leaning down to scold his misbehaving son, my sister is yawning, two grandchildren are facing away from the camera, and my dad's hand is planted squarely on my Mother's left breast. In that picture my mother is wearing the biggest smile I have ever seen. When we finally tore ourselves away from 1977's replacement, we saw that every wall was now home to at least one of our year's worth of terrible family portraits. By the stairs, 1981, where my brother was hung over and looked like hell, and my sister was frowning. Near the dinning room table was 1987 where my dad was grabbing my ears. 1990 was on the wall next to the bathroom, it was almost perfect, except for my sister-in-law's eyes were rolled back in her head, and my tongue was doing something strange. We

wandered around the house for twenty minutes in silence looking at these framed portraits that had been hidden away in the attic. They were awful examples of how a family should pose for pictures, but they were perfect representations of my family. After twenty-two years my mother realized that beautiful old 1977 in its ornate gold painted frame was the mistake, in fact it wasn't a picture of her family at all.



3. Neil Gaiman – a renowned storyteller whose story “Instructions” (2010) has transported readers to magical realms and an acclaimed illustrator of lushly imagined fairy-tale landscapes guide a traveler safely through lands unknown and yet strangely familiar and home again.

“Instructions” is one of the handiest guides an explorer will ever come across as it's filled with all sorts of useful information about the world in which fairy tales, myths, and legends exist. You'll find they've paid homage to fairy tales and nursery rhymes from all around the world through both indirect and direct references. Compared to a usual fairy tale, the story is stripped bare of any narrative flesh. What remains are the motifs and symbols that actually give a fairy tale its resonating meaning.

Search the story for all possible kinds of allusions and decipher them in the context offered.

Instructions

N.Gaiman

Touch the wooden gate in the wall you never
saw before.
Say "please" before you open the latch,
go through,
walk down the path.

A red metal imp hangs from the green-painted
front door,
as a knocker,
do not touch it; it will bite your fingers.
Walk through the house. Take nothing.
Eat nothing.
However, if any creature tells you that it hungers,
feed it.
If it tells you that it is dirty,
clean it.
If it cries to you that it hurts,
if you can,
ease its pain.

From the back garden you will be able to see the
wild wood.
The deep well you walk past leads to Winter's
realm;
there is another land at the bottom of it.
If you turn around here,
you can walk back, safely;
you will lose no face. I will think no less of you.

Once through the garden you will be in the
wood.
The trees are old. Eyes peer from the under-
growth.
Beneath a twisted oak sits an old woman. She
may ask for something;
give it to her. She
will point the way to the castle.
Inside it are three princesses.
Do not trust the youngest. Walk on.
In the clearing beyond the castle the twelve
months sit about a fire,
warming their feet, exchanging tales.
They may do favors for you, if you are polite.
You may pick strawberries in December's frost.
Trust the wolves, but do not tell them where

you are going.

The river can be crossed by the ferry. The ferryman will take you.

(The answer to his question is this:

If he hands the oar to his passenger, he will be free to leave the boat.

Only tell him this from a safe distance.)

If an eagle gives you a feather, keep it safe.

Remember: that giants sleep too soundly; that witches are often betrayed by their appetites; dragons have one soft spot, somewhere, always; hearts can be well-hidden, and you betray them with your tongue.

Do not be jealous of your sister.

Know that diamonds and roses are as uncomfortable when they tumble from one's lips as toads and frogs: colder, too, and sharper, and they cut.

Remember your name.

Do not lose hope — what you seek will be found.

Trust ghosts. Trust those that you have helped to help you in their turn.

Trust dreams.

Trust your heart, and trust your story.

When you come back, return the way you came.

Favors will be returned, debts will be repaid.

Do not forget your manners.

Do not look back.

Ride the wise eagle (you shall not fall).

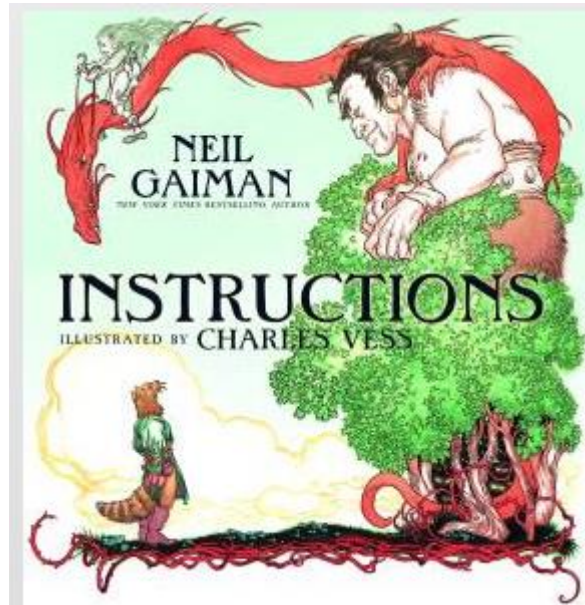
Ride the silver fish (you will not drown).

Ride the grey wolf (hold tightly to his fur).

There is a worm at the heart of the tower; that is why it will not stand.

When you reach the little house, the place your

journey started,
you will recognize it, although it will seem
much smaller than you remember.
Walk up the path, and through the garden gate
you never saw before but once.
And then go home. Or make a home.
And rest.



4. Identify ethnocultural implication present in the story “The Cactus” by O.Henry. Dwell upon the effect it creates.

The Cactus

O.Henry

The most notable thing about Time is that it is so purely relative. A large amount of reminiscence is, by common consent, conceded to the drowning man; and it is not past belief that one may review an entire courtship while removing one's gloves.

That is what Trysdale was doing, standing by a table in his bachelor apartments. On the table stood a singular-looking green plant in a red earthen jar. The plant was one of the species of cacti, and was provided with long, tentacular leaves that perpetually swayed with the slightest breeze with a peculiar beckoning motion.

Trysdale's friend, the brother of the bride, stood at a sideboard complaining at being allowed to drink alone. Both men were in evening

dress. White favors like stars upon their coats shone through the gloom of the apartment.

As he slowly unbuttoned his gloves, there passed through Trysdale's mind a swift, scarifying retrospect of the last few hours. It seemed that in his nostrils was still the scent of the flowers that had been banked in odorous masses about the church, and in his ears the low pitched hum of a thousand well-bred voices, the rustle of crisp garments, and, most insistently recurring, the drawling words of the minister irrevocably binding her to another.

From this last hopeless point of view he still strove, as if it had become a habit of his mind, to reach some conjecture as to why and how he had lost her. Shaken rudely by the uncompromising fact, he had suddenly found himself confronted by a thing he had never before faced – his own innermost, unmitigated, arid unbedecked self. He saw all the garbs of pretence and egoism that he had worn now turn to rags of folly. He shuddered at the thought that to others, before now, the garments of his soul must have appeared sorry and threadbare. Vanity and conceit? These were the joints in his armor. And how free from either she had always been. But why?

As she had slowly moved up the aisle toward the altar he had felt an unworthy, sullen exultation that had served to support him. He had told himself that her paleness was from thoughts of another than the man to whom she was about to give herself. But even that poor consolation had been wrenched from him. For, when he saw that swift, limpid, upward look that she gave the man when he took her hand, he knew himself to be forgotten. Once that same look had been raised to him, and he had gauged its meaning. Indeed, his conceit had crumbled; its last prop was gone. Why had it ended thus? There had been no quarrel between them, nothing.

For the thousandth time he remarshalled in his mind the events of those last few days before the tide had so suddenly turned.

She had always insisted upon placing him upon a pedestal, and he had accepted her homage with royal grandeur. It had been a very sweet incense that she had burned before him; so modest (he told himself); so childlike and worshipful, and (he would once have sworn) so sincere. She had invested him with an almost supernatural number of high attributes and excellencies

and talents, and he had absorbed the oblation as a desert drinks the rain that can coax from it no promise of blossom or fruit.

As Trysdale grimly wrenched apart the seam of his last glove, the crowning instance of his fatuous and tardily mourned egoism came vividly back to him. The scene was the night when he had asked her to come up on his pedestal with him and share his greatness. He could not, now, for the pain of it, allow his mind to dwell upon the memory of her convincing beauty that night – the careless wave of her hair, the tenderness and virginal charm of her looks and words. But they had been enough, and they had brought him to speak. During their conversation she had said:

"And Captain Carruthers tells me that you speak the Spanish language like a native. Why have you hidden this accomplishment from me? Is there anything you do not know?"

Now, Carruthers was an idiot. No doubt he (Trysdale) had been guilty (he sometimes did such things) of airing at the club some old, canting Castilian proverb dug from the hotch potch at the back of dictionaries. Carruthers, who was one of his incontinent admirers, was the very man to have magnified this exhibition of doubtful erudition.

But, alas! the incense of her admiration had been so sweet and flattering. He allowed the imputation to pass without denial. Without protest, he allowed her to twine about his brow this spurious bay of Spanish scholarship. He let it grace his conquering head, and, among its soft convolutions, he did not feel the prick of the thorn that was to pierce him later.

How glad, how shy, how tremulous she was! How she fluttered like a snared bird when he laid his mightiness at her feet! He could have sworn, and he could swear now, that unmistakable consent was in her eyes, but, coyly, she would give him no direct answer. "I will send you my answer tomorrow," she said; and he, the indulgent, confident victor, smilingly granted the delay. The next day he waited, impatient, in his rooms for the word. At noon her groom came to the door and left the strange cactus in the red earthen jar. There was no note, no message, merely a tag upon the plant bearing a barbarous foreign or botanical name. He waited until night, but her answer did not come. His large pride and hurt vanity kept him from seeking her. Two evenings later they met at a dinner. Their greetings were conventional, but she looked at him, breathless, wondering, eager. He was courteous, adamant, waiting her explanation. With womanly swiftness she took her cue from his manner, and turned to snow and ice. Thus, and wider from this on, they had drifted apart. Where was his fault? Who had been to

blame? Humbled now, he sought the answer amid the ruins of his self-conceit. If –

The voice of the other man in the room, querulously intruding upon his thoughts, aroused him.

"I say, Trysdale, what the deuce is the matter with you? You look unhappy as if you yourself had been married instead of having acted merely as an accomplice. Look at me, another accessory, come two thousand miles on a garlicky, cockroachy banana steamer all the way from South America to connive at the sacrifice – please to observe how lightly my guilt rests upon my shoulders. Only little sister I had, too, and now she's gone. Come now! take something to ease your conscience."

"I don't drink just now, thanks," said Trysdale.

"Your brandy," resumed the other, coming over and joining him, "is abominable. Run down to see me some time at Punta Redonda, and try some of our stuff that old Garcia smuggles in. It's worth the, trip. Hallo! here's an old acquaintance. Wherever did you rake up this cactus, Trysdale?"

"A present," said Trysdale, "from a friend. Know the species?"

"Very well. It's a tropical concern. See hundreds of 'em around Punta every day. Here's the name on this tag tied to it. Know any Spanish, Trysdale?"

"No," said Trysdale, with the bitter wraith of a smile – "Is it Spanish?"

"Yes. The natives imagine the leaves are reaching out and beckoning to you. They call it by this name – Ventomarme. Name means in English, 'Come and take me.'"





**FINAL CONTROL ASSIGNMENT
THE STORY FOR INTERPRETATION:**

PILLAR OF SALT

Shirley Jackson

For some reason a tune was running through her head when she and her husband got on the train in New Hampshire for their trip to New York; they had not been to New York for nearly a year, but the tune was from further back than that. It was from the days when she was fifteen or sixteen, and had never seen New York except in movies, when the city was made up, to her, of penthouses filled with Noel Coward people; when the height and speed and luxury and gaiety that made up a city like New York were confused inextricably with the dullness of being fifteen, and beauty unreachable and far in the movies.

“What *is* that tune?” she said to her husband, and hummed it. “It’s from some old movie, I think.”

“I know it,” he said, and hummed it himself. “Can’t remember the words.”

He sat back comfortably. He had hung up their coats, put the suitcases on the rack, and had taken his magazine out. “I’ll think of it sooner or later,” he said.

She looked out the window first, tasting it almost secretly, savoring the extreme pleasure of being on a moving train with nothing to do for six hours but read and nap and go into the dining-car, going farther and farther every minute from the children, from the kitchen floor, with even the hills being incredibly left behind, changing into fields and trees too far away from home

to be daily. "I love trains," she said, and her husband nodded sympathetically into his magazine.

Two weeks ahead, two unbelievable weeks, with all arrangements made, no further planning to do, except perhaps what theatres or what restaurants. A friend with an apartment went on a convenient vacation, there was enough money in the bank to make a trip to New York compatible with new snow suits for the children; there was the smoothness of unopposed arrangements, once the initial obstacles had been overcome, as though when they had really made up their minds, nothing dared stop them. The baby's sore throat cleared up. The plumber came, finished his work in two days, and left. The dresses had been altered in time; the hardware store could be left safely, once they had found the excuse of looking over new city products. New York had not burned down, had not been quarantined, their friend had gone away according to schedule, and Brad had the keys to the apartment in his pocket. Everyone knew where to reach everyone else; there was a list of plays not to miss and a list of items to look out for in the stores – diapers, dress materials, fancy canned goods, tarnish-proof silverware boxes. And, finally, the train was there, performing its function, pacing through the afternoon, carrying them legally and with determination to New York.

Margaret looked curiously at her husband, inactive in the middle of the afternoon on a train, at the other fortunate people traveling, at the sunny country outside, looked again to make sure, and then opened her book. The tune was still in her head, she hummed it and heard her husband take it up softly as he turned a page in his magazine.

In the dining-car she ate roast beef, as she would have done in a restaurant at home, reluctant to change over too quickly to the new, tantalizing food of a vacation. She had ice cream for dessert but became uneasy over her coffee because they were due in New York in an hour and she still had to put on her coat and hat, relishing every gesture, and Brad must take the suitcases down and put away the magazines. They stood at the end of the car for the interminable underground run, picking up their suitcases and putting them down again, moving restlessly inch by inch.

The station was a momentary shelter, moving visitors gradually into a world of people and sound and light to prepare them for the blasting reality of the street outside. She saw it for a minute from the sidewalk before she was in a taxi moving into the middle of it, and then they were bewilderingly caught and carried on uptown and whirled out on to another sidewalk and Brad paid the taxi driver and put his head back to look up at the apartment house. "This is it, all right," he said, as though he had doubted the driver's

ability to find a number so simply given. Upstairs in the elevator, and the key fit the door. They had never seen their friend's apartment before, but it was reasonably familiar – a friend moving from New Hampshire to New York carries private pictures of a home not erasable in a few years, and the apartment had enough of home in it to settle Brad immediately in the right chair and comfort her with instinctive trust of the linen and blankets.

“This is home for two weeks,” Brad said, and stretched. After the first few minutes they both went to the windows automatically; New York was below, as arranged, and the houses across the street were apartment houses filled with unknown people.

“It's wonderful,” she said. There were cars down there, and people, and the noise was there. “I'm so happy,” she said, and kissed her husband.

They went sight-seeing the first day; they had breakfast in an Automat¹ and went to the top of the Empire State Building. “Got it all fixed up now,” Brad said, at the top. “Wonder just where that plane hit.”

They tried to peer down on all four sides, but were embarrassed about asking. “After all,” she said reasonably, giggling in a corner, “if something of mine got broken I wouldn't want people poking around asking to see the pieces.”

“If you owned the Empire State Building you wouldn't care,” Brad said.

They traveled only in taxis the first few days, and one taxi had a door held on with a piece of string; they pointed to it and laughed silently at each other, and on about the third day, the taxi they were riding in got a flat tire on Broadway⁵ and they had to get out and find another.

“We've only got eleven days left,” she said one day, and then, seemingly minutes later, “we've already been here six days.”

They had got in touch with the friends they had expected to get in touch with, they were going to a Long Island summer home for a week end. “It looks pretty dreadful right now,” their hostess said cheerfully over the phone, “and we're leaving in a week ourselves, but I'd never *forgive* you if you didn't see it *once* while you were here.” The weather had been fair but cool, with a definite autumn awareness, and the clothes in the store windows were dark and already hinting at furs and velvets. She wore her coat every day, and suits most of the time. The light dresses she had brought were hanging in the closet in the apartment, and she was thinking now of getting a sweater in one of the big stores, something impractical for New Hampshire, but probably good for Long Island.

“I have to do some shopping, at least one day,” she said to Brad, and he groaned. “Don't ask me to carry packages,” he said. “You aren't up to a

good day's shopping," she told him, "not after all this walking around you've been doing. Why don't you go to a movie or something?"

"I want to do some shopping myself," he said mysteriously. Perhaps he was talking about her Christmas present; she had thought vaguely of getting such things done in New York; the children would be pleased with novelties from the city, toys not seen in their home stores. At any rate she said, "You'll probably be able to get to your wholesalers at last."

They were on their way to visit another friend, who had found a place to live by a miracle and warned them consequently not to quarrel with the appearance of the building, or the stairs, or the neighborhood. All three were bad, and the stairs were three flights, narrow and dark, but there was a place to live at the top. Their friend had not been in New York long, but he lived by himself in two rooms, and had easily caught the mania for slim tables and low bookcases which made his rooms look too large for the furniture in some places, too cramped and uncomfortable in others.

"What a lovely place," she said when she came in, and then was sorry when her host said, "Some day this damn situation will let up and I'll be able to settle down in a really decent place."

There were other people there; they sat and talked companionably about the same subjects then current in New Hampshire, but they drank more than they would have at home and it left them strangely unaffected; their voices were louder and their words more extravagant; their gestures, on the other hand, were smaller, and they moved a finger where in New Hampshire they would have waved an arm. Margaret said frequently, "We're just staying here for a couple of weeks, on a vacation," and she said, "It's wonderful, so *exciting*," and she said, "We were *terribly* lucky; this friend went out of town just at the right...."

Finally the room was very full and noisy, and she went into a corner near a window to itch her breath. The window had been opened and shut all evening, depending on whether the person standing next to it had both hands free; and now it was shut, with the clear sky outside. Someone came and stood next to her, and she said, "Listen to the noise outside. It's as bad as it is inside." He said, "In a neighborhood like this someone's always getting killed."

She frowned. "It sounds different than before. I mean, there's a different sound to it."

"Alcoholics," he said. "Drunks in the streets. Fighting going on across the way." He wandered away, carrying his drink.

She opened the window and leaned out, and there were people hanging out the windows across the way shouting, and people standing in the street looking up and shouting, and from across the way she heard clearly, "Lady, lady." They must mean me, she thought, they're all looking this way. She leaned out farther and the voices shouted incoherently but somehow making an audible whole, "Lady, your house is on fire, lady, lady."

She closed the window firmly and turned around to the other people in the room, raising her voice a little. "Listen," she said, "they're saying the house is on fire." She was desperately afraid of their laughing at her, of looking like a fool while Brad across the room looked at her blushing. She said again, "The *house* is on *fire*," and added, "They say," for fear of sounding too vehement. The people nearest to her turned and someone said, "She says the house is on fire."

She wanted to get to Brad and couldn't see him; her host was not in sight either, and the people all around were strangers. They don't listen to me, she thought, I might as well not be here, and she went to the outside door and opened it. There was no smoke, no flame, but she was telling herself, I might as well not be here, so she abandoned Brad in panic and ran without her hat and coat down the stairs, carrying a glass in one hand and a package of matches in the other. The stairs were insanely long, but they were clear and safe, and she opened the street door and ran out. A man caught her arm and said, "Everyone out of the house?" and she said, "No, Brad's still there." The fire engines swept around the corner, with people leaning out of the windows watching them, and the man holding her arm said, "It's down here," and left her. The fire was two houses away; they could see flames behind the top windows, and smoke against the night sky, but in ten minutes it was finished and the fire engines pulled away with an air of martyrdom for hauling out all their equipment to put out a ten-minute fire.

She went back upstairs slowly and with embarrassment, and found Brad and took him home.

"I was so frightened," she said to him when they were safely in bed, "I lost my head completely."

"You should have tried to find someone," he said.

"They wouldn't listen," she insisted. "I kept telling them and they wouldn't listen and then I thought I must have been mistaken. I had some idea of going down to see what was going on."

"Lucky it was no worse," Brad said sleepily.

"I felt trapped," she said. "High up in that old building with a fire; it's like a nightmare. And in a strange city."

“Well, it’s all over now,” Brad said.

The same faint feeling of insecurity tagged her the next day; she went shopping alone and Brad went off to see hardware, after all. She got on a bus to go downtown and the bus was too full to move when it came time for her to get out. Wedged standing in the aisle she said, “Out, please,” and, “Excuse me,” and by the time she was loose and near the door the bus had started again and she got off a stop beyond. “No one *listens* to me,” she said to herself. “Maybe it’s because I’m too polite.” In the stores the prices were all too high and the sweaters looked disarmingly like New Hampshire ones. The toys for the children filled her with dismay; they were so obviously for New York children: hideous little parodies of adult life, cash registers, tiny pushcarts with imitation fruit, telephones that really worked (as if there weren’t enough phones in New York that really worked), miniature milk bottles in a carrying case. “We get our milk from cows,” Margaret told the salesgirl. “My children wouldn’t know what these were.” She was exaggerating, and felt guilty for a minute, but no one was around to catch her.

She had a picture of small children in the city dressed like their parents, following along with a miniature mechanical civilization, toy cash registers in larger and larger sizes that eased them into the real thing, millions of clattering jerking small imitations that prepared them nicely for taking over the large useless toys their parents lived by. She bought a pair of skis for her son, which she knew would be inadequate for the New Hampshire snow, and a wagon for her daughter inferior to the one Brad could make at home in an hour. Ignoring the toy mailboxes, the small phonographs with special small records, the kiddie cosmetics, she left the store and started home.

She was frankly afraid by now to take a bus; she stood on the corner and waited for a taxi. Glancing down at her feet, she saw a dime on the sidewalk and tried to pick it up, but there were too many people for her to bend down, and she was afraid to shove to make room for fear of being stared at. She put her foot on the dime and then saw a quarter⁷ near it, and a nickel. Someone dropped a pocketbook, she thought, and put her other foot on the quarter, stepping quickly to make it look natural; then she saw another dime and another nickel, and a third dime in the gutter. People were passing her, back and forth, all the time, rushing, pushing against her, not looking at her, and she was afraid to get down and start gathering up the money. Other people saw it and went past, and she realized that no one was going to pick it up. They were all embarrassed, or in too much of a hurry, or too crowded. A taxi stopped to let someone off, and she hailed it. She lifted her feet off the dime

and the quarter, and left them there when she got into the taxi. This taxi went slowly and bumped as it went; she had begun to notice that the gradual decay was not peculiar to the taxis. The buses were cracking open in unimportant seams, the leather seats broken and stained. The buildings were going, too – in one of the nicest stores there had been a great gaping hole in the tiled foyer, and you walked around it. Corners of the buildings seemed to be crumbling away into fine dust that drifted downward, the granite was eroding unnoticed. Every window she saw on her way uptown seemed to be broken; perhaps every street corner was peppered with small change. The people were moving faster than ever before; a girl in a red hat appeared at the upper side of the taxi window and was gone beyond the lower side before you could see the hat; store windows were so terribly bright because you only caught them for a fraction of a second. The people seemed hurled on in a frantic action that made every hour forty-five minutes long, every day nine hours, every year fourteen days. Food was so elusively fast, eaten in such a hurry, that you were always hungry, always speeding to a new meal with new people. Everything was imperceptibly quicker every minute. She stepped into the taxi on one side and stepped out the other side at her home; she pressed the fifth-floor button on the elevator and was coming down again, bathed and dressed and ready for dinner with Brad. They went out for dinner and were coming in again, hungry and hurrying to bed in order to get to breakfast with lunch beyond. They had been in New York nine days; tomorrow was Saturday and they were going to Long Island, coming home Sunday, and then Wednesday they were going home, really home. By the time she had thought of it they were on the train to Long Island; the train was broken, the seats torn and the door dirty; one of the doors wouldn't open and the windows wouldn't shut. Passing through the outskirts of the city, she thought, It's as though everything were traveling so fast that the solid stuff couldn't stand it and were going to pieces under the strain, cornices blowing off and windows caving in. She knew she was afraid to say it truly, afraid to face the knowledge that it was a voluntary neck-breaking speed, a deliberate whirling faster and faster to end in destruction.

On Long Island, their hostess led them into a new piece of New York, a house filled with New York furniture as though on rubber bands, pulled this far, stretched taut, and ready to snap back to the city, to an apartment, as soon as the door was opened and the lease, fully paid, had expired. "We've had this place every year for simply ages," their hostess said. "Otherwise we couldn't have gotten it *possibly* this year."

“It’s an awfully nice place,” Brad said. “I’m surprised you don’t live here all year round.”

“Got to get back to the city *some* time,” their hostess said, and laughed.

“Not much like New Hampshire,” Brad said. He was beginning to be a little homesick, Margaret thought; he wants to yell, just once. Since the fire scare she was apprehensive about large groups of people gathering together; when friends began to drop in after dinner she waited for a while, telling herself they were on the ground floor, she could run right outside, all the windows were open; then she excused herself and went to bed. When Brad came to bed much later she woke up and he said irritably, “We’ve been playing anagrams. Such crazy people’ She said sleepily, “Did you win?” and fell asleep before he told her.

The next morning she and Brad went for a walk while their host and hostess read the Sunday papers. “If you turn to the right outside the door,” their hostess said encouragingly, “and walk about three blocks down, you’ll come to our beach.”

“What do they want with our beach?” their host said. “It’s too damn cold to do anything down there.”

“They can look at the *water*,” their hostess said.

They walked down to the beach; at this time of year it was bare and windswept, yet still nodding hideously under traces of its summer plumage, as though it thought itself warmly inviting. There were occupied houses on the way there, for instance, and a lonely lunchstand was open, bravely advertising hot dogs and root beer.⁸ The man in the lunchstand watched them go by, his face cold and unsympathetic. They walked far past him, out of sight of houses, on to a stretch of grey pebbled sand that lay between the grey water on one side and the grey pebbled sand dunes on the other.

“Imagine going swimming here,” she said with a shiver. The beach pleased her; it was oddly familiar and reassuring and at the same time that she realized this, the little tune came back to her, bringing a double recollection. The beach was the one where she had lived in imagination, writing for herself dreary love-broken stories where the heroine walked beside the wild waves; the little tune was the symbol of the golden world she escaped into to avoid the everyday dreariness that drove her into writing depressing stories about the beach. She laughed out loud and Brad said, “What on earth’s so funny about this Godforsaken landscape?”

“I was just thinking how far away from the city it seems,” she said falsely.

The sky and the water and the sand were grey enough to make it feel like late afternoon instead of midmorning; she was tired and wanted to go back, but Brad said suddenly, "Look at that," and she turned and saw a girl running down over the dunes, carrying her hat, and her hair flying behind her.

"Only way to get warm on a day like this," Brad remarked, but Margaret said, "She looks frightened."

The girl saw them and came toward them, slowing down as she approached them. She was eager to reach them but when she came within speaking distance the familiar embarrassment, the not wanting to look like a fool, made her hesitate and look from one to the other of them uncomfortably.

"Do you know where I can find a policeman?" she asked finally.

Brad looked up and down the bare rocky beach and said solemnly, "There don't seem to be any around. Is there something we can do?"

"I don't think so," the girl said. "I really need a policeman."

They go to the police for everything, Margaret thought, these people, these New York people, it's as though they had selected a section of the population to act as problem-solvers, and so no matter what they want they look for a policeman.

"Be glad to help you if we can," Brad said.

The girl hesitated again. "Well, if you *must* know," she said crossly, "there's a leg up there."

They waited politely for the girl to explain, but she only said, "Come on, then," and waved to them to follow her. She led them over the dunes to a spot near a small inlet, where the dunes gave way abruptly to an intruding head of water. A leg was lying on the sand near the water, and the girl gestured at it and said, "There," as though it were her own property and they had insisted on having a share.

They walked over to it and Brad bent down gingerly. "It's a leg all right," he said. It looked like part of a wax dummy, a death-white wax leg neatly cut off at top-thigh and again just above the ankle, bent comfortably at the knee and resting on the sand. "It's real," Brad said, his voice slightly different. "You're right about that policeman."

They walked together to the lunchstand and the man listened unenthusiastically while Brad called the police. When the police came they all walked out again to where the leg was lying and Brad gave the police their names and addresses, and then said, "Is it all right to go on home?"

“What the hell you want to hang around for?” the policeman inquired with heavy humor. “You waiting for the rest of him?”

They went back to their host and hostess, talking about the leg, and their host apologized, as though he had been guilty of a breach of taste in allowing his guests to come on a human leg; their hostess said with interest, “There was an arm washed up in Bensonhurst, I’ve been reading about it.”

“One of these killings,” the host said.

Upstairs Margaret said abruptly, “I suppose it starts to happen first in the suburbs,” and when Brad said, “What starts to happen?” she said hysterically, “People starting to come apart.”

In order to reassure their host and hostess about their minding the leg, they stayed until the last afternoon train to New York. Back in their apartment again it seemed to Margaret that the marble in the house lobby had begun to age a little; even in two days there were new perceptible cracks. The elevator seemed a little rusty, and there was a fine film of dust over everything in the apartment. They went to bed feeling uncomfortable, and the next morning Margaret said immediately, “I’m going to stay in today.”

“You’re not upset about yesterday, are you?”

“Not a bit,” Margaret said. “I just want to stay in and rest.”

After some discussion Brad decided to go off again by himself; he still had people it was important to see and places he must go in the few days they had left. After breakfast in the Automat, Margaret came back alone to the apartment, carrying the mystery story she had bought on the way. She hung up her coat and hat and sat down by the window with the noise and the people far below, looking out at the sky where it was grey beyond the houses across the street.

I’m not going to worry about it, she said to herself, no sense thinking all the time about things like that, spoil your vacation and Brad’s too. No sense worrying, people get ideas like that and then worry about them.

The nasty little tune was running through her head again, with its burden of suavity and expensive perfume. The houses across the street were silent and perhaps unoccupied at this time of day; she let her eyes move with the rhythm of the tune, from window to window along one floor. By gliding quickly across two windows, she could make one line of the tune fit one floor of windows, and then a quick breath and a drop down to the next floor; it had the same number of windows and the tune had the same number of beats, and then the next floor and the next. She stopped suddenly when it seemed to her that the windowsill she had just passed had soundlessly crumpled and fallen into fine sand; when she looked back it was there as

before but then it seemed to be the windowsill above and to the right, and finally a corner of the roof.

No sense worrying, she told herself, forcing her eyes down to the street, stop thinking about things all the time. Looking down at the street for long made her dizzy and she stood up and went into the small bedroom of the apartment. She had made the bed before going out to breakfast, like any good housewife, but now she deliberately took it apart, stripping the blankets and sheets off one by one, and then she made it again, taking a long time over the corners and smoothing out every wrinkle. "*That's done,*" she said when she was through, and went back to the window. When she looked across the street the tune started again, window to window, sills dissolving and falling downward. She leaned forward and looked down at her own window, something she had never thought of before, down to the sill. It was partly eaten away; when she touched the stone a few crumbs rolled off and fell.

It was eleven o'clock; Brad was looking at blowtorches by now and would not be back before one, if even then. She thought of writing a letter home, but the impulse left her before she found paper and pen. Then it occurred to her that she might take a nap, a thing she had never done in the morning in her life, and she went in and lay down on the bed. Lying down, she felt the building shaking.

No sense worrying, she told herself again, as though it were a charm against witches, and got up and found her coat and hat and put them on. I'll just get some cigarettes and some letter paper, she thought, just run down to the corner. Panic caught her going down in the elevator; it went too fast, and when she stepped out in the lobby it was only the people standing around who kept her from running. As it was, she went quickly out of the building and into the street. For a minute she hesitated, wanting to go back. The cars were going past so rapidly, the people hurrying as always, but the panic of the elevator drove her on finally. She went to the corner, and, following the people flying along ahead, ran out into the street, to hear a horn almost overhead and a shout from behind her, and the noise of brakes. She ran blindly on and reached the other side where she stopped and looked around. The truck was going on its appointed way around the corner, the people going past on either side of her, parting to go around her where she stood.

No one even noticed me, she thought with reassurance, everyone who saw me has gone by long ago. She went into the drugstore ahead of her and asked the man for cigarettes; the apartment now seemed safer to her than the street – she could walk up the stairs. Coming out of the store and walking to

the corner, she kept as close to the buildings as possible, refusing to give way to the rightful traffic coming out of the doorways. On the corner she looked carefully at the light; it was green, but it looked as though it were going to change. Always safer to wait, she thought, don't want to walk into another truck.

People pushed past her and some were caught in the middle of the street when the light changed. One woman, more cowardly than the rest, turned and ran back to the curb, but the others stood in the middle of the street, leaning forward and then backward according to the traffic moving past them on both sides. One got to the farther curb in a brief break in the line of cars, the others were a fraction of a second too late and waited. Then the light changed again and as the cars slowed down Margaret put a foot on the street to go, but a taxi swinging wildly around her corner frightened her back and she stood on the curb again. By the time the taxi had gone the light was due to change again and she thought, I can wait once more, no sense getting caught out in the middle. A man beside her tapped his foot impatiently for the light to change back; two girls came past her and walked out into the street a few steps to wait, moving back a little when cars came too close, talking busily all the time. I ought to stay right with them, Margaret thought, but then they moved back against her and the light changed and the man next to her charged into the street and the two girls in front waited a minute and then moved slowly on, still talking, and Margaret started to follow and then decided to wait. A crowd of people formed around her suddenly; they had come off a bus and were crossing here, and she had a sudden feeling of being jammed in the center and forced out into the street when all of them moved as one with the light changing, and she elbowed her way desperately out of the crowd and went off to lean against a building and wait. It seemed to her that people passing were beginning to look at her. What do they think of me, she wondered, and stood up straight as though she were waiting for someone. She looked at her watch and frowned, and then thought, What a fool I must look like, no one here ever saw me before, they all go by too fast. She went back to the curb again but the green light was just changing to red and she thought, I'll go back to the drugstore and have a Coke,⁹ no sense going back to that apartment.

The man looked at her unsurprised in the drugstore and she sat and ordered a Coke but suddenly as she was drinking it the panic caught her again and she thought of the people who had been with her when she first started to cross the street, blocks away by now, having tried and made perhaps a dozen lights while she had hesitated at the first; people by now a

mile or so downtown, because they had been going steadily while she had been trying to gather her courage. She paid the man quickly, restrained an impulse to say that there was nothing wrong with the Coke, she just had to get back, that was all, and she hurried down to the corner again.

The minute the light changes, she told herself firmly; there's no sense. The light changed before she was ready and in the minute before she collected herself traffic turning the corner overwhelmed her and she shrank back against the curb. She looked longingly at the cigar store on the opposite corner, with her apartment house beyond; she wondered, How do people ever manage to get there, and knew that by wondering, by admitting a doubt, she was lost. The light changed and she looked at it with hatred, a dumb thing, turning back and forth, back and forth, with no purpose and no meaning. Looking to either side of her slyly, to see if anyone were watching, she stepped quietly backward, one step, two, until she was well away from the curb. Back in the drugstore again she waited for some sign of recognition from the clerk and saw none; he regarded her with the same apathy as he had the first time. He gestured without interest at the telephone; he doesn't care, she thought, it doesn't matter 13 him who I call.

She had no time to feel like a fool, because they answered the phone immediate and agreeably and found him right away. When he answered the phone, his voice funding surprised and matter-of-fact, she could only say miserably, "I'm in the drugstore on the corner. Come and get me." "What's the matter?" He was not anxious to come.

"Please come and get me," she said into the black mouthpiece that might or might not tell him, "please come and get me, Brad. *Please.* "

THE TASKS TO FULFIL:

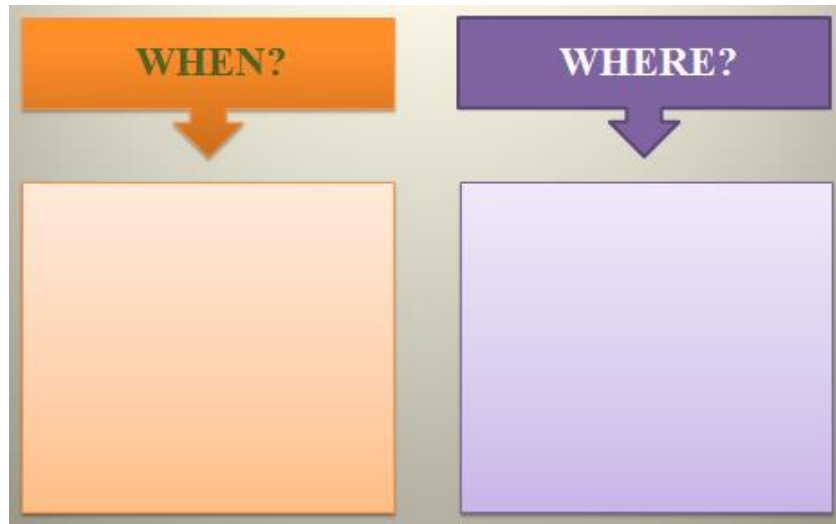
1. Provide brief information about the author, historical and cultural background of the story, that is closely related to your thoughts regarding content and stylistic qualities of the text under analysis.

Shirley Jackson: autobiographical notes	Historical conditions of the epoque	Cultural background of the story

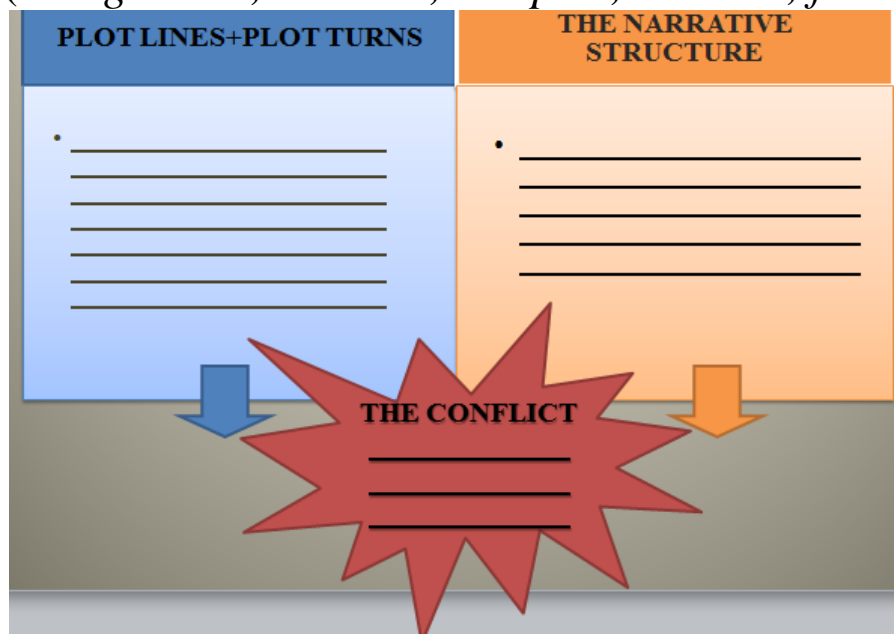
2. Outline the theme of the story in a compressed and exhaustive manner.
THE THEME of the story is _____

3. Identify the temporal and spatial settings of the story.

**THE ACTION OF THE STORY
TAKES PLACE**



4. Present the plot lines, plot turns and the conflict of the story in a concise form, focusing on the compositional parts (*exposition, beginning of the plot, plot complications, climax or culmination, denouement, conclusion or ending*) and the narrative structure (*straight-line, inverted, complex, circular, frame*).



5. What does the title of the story suggest? Dwell upon the allusion it contains. What image is conveyed by a pillar of salt? Define the type of implication it is.

THE TITLE of the story suggests _____

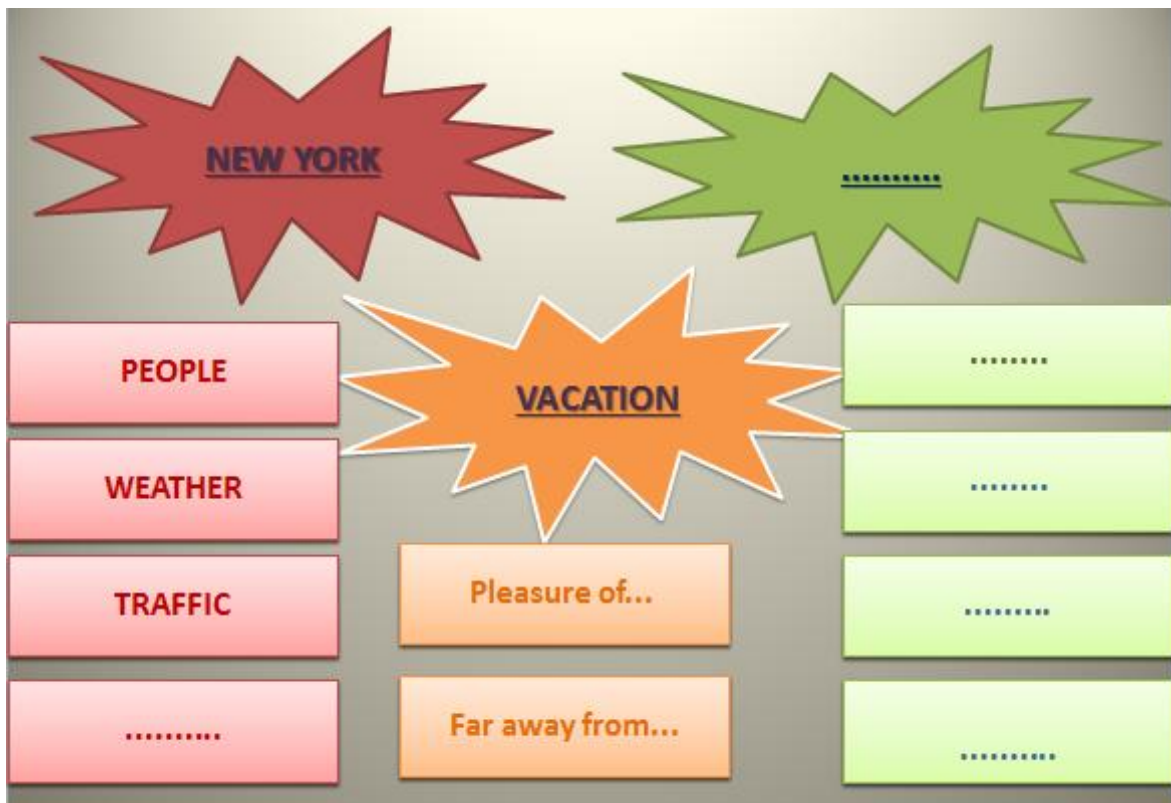
It is **THE ALLUSION** to _____



THE PILLAR OF SALT symbolizes _____

It is **THE IMPLICATION** of _____ type.

6. Identify the major concepts of the story. Trace the possible interrelations between them. To fulfil the task fill in the gaps in the conceptual framework of the story offered below.

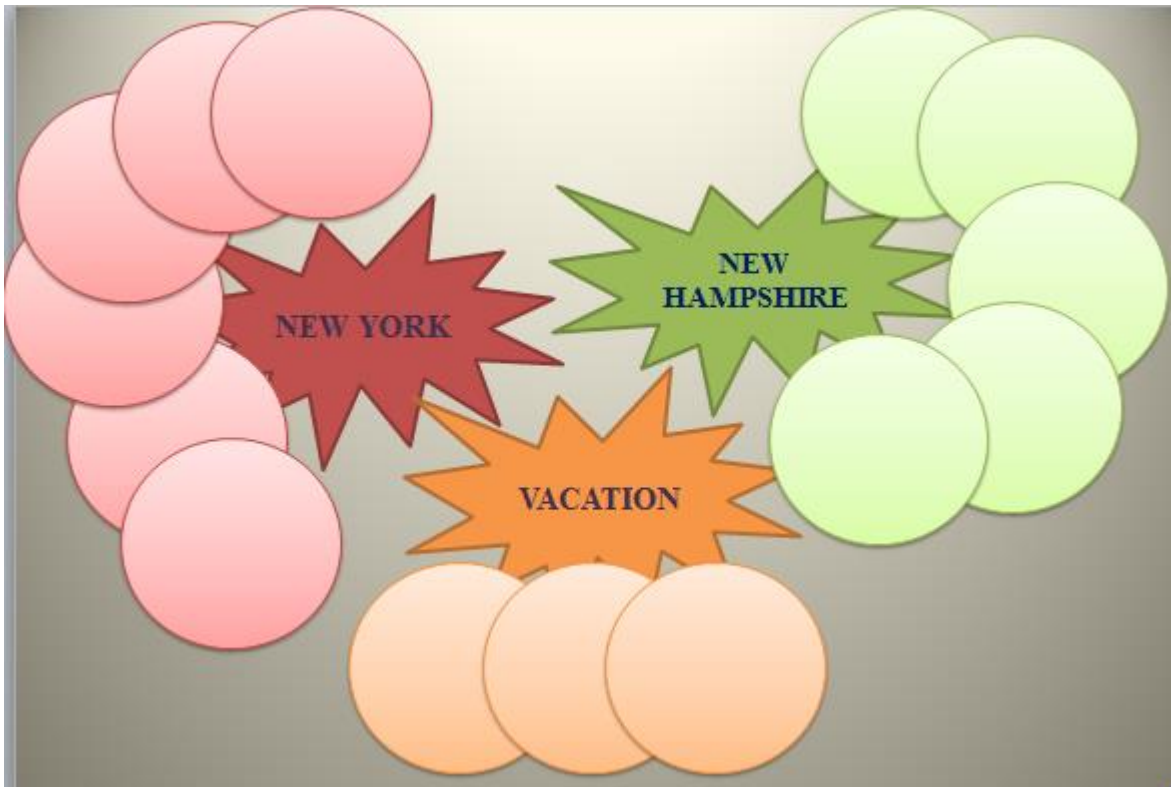


Search for different types of artistic details (*depicting, characterological, authenticity, implicit*) that represent the concepts in the story. What are the major lexical and stylistic means of their verbalization?

DEPICTING details	CHARACTERO- LOGICAL details	AUTHENTICITY details	IMPLICIT details

7. Identify the major emotions and emotive states the main character experiences. Correlate them with the concepts you've spotlighted.

THE EMOTIVE MAP OF THE STORY



To describe the emotions chronologically make use of the questions below:

- What was Margaret's initial feeling about her vacation trip to New York?
- Where did the feeling of insecurity first begin to take hold of her?
- What occurred during their visit to Long Island that increased Margaret's panic?
- Why did Margaret phone Brad to come and get her in the drugstore?



Pinpoint all the emotions you've identified on the diagramme.

8. Decipher four crucial images of the story.



DECAY	SPEED	FEAR	TUNE
<p>What are the signs of erosion and decay that M. perceives?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 	<p>In what way does the image of speed begin to disturb M.?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 	<p>Make the choronology of the events that lead to M.'s disabling fear of the city.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 	<p>What is the significance of the tune that keeps roaming through M.'s head?</p>
<p>Was the city literally eroding and crumbling to pieces around her?</p>			

9. Define the message of the story, which should be defined as a conclusion from the overall analysis of the text.

You should strive to expose the main problem(s) suggested by the author by means of various textual elements, especially those of the implicit layer.

One's attempt to derive the message from the text can be facilitated by the following techniques:

- You start interpretation by making a note of all possible ideas and associations that arise either during or after reading; this facilitates spontaneous revelations of the underlying meaning.
- You single out key words or phrases (recurrent or stylistically marked units) that either explicitly or implicitly refer to the main problems of the text.
- You study puzzling or ambiguous places that may contain important implications.



UNIT 4. IMAGE OF THE AUTHOR (Theoretical Basics)

Literature:

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14. Смуциньська І.В. Точка зору як модальний центр художнього твору // Вісник Київського національного ун-ту ім. Т.Г.Шевченка. – 2002. – Вип. 32-33. – С. 27-35.
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17. Топоров В.Н. Пространство и текст // Из работ московского семиотического круга. – М.: Мысль, 1997. – С. 472-473.
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BASIC NOTIONS

The **image of the author** (IOA) is the expression of the text essence that holds together the whole system of the characters' speech structures in their relation to that of the narrator (or the story-teller) and that is an ideological and stylistic focus of the resulting whole. The IOA is a cementing force uniting all stylistic means and devices into a comprehensive verbal structure, it is an internal core around which the whole stylistic system and imagery are grouped (V.V.Vinogradov).

Poetics and stylistics traditionally differentiate between the internal and external aspects of the category in question.

Internally, the IOA is revealed as a certain point of view, a position or a stand through which the writer's attitude to the subject matter is manifested.

Externally, the IOA becomes comprehensible through the language used in the text.

The speech structure finds its realization, first and foremost, in the author's speech what provides for the existence of a specific speech plane – that of the **narrator**.

The term “*narrate*” etymologically stems from the Indo-European verb *gnarus*, which means “*to know*”. This, of course, seems logical: in order to have something to tell, you must know something. What any narrative account entails for an audience is an assessment of its reliability.

Types of the *narrative perspective* (NP):

1. **omniscient, or unlimited NP** – the implied author distances himself from the narrated events, he is above the characters, he is free to switch from one episode to another, to transcend time and space, to establish cause and effect relations as he sees fit.

2. **limited, or concentrated NP** – suggests the description from the point of view of either the narrator identified in the text and having some

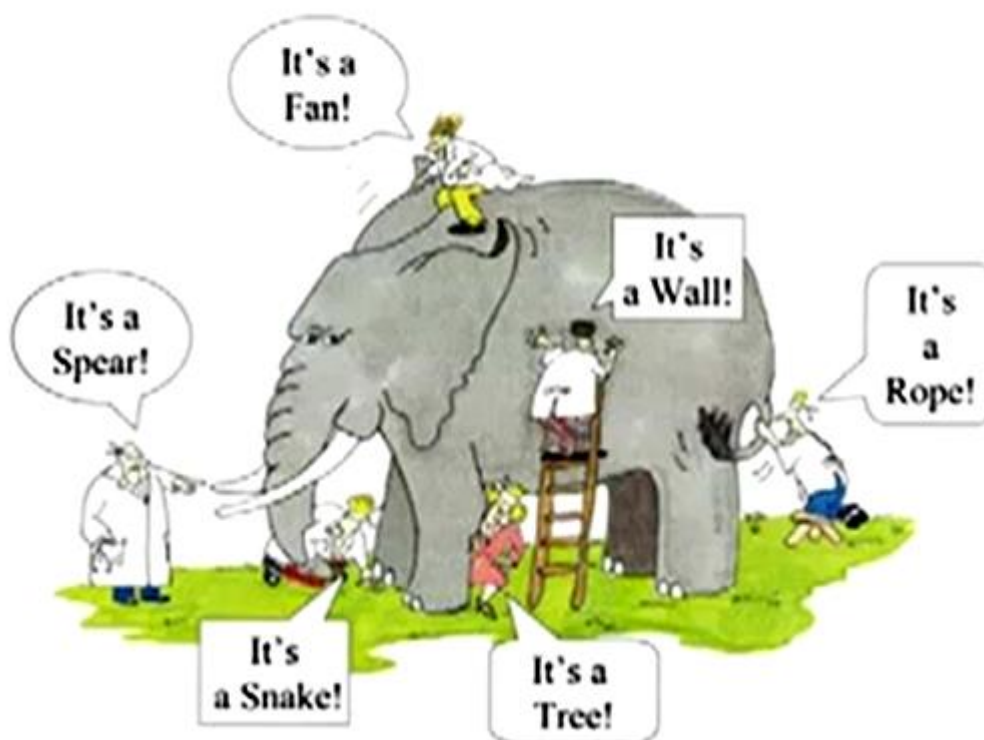
reference to the story or one of the characters who, at the same time, is the narrator.

*On the other hand, both Russian and foreign critics mention the so-called

– *constant NP*, or fixed focalization, tied to a single focalizer throughout the novel; and

– *variable, or changeable NP* (focalization), when it varies between two or more positions.

New Perspectives



Focalization is usually considered to have several facets to it, the main ones being *perceptual*, *psychological* and *ideological*.

1. **Perception** (sight, hearing, smell, etc.) is determined by two main coordinates, those of space and time. In literary works *conceptual time* and *space*, which embrace universal ideas based on physical laws and historical conventions, as well as *perceptual* or *emotive* (individually sensed) *time* and *space* are modeled in the form of fictional time and space.

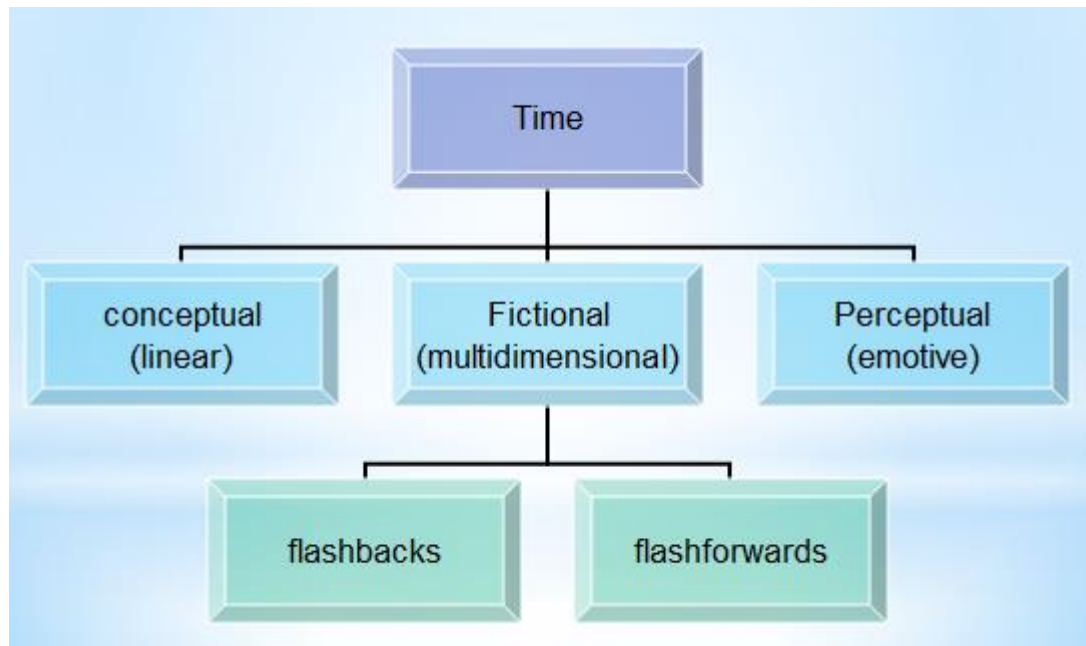
Fictional time includes at least four potentially quite different time frames:

1) author time: time when the author has originally created or published a literary text;

2) narrator time: time when the narrator in a work of fiction supposedly narrates the story;

3) plot time: time when the action depicted in the work supposedly takes place (in other words, the work's temporal setting);

4) reader (or audience) time: time when an actual reader reads the work.



The expression “**spatial point of view**” designates broadly the viewing position assumed by the narrator of a story. It concerns the “camera angle” adopted in a text, whether this be a *a bird's-eye view* of events or the restricted viewpoint of a single observer or that of *a limited observer*.

In the form of *a bird's-eye view* the focalizer is located at a point far above the object(s) of his perception. This is a classical position of a narrator-focalizer, yielding either a panoramic view or a simultaneous localization of things "happening" in different places.

In the form of *a limited observer* a panoramic view or simultaneous focalization is impossible because focalization is attached to a character or to an unpersonified position internal to the story.

*The suggested parallel with visual arts and particularly, filmic texts, is an important one; close-ups, long-shots and tracking shots all have linguistic counterparts in narrative fiction. Readers, like viewers, may be presented with objects, locations and characters in a host of different ways, ranging from the extreme close-up which

characterizes much *film noir* to the panoramic tracking movement characteristic of the *mise-en-scene* technique.

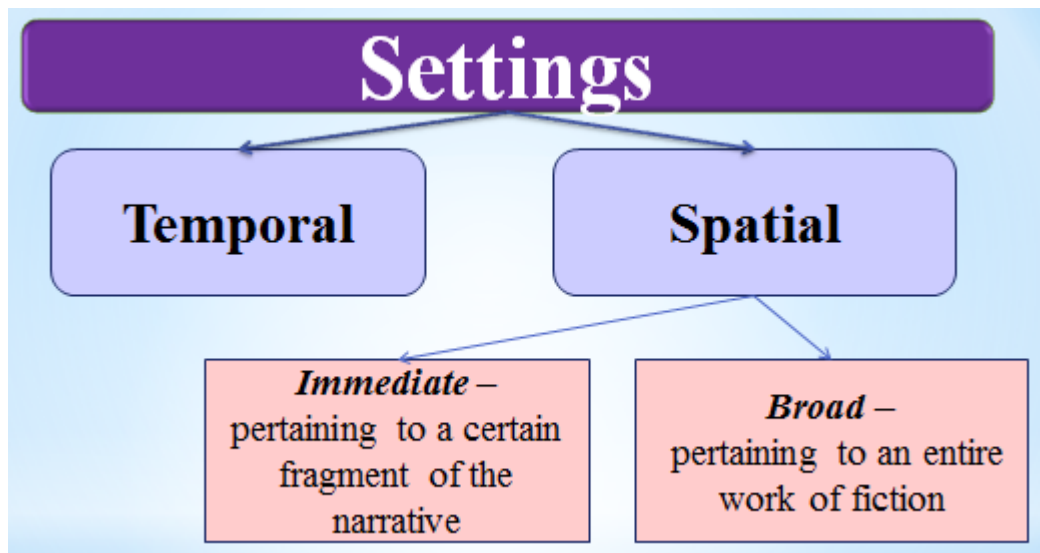
The expression “**temporal point of view**” refers to temporal dimension, and relates generally to the impression which a reader gains of events moving rapidly or slowly, in a continuous chain or isolated segments.

*Filmic texts and narrative texts share many features of temporal point of view, with their flashbacks, gaps in the progression of time, and the interweaving of other stories and incidents which break up the linear development of the main body of the narrative.

The most important linguistic component that serves as the technique writers employ in constructing spatio-temporal points of view is *the system of deixis*. Deixis may be characterized as those “orientational” features of language which function to locate utterances in relation to speakers’ viewpoints.

Spatial deixis is realized through terms which denote the relationship of objects to a speaker, or which signal how a speaker is situated in physical space.

Temporal deixis concerns the ways in which the time of the events referred to in an utterance interacts with the time of the utterance itself.



2. **Psychological** facet comprises the *cognitive* and *emotive orientation* of the focalizer towards the focalized.

In terms of **cognition**, the opposition between external and internal focalization becomes that between unrestricted and restricted knowledge. In principle, the external focalizer knows everything about the represented world. The knowledge of an internal focalizer is restricted by definition: being part of the represented world, he cannot know everything about it.

In its **emotive** transformation, the external/internal opposition yields "objective" (neutral, uninvolved) vs. "subjective" (colored, involved) focalization.

3. **Ideological** facet, often referred to as "norms of the text", consists of a "general system of viewing the world conceptually", in accordance with which the events and characters of the story are evaluated.

There are two criteria the classification of the narrator is based on: *the narrator's position in the story* and *the relationship between the narrator and the implied author*.

According to the narrator's position in the story, there are two types of the narrator:

I. The narrator is outside the story, outside the world of the characters, he does not participate in the story he narrates (*heterodiegetic* narrator);

II. The narrator is inside the story, he takes part in it, and at least in some manifestations of his self he is similar to other characters (*homodiegetic* narrator).

*Two subtypes can be found in this last case:

a) the narrator is in the centre of the story, i.e. he is one of its main characters or a protagonist;

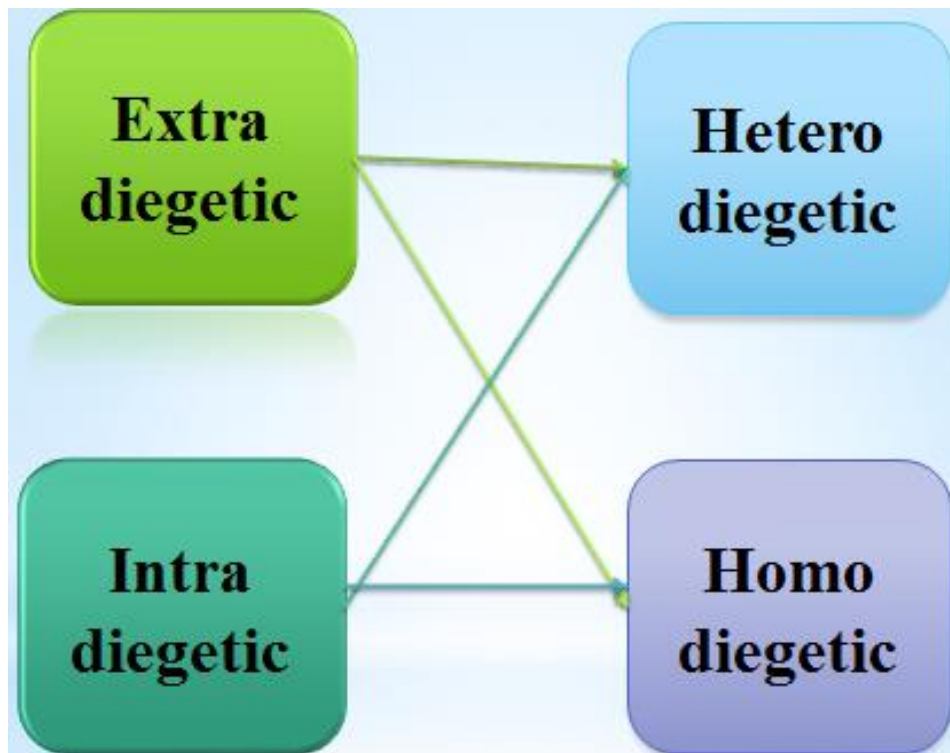
b) the narrator is on the periphery of the story, he is a witness rather than a character.

According to the relationship between the narrator and the implied author, there are two types of the narrator:

1. The narrator is not opposed to the author in certain essential characteristics of his ideological position (*extradiegetic* narrator).

2. The narrator is evidently different from the author, he is a fictitious figure, created by the author (*intradiegetic* narrator).

These two pairs of characteristics, when combined, yield four various types of narrator:



I.1. The narrator who is not opposed to the author and does not belong to the story (textual world) – authorial, omniscient, *extra-heterodiegetic*.

I.2. The narrator who is not opposed to the author but is inside the story, either in its centre or on the periphery – *extra-homodiegetic*.

II.1. The narrator who is opposed to the author and is outside the story – *intra-heterodiegetic*.

II.2. The narrator who is opposed to the author and is a fictitious storyteller inside the story, either (a) in its centre or (b) on its periphery – *intra-homodiegetic*.

Genette proposes a triadic system for the point of view or focalization. The three relevant **categories of focalization** are:

1. ***Zero focalization*** – the narrative with omniscient narrator, where the narrator says more than any of the characters know.
2. ***Internal focalization*** – the narrative with restricted field or restricted omniscience, only fully realized in narratives of interior monologue. Internal focalization may be *fixed* or *variable*.
3. ***External focalization*** – the narrative where the narrator says less than a character knows. External focalization thus yields

“objectivist” narratives, where access to the thoughts and feelings of characters is not provided.

The commitment to a particular mode of focalization need not be consistent over the whole length of a narrative.

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH WORK

1. Trace the ontogenesis of the notion of a narrative in M.Toolan’s interpretation. Focus on the key constituents highlighted in each of the definitions.

Dwell upon the typical characteristics of narratives.

1. *Narrative* is a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events. *Event* presupposes that there is some recognized state or set of conditions, and that something happens, causing a change to that state. *Non-random connectedness* means that a pure collage of described events, even given in sequence, does not count as a narrative. Non-random connection is a connectedness that is taken to be motivated and significant.

The importance of “change of state” has been celebrated in the more linguistic term *transformation*: the facts of narrative must be organized, they must have elements in common, but transformation represents precisely a synthesis of differences and resemblance, it links two facts without their being able to be identified.

2. *Narrative* is a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events, typically involving, as the experiencing agonist, humans or quasi-humans, or other sentient beings, from whose experience we humans can learn.

While a sequence of events entails some sort of change of state, a sequence containing a resolved *crises* or *problem* entails a pronounced change of state.

3. *Narrative* is a sequence of logically and chronologically related events, bound together by a recurrent focus on one or more individuals (characters) in whom the reader becomes interested (positively or negatively); is a kind of chronological sequence in which a period of turbulence, crisis or uncertainty is surpassed by a later stage of calm, solution or closure.

Typical characteristics of narratives:

1. Narrative is “worked upon”. Sequence, emphasis and pace are planned.
2. Narrative seem to have a trajectory. They usually go somewhere with some sort of development and even a resolution or conclusion provided. We expect them to have beginnings, middles and ends.
3. Narratives have to have a teller, and that teller, no matter how backgrounded or “invisible”, is always important.
4. Narratives are richly exploitative of that design feature of language called *displacement*, that is the ability of human language to be used to refer to things or events that are removed, in space or time, from either speaker or addressee.

(M.Toolan *Narrative. A critical Linguistic Introduction*)

2. Dwell upon three most influential approaches to the point of view on the psychological plane analysed in the work of P.Simpson Language, Ideology and Point of View. Fill in the table that follows.

Structuralist approach is characterized generally by its preoccupation with uncovering the abstract principles of the system of literary communication, its oppositions and contrasts and its underlying positions and possibilities. Structuralist poetics seeks to develop a “grammar” of literature in much the same way as linguistics seeks to develop a grammar of a particular language. The emphasis is not on explaining what individual works mean but on explaining “the system of figures and conventions that enable works to have the forms and meanings they do”. The best exemplum of where structuralist poetics and the analysis of point of view intersect, is G.Genette’s *Narrative Discourse* (1980). Genette bases his model on sets of constraints and oppositions. One key contrast, proposed at the outset, is that between *diegesis* and *narrative*. *Diegesis* is the actual story which a narrative relates, the sequence of “real” events organized in a linear chronological sequence. *Narrative*, by contrast, is the means by which the story is told, the actual text with all its linguistic idiosyncrasies. This diegetic/narrative distinction provides a locus upon which further structural contrasts are based. One of such contrasts concerns the position of the narrator relative to the story. According to Genette, there are two basic positions: that where a narrator is *outside* the story (*heterodiegetic*) and that where a narrator is a character *within* the story (*homodiegetic*).

Generative approach is suggested N.Chomsky and his followers who developed the transformational-generative (TG) model. Such “Chomskyan stylistics” is characterized by the detailed analysis of sets of sentences with a view to expounding a generative theory of narrative communication. Unlike the structuralist approach, which seeks to develop a grammar of narrative, the generative approach seeks to develop a grammar of the sentences which make up narratives. The former approach thus concentrates on the *macrostructures* of literary communication and the latter on its *microstructures*. Ann Banfield’s *Unspeakable sentences* (1982) reads very much like a manifesto for generative stylistics. Banfield goes on to identify two types of narrative sentences: *sentences of narration* and *sentences of represented speech and thought*. Both types of sentences are “unspeakable”. Sentences of narration cannot be spoken not only because they are cut adrift from tangible co-ordinates of space and time but also because they contain no “real” speaker and addressee. Sentences of represented speech and thought are comparable unspeakable, but in this case it is because subjects cannot report their speech and thought within this mode (e.g., you might arrange a meeting with someone with: *I’ll be in the pub this evening*. But never with: *He would be in the pub that evening*).

Interpersonal approach shares both the structuralist concern with the macro-units of narrative and the generative interest in the sentence-level representation of point of view. What sets it apart is the way in which it attempts to isolate the linguistic features which create a text’s “personality”. Two central analyses of narrative within the interpersonal framework are Uspensky and Fowler. In common with the scholars working within the structuralist model, Fowler proposes an initial distinction between *internal* and *external* narratorial viewpoints. Internal narrative is mediated through the subjective viewpoint of a particular character’s consciousness, whilst in an external narrative events are described *outside* the consciousness of any participating character.

(P.Simpson *Language, Ideology and Point of View*)

The approaches to the point of view theory by P.Simpson

Approach	Representatives	Focus of investigation	Key notions	Spheres of application
STRUCTURALIST				
GENERATIVE				
INTERPERSONAL				

3. Read the excerpt about a viewpoint in a literary text interpretation from M.Turner's story Literary Mind. What is a crucial point a critical reader is to understand before starting interpreting a literary text?

A person has a single life, by which I mean not that we live only once, true as that is, but that a human being – a mind in a brain in a body – leads a singular rather than a general existence. A God's-eye view is a general view – it can belong only to a being whose existence is without limit or locale. Since God's eye is everywhere, eternal, and all-seeing, it is undifferentiated. To the eye of God, there would not be alternative ways of seeing, but only seeing pure and absolute and permanent. A human being does not have a God's-eye view. A human being has always only a single view, which is always local.

It is astonishing that we forget so easily that we have only a single, local view. What we see of an event may look entirely unlike what a person on the other side of the event may see or entirely unlike what we ourselves actually do see when we walk to the other side, but we imagine that these views from either side are nonetheless views of the *same* story, despite the manifest differences in perceptions. This is evidence of our considerable mental capacity to integrate fragmentary information, to blend it into one mental construction.

(M. Turner *Literary Mind*)

4. Dwell upon W. Labov's considerations about the large-scale, external mechanisms of narrative evaluation. Supply examples from any literary works you've read to the descriptions of each type of evaluation offered.

There are a great many ways in which the point of a narrative can be conveyed – in which the speaker signals to the listener why he is telling it. To identify the evaluative portion of a narrative, it is necessary to know why this narrative – or any narrative – is felt to be tellable; in other words, why the events of the narrative are *reportable*. There are some of the large-scale, external mechanisms of evaluation.

External evaluation – the narrator can stop the narrative, turn to the listener, and tell him what the point is. This is a common trait of middle-class narrators, who frequently interrupt the course of their narrative. The narratives themselves may serve only as a framework for the evaluation.

Embedding evaluation – the first step in embedding the evaluation into the narration, and preserving dramatic continuity, is for the narrator to quote the sentiment as something occurring to him at the moment rather than addressing it to the listener outside the narrative. A second step toward embedding evaluation is for the narrator to quote himself as addressing someone else.

Evaluative action – a further step in dramatizing the evaluation of a narrative is to tell what people *did* rather than what they said.

Evaluation by suspension of the action – the emotions that are expressed may have been instantaneous or simultaneous with the action at the time, but when they are expressed in separate sentences, the action stops. Stopping the action calls attention to that part of the narrative and indicates to the listener that this has some connection with the evaluative point. When

this is done artfully, the listener's attention is also suspended, and the resolution comes with much greater force.

(W.Labov *Language in the Inner City*)

5. Read the excerpt from the article of B.Petterson *The Many Faces of Unreliable Narration: A Cognitive Narratological Presentation*. In what senses, to your mind, could a fictional narrative be considered reliable or unreliable? Do you think that unreliability can simply be measured against a narrow mimetic or realistic view of literature? Support your point of view with examples.

All narratives are assessed on a scale from empirical to fantastic and all speakers or writers are deemed reliable or unreliable in a number of senses (dependant on the speaker's or writer's age, knowledge, mental constitution, likelihood to deceive; prejudiced people might include parameters such as gender, nationality, race, etc).

In fiction we could differentiate between various scales of (more or less absolute) unreliability to (more or less absolute) reliability. Even the most obviously omniscient and reliable narrators we might find that they make unintentional mistakes in observation (for instance, owing to their author's poor knowledge of, say, topography or botany) and moral faltering in judgment (for instance, owing to their author's prejudice). Thus, the first question to be asked is not whether a fictional narrative is unreliable or not, but *in what senses* it could be considered reliable and unreliable, respectively*. Fantastic narratives often include a good deal of realistic features against the backdrop of which the fantastic features (such as wizards, aliens or unicorns) occur. If the fictional world portrayed is radically discontinuous with the one readers are familiar with, often at least some aspects in the depiction of the behaviour of the characters (whether human or not) draw on human behaviour. [...]

*There is a typology of six kinds of unreliability: misreporting / underreporting, misreading / underreading, misregarding / underregarding. However, it is not entirely clear how the two former are to be distinguished, since misreporting supposedly involves "the axis of characters, facts, and events" and misreading "the axis of knowledge/perception" (as if knowledge and perception were not elemental in viewing characters, facts and events), and in fact misreporting almost always occurs with misreading or misevaluating. Thus, fallibility and untrustworthiness may suffice as central

types – possibly with the specification of *over-*, *mis-*, *under-* categories. Moreover, what makes any typology insufficient for critical praxis is the fact that in fiction the blends are often what makes unreliable narration so intriguing, no the typologically clear-cut cases.

(*B.Petterson The Many Faces of Unreliable Narration:
A Cognitive Narratological Presentation*)

6. Read the excerpt from the article of A.Drozdownicz *Modes of Comprehending Space*. Supply the types of space offered with the examples from any literary texts you've read. Having taken into account the information suggested, work out your own definition of space.

There exist different types of space: *source*, *natural*, *abstract*, *conceptual*, *mythical*, which constitute the necessary stages of transcendence for the subject to gain individuality and the conscious attitude to itself and the world. All types of space, however, hinge on the primary (source) one.

They differ as far as the degree of articulation is concerned as well as the amount of the subjective input on the intentional body. Even natural space is not freely created as it is not only the space of possible body activities. It composes with existential characters – our fears or things that our lives depend on. Feeling and thought tint even the most basic experience of space.

Different types of space penetrate each other and overlap. Even though natural space is viewed as the most basic frame of orientation, full of tensions and directions, it can, nevertheless, be filled with anthropological spaces: myths, hallucinations, private obsessions and the world of culture. The structures of natural space and its correlate – the natural world – are constitutive of each superimposed space. The world reaches us even in our dreams as we dream in and about the world. Finally, it must be noted that different spaces can symbolize each other (the movement up and down can symbolize the movements of our desires), expressing, nevertheless, the same openness of our existence.

(*A.Drozdownicz Modes of Comprehending Space*)



IMAGE OF THE AUTHOR (Practical Assignment)

1. *In the excerpts that follow define the narrative perspective and the type of narrator.*

1. Hurstwood was in his best form, as usual. He hadn't heard that Droet was out of town. He was but slightly affected by the intelligence, and devoted himself to the more general topics which would interest Carrie. It was surprising – the ease with which he conducted a conversation. He was like every man who has had the advantage of practice and knows he has sympathy. He knew that Carrie listened to him pleurably, and, without the least effort, he fell into a train of observation which absorbed her fancy. He drew up his chair and modulated his voice to such a degree that what he said seemed wholly confidential. He confined himself almost exclusively to his observation of men and pleasures. He had been here and there, he had seen this and that. Somehow he made Carrie wish to see similar things, and all the while kept her aware of himself. She could not shut out the consciousness of his individuality and presence for a moment. He would raise his eyes slowly in smiling emphasis of something, and she was fixed by their magnetism. He would draw out, with the easiest grace, her approval. [...] At least, she brightened under his influence until all her best side was exhibited. She felt that she was more clever with him than with others. At least, he seemed to find so much in her to applaud. There was not the slightest touch of patronage. Droet was full of it.

(Th. Dreiser *Sister Carrie*)

2. Most of the time I worked. In the early morning the sun threw my shadow westward as I hurried down the white chasms of lower New York to the Probitry Trust. I knew the other clerks and young bond-salesmen by their first names, and lunched with them in dark, crowded restaurants on little pig sausages and mashed potatoes and coffee. I even had a short affair with a girl who lived in Jersey City and worked in the accounting department, but her brother began throwing mean looks in my direction, so when she went on her vacation in July I let it blow quietly away.

I took dinner usually at the Yale Club – for some reason it was the gloomiest event of my day – and then I went upstairs to the library and

studied investments and securities for a conscientious hour. There were generally a few rioters around, but they never came into the library, so it was a good place to work. After that, if the night was mellow, I strolled down Madison Avenue past the old Murray Hill Hotel, and over 33-rd Street to the Pennsylvania Station.

I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night, and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye. I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter into their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove. Sometimes, in my mind, I followed them to their apartments on the corners of hidden streets, and they turned and smiled back at me before they faded through a door into warm darkness. At the enchanted metropolitan twilight I felt a haunting loneliness sometimes, and felt it in others – poor young clerks who loitered in front of windows waiting until it was time for a solitary restaurant dinner – young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life.

Again at eight o'clock, when the dark lanes of the Forties were lined live deep with throbbing taxicabs, bound for the theatre district, I felt a sinking in my heart. Forms leaned together in the taxis as they waited, and voices sang, and there was laughter from unheard jokes, and lighted cigarettes made unintelligible circles inside. Imagining that I, too, was hurrying toward gaiety and sharing their intimate excitement, I wished them well.

(F.S. Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby*)

3. Once upon a time, a very long time ago, about last Friday, Winnie-the-Pooh lived in the forest all by himself under the name of Sanders.

("What does 'under the name' mean?" asked Christopher Robin.

"It means he had the name over the door in gold letters, and lived under it."

"Winnie-the-Pooh wasn't quite sure," said Christopher Robin.

"Now I am," said a growly voice.

"Then I will go on," said I.)

One day when he was out walking, he came to an open place in the middle of the forest, and in the middle of this place was a large oak-tree, and, from the top of the tree, there came a loud buzzing-noise.

(A.Miln *Winnie-the-Pooh*)

4. That night at the hotel, in our room with the long empty hall outside and our shoes outside the door, a thick carpet on the floor of the room, outside the windows the rain falling and in the room light and pleasant and cheerful, then the light out and it exciting with smooth sheets and the bed comfortable, feeling that we had come home, feeling no longer alone, waking in the night to find the other one there, and not gone away; all other things were unreal. We slept when we were tired and if we woke the other one woke too so one was not alone. Often a man wishes to be alone and a girl wishes to be alone too and if they love each other they are jealous of that in each other, but I can truly say we never felt that. We could feel alone when we were together, alone against the others. It has only happened to me like that once. I have been alone while I was with many girls and that is the way that you can be most lonely. But we were never lonely and never afraid when we were together. I know that the night is not the same as the day: that all things are different, that the things of the night cannot be explained in the day, because they do not exist, and the night can be a dreadful time for lonely people once their loneliness has started. But with Catherine there was almost no difference in the night except that it was an even better time. If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry.

I remember waking in the morning. Catherine was asleep and the sunlight was coming in through the window. The rain had stopped and I stepped out of bed and across the floor to the window. Down below were the gardens, bare now but beautifully regular, the gravel paths, the trees, the stone wall by the lake and the lake in the sunlight with the mountains beyond. I stood at the window looking out and when I turned away I saw Catherine was awake and watching me.

(E.Hemingway *Farewell to Arms*)

5. If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. In the first place that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two hemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them. They're quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father. They're nice and all – I'm not saying that – but they're also touchy as hell. Besides, I'm not going to tell you my whole goddam

autobiography or anything. I'll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas just before I got pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy. I mean that's all I told D.B. about, and he's my brother and all.

(J.Salindger *The Catcher in the Rye*)

6. This hobbit was a very well-to-do hobbit, and his name was Baggins. The Bagginses had lived in the neighbourhood of The Hill for time out of mind, and people considered them very respectable, not only because most of them were rich, but also because they never had any adventures or did anything unexpected: you could tell what a Baggins would say on any question without the bother of asking him. This is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure, found himself doing and saying things altogether unexpected. He may have lost the neighbours' respect, but he gained-well, you will see whether he gained anything in the end.

The mother of our particular hobbit ... what is a hobbit? I suppose hobbits need some description nowadays, since they have become rare and shy of the Big People, as they call us. They are (or were) a little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded Dwarves. Hobbits have no beards. There is little or no magic about them, except the ordinary everyday sort which helps them to disappear quietly and quickly when large stupid folk like you and me come blundering along, making a noise like elephants which they can hear a mile off. They are inclined to be at in the stomach; they dress in bright colours (chiefly green and yellow); wear no shoes, because their feet grow natural leathery soles and thick warm brown hair like the stuff on their heads (which is curly); have long clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and laugh deep fruity laughs (especially after dinner, which they have twice a day when they can get it). Now you know enough to go on with. As I was saying, the mother of this hobbit – of Bilbo Baggins, that is – was the fabulous Belladonna Took, one of the three remarkable daughters of the Old Took, head of the hobbits who lived across The Water, the small river that ran at the foot of The Hill. It was often said (in other families) that long ago one of the Took ancestors must have taken a fairy wife. That was, of course, absurd, but certainly there was still something not entirely hobbit-like about them, – and once in a while members of the Took-clan would go and have adventures. They discreetly disappeared, and the family hushed it up; but the fact remained that the Tooks were not as respectable as the Bagginses, though they were

undoubtedly richer. Not that Belladonna Took ever had any adventures after she became Mrs. Bungo Baggins. Bungo, that was Bilbo's father, built the most luxurious hobbit-hole for her (and partly with her money) that was to be found either under The Hill or over The Hill or across The Water, and there they remained to the end of their days. Still it is probable that Bilbo, her only son, although he looked and behaved exactly like a second edition of his solid and comfortable father, got something a bit queer in his makeup from the Took side, something that only waited for a chance to come out. The chance never arrived, until Bilbo Baggins was grown up, being about fifty years old or so, and living in the beautiful hobbit-hole built by his father, which I have just described for you, until he had in fact apparently settled down immovably.

(J.R.R. Tolkien *The Hobbit*)

7. I went to my first support group two years ago, after I'd gone to my doctor about my insomnia, again. Three weeks and I hadn't slept. Three weeks without sleep, and everything becomes an out-of-body experience. My doctor said, "Insomnia is just the symptom of something larger. Find out what's actually wrong. Listen to your body." I just wanted to sleep. I wanted little blue Amytal Sodium capsules, 200 milligram-sized. I wanted red-and-blue Tuinal bullet capsules, lipstick-red Seconals. My doctor told me to chew valerian root and get more exercise. Eventually I'd fall asleep. The bruised, old fruit way my face had collapsed, you would've thought I was dead. My doctor said, if I wanted to see real pain, I should swing by First Eucharist on a Tuesday night. See the brain parasites. See the degenerative bone diseases. The organic brain dysfunctions. See the cancer patients getting by. So I went.

The first group I went to, there were introductions: this is Alice, this is Brenda, this is Dover. Everyone smiles with that invisible gun to their head. I never give my real name at support groups. The little skeleton of a woman named Chloe with the seat of her pants hanging down sad and empty, Chloe tells me the worst thing about her brain parasites was no one would have sex with her. Here she was, so close to death that her life insurance policy had paid off with seventy-five thousand bucks, and all Chloe wanted was to get laid for the last time. Not intimacy, sex. What does a guy say? What can you say, I mean. [...] Chloe looking the way she is, I am nothing. Not even nothing. Still, Chloe's shoulder pokes mine when we sit around a circle on the shag carpet. We close our eyes. This was Chloe's turn to lead us in guided meditation, and she talked us into the garden of serenity. [...] Then it was time to hug. Open your eyes. This was therapeutic physical contact,

Chloe said. We should all choose a partner. Chloe threw herself around my head and cried. She had strapless underwear at home, and cried. Chloe had oils and handcuffs, and cried as I watched the second hand on my watch go around eleven times. So I didn't cry at my first support group, two years ago. I didn't cry at my second or my third support group, either. I didn't cry at blood parasites or bowel cancers or organic brain dementia. This is how it is with insomnia. Everything is so far away, a copy of a copy of a copy. The insomnia distance of everything, you can't touch anything and nothing can touch you.

(Ch.Palahniuk *Fight Club*)

2. In the short stories by M.Stainley Buben that follow, analyze the narrative method according to the scheme offered:

1. type of narrative: subjectivized (in the first person), objectivized (in the third person);

2. type of narrator: extra-heterodiegetic, extra-homodiegetic, intra-heterodiegetic, intra-homodiegetic;

3. type of narrative perspective (point of view): omniscient (unlimited) or limited (concentrated), constant or variable (changeable);

4. the author's point of view, the character's point of view, the onlooker's point of view;

5. form of presentation:

-the author's narrative: narration, expository speech (meditations), description (panoramic, general view, close-up);

-reported (represented or non-personal direct speech): inner (unuttered) or outer (uttered) speech;

-direct speech: conversation, monologue, dialogue.

How does the recreation of the image of the author add to defining of the message of the stories?

The Devil's Trap

The rain had been falling for weeks, and I along with my comrades in arms were bloody soaked – soaked in our trenches, soaked in our dugouts, we either slept in wet clothes or stood with boots full of water.

"Grin and bear it," our sergeant blurted as he slogged into our trench. To illustrate, he grabbed off a boot and, draining it into the mud, he cried,

"Aye! You see?" Which he followed with a belly laugh that rumbled like a Howitzer.

It was a most ludicrous sight, our sergeant, boot in hand with yellow water spilling forth, swaying as he made mockery of our situation. It was too much for the men – and myself as well. Pointing fingers or nudging our nearest mate, we let go a torrent of laughter that echoed the length of our trench.

This had to be more than poor old Fritz could take – his enemy across the field drenched in misery but guffawing as though sharing an ale with his pals down at the corner pub.

"What's this?" the sergeant squinted as he staggered to replace his boot.

Above the German parapet, a plank raised, upon which had been scrawled "The English are fools!"

The sergeant grunted, "not such bloody fools as all that!" and he waved myself and two others forward. We pressed our chests against slimy trench wall and, aiming over the top, we made quick work of smashing the sign to splinters with rifle fire.

"Jolly good! We've shown them!" the sergeant said too soon.

Another plank appeared, this time bearing the words "The French are fools!"

"Loyalty to our allies, men." And we destroyed this board as well.

"Bullocks," the sergeant said. He shook a bout of slime away and pointed across No-Man's Land. There rose yet another plank.

On instinct I fired, and these words I made out just as it disintegrated: "We're all fools! Let's all go home!"

The gunfire had silenced only moments before some of the men chuckled. They repeated the message and began talking amongst themselves.

"There's a deal of truth there. Why should this go on?" one said.

"The fighting men have no real quarrel with each other." another agreed.

And a rifleman who helped me extinguish the signs replied, "Bloody right! Let the old men who made this war come here and fight it out themselves."

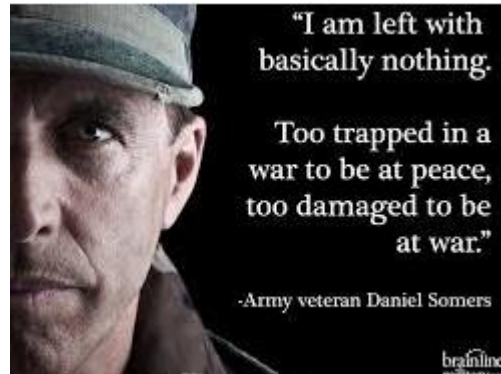
Nods of ascent spread, and mine was one of them.

"Bloody right!" the sergeant broke in. "But who will go home first?" He glanced about, looking each man in the eye. "Will it be us?" He raised his chin toward the Germans, "or Fritz there?"

The question struck the men dumbfounded. I, however, peered over the trench in hope that the Germans were actually making a retreat. But alas no.

I sank back down. We were, each side, caught by the same question – it was a trap, a devil's trap from which there was no escape.

The sergeant slapped me on the shoulder with a mucky hand. "Grin and bear it man," he said and marched away through the trench.



Come, Share

First I will speak of good times, then the bad, though, most certainly, they stand so closely together.

After my wedding, when my fiancé became my husband, we celebrated. I invited family and friends into my house, and in my joy I said, "Come, share with me!" And they danced in circles upon the living room floor, splashing champagne glasses together with songs for the occasion.

The twins were born later, son and daughter. My husband cradled them, one in each arm, and it lit my eyes like the sun. Family and friends visited. I waved them to my bedside, "Come, share in the miracle of life!" And the same light shown in their eyes as they gazed within the bassonettes.

Through the years, we celebrated more mundane milestones. We called it the "family room," and never did that seem more appropriate than the Christmas when my daughter cried in my voice, "come, share!" to the friends who had no family of their own on this blessed day. And, lest I forget, the Thanksgiving where the turkey barely fit into the oven, yet barely fed those we loved as they gathered at our table – certainly my son attending with a flock of football players did little to alleviate the situation!

Later, much later – yes, it took twenty-five years to learn why it was a "silver" anniversary. Shoulder to shoulder family and friends stood, as my husband and I grasped a single goblet, lifting it with the cry of "thank you for coming, thank you for sharing." And though beneath our covered porch, still the sun reflected off the aged heads of these loved ones, and their hair streaked with the color of that precious metal.

Oh, but in that time it all seemed to go to pieces. Not once, but so often – and we picked them up, those fragments we called our lives. Yet it is certainly the first that I remember. No, not the reason for the pain, and not the cause of the sorrow – that has slipped by-the-by. I recall, instead, the family, the friends, in their offer of aid. And I put my foot down. "Go! What happens under this roof, stays under this roof." Thus, I dismissed them, knowing my self-sufficiency in enduring a pain that was entirely my own.

Yet they did not heed, and did not go, instead coming closer still, all the while more entering from the threshold. Within the living room that had once been a dance floor, they stood still. In the family room that gave comfort to the lonely on Christmas, they gathered. Within the coolly silent kitchen, and upon the empty table, they leaned like weary travellers. And still more, undaunted by my dismissal, until family and friends brimmed into the bedroom, poured onto the patio.

"My house! My house!" I cried. "You cannot fit!"

But as a chorus, those whom I loved, still seeking entrance under my roof, replied to my painful time, "But you invited us."

And one-by-one, they offered embrace, like my husband had in cradling our children.



Aftershock

The door swung slowly inward, and I clung onto the jamb so tightly it made my knuckles pale. The room stared at me silently, but I felt it shake, a rumbling like thunder, everything crashing all around...

No! It was over! The earthquake had ended!

I took a deep breath, wrenching my hand free, and forced myself into the room. I wanted to step surely, solidly, as though that would bring stability back, but my shoes crunched upon the broken china strewn about the floor. I dodged my couch, spun from its normal perch, and came to the nightstand and lamp which lay on their sides.

Somehow, neither lay broken. I picked up the lamp. It still gave off a sparkling reflection from its cylindrical base, and I twisted it around and gazed into it like a crystal ball. The littered floor, the table and couch, my fallen bureau, the overturned desk and computer, pictures that'd slid from the wall – all this reflected at me in an image distorted by the lamp's shape.

And there, in the midst of this distortion, blurred into a single image with the disarray about the room, was my face, a warped figure staring, eyes unnaturally wide.

Something screamed from the corner, and I dropped the lamp and covered my ears.

Down, down, down it fell, as if in slow motion, and my reflection within the base seemed to reach out, arms groping futilely above its head to stop the fall.

The lamp hit the hardwood floor and shattered, spraying shards everywhere.

The scream came again.

I wanted to scream back, but was stopped by a sudden realization. "The phone!" I grunted, dropping my hands. I pushed my way into the kitchen. The reek coming from my overturned refrigerator nearly overwhelmed me, but I took short breaths, trying to inhale only through my mouth, and lifted the receiver.

"You okay?" my brother's voice asked calmly, a contrast to everything that surrounded me.

"I... I... think..." I began to answer.

"It's alright," he interrupted. "Maybe it's still too soon."

"No!" I blurted. "I can do this."

"Look, earthquakes are traumatic. And you had the worse of it."

"No!" I called again. "Damn it! I can handle this! It's been long enough."

My brother paused briefly, then said, "I know how you feel. I've been scared too. It can take time."

My grasp threatened to crush the phone and I cried, "Damn you! It's been three months, and I've never been – " I cut myself short.

Voice soothing, he said, "Okay. You decide what's best. You're welcome to keep staying with us – lucky my wife still likes you!" He laughed, and continued more solemnly, "It's up to you. But remember. There's no shame in this. You've been through a lot."

I nodded with the phone still to my cheek, and said, "Okay."

After I hung up, I glanced around. The light flashed off the lamp shards I'd recently added to the mess, reflecting tiny pieces of myself scattered about.

"No shame!" I cried shaking my head with my eyes closed.



hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall. Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir, in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmth, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. But then they always awoke to the tating drum, the endless shaking down of clear bead necklaces upon the roof, the walk, the gardens, the forests, and their dreams were gone. All day yesterday they had read in class about the sun. About how like a lemon it was, and how hot. And they had written small stories or essays or poems about it:

I think the sun is a flower, That blooms for just one hour.

That was Margot's poem, read in a quiet voice in the still classroom while the rain was falling outside.

"Aw, you didn't write that!" protested one of the boys.

"I did," said Margot. "I did."

"William!" said the teacher.

But that was yesterday. Now the rain was slackening, and the children were crushed in the great thick windows.

Where's teacher?"

"She'll be back."

"She'd better hurry, we'll miss it!"

They turned on themselves, like a feverish wheel, all tumbling spokes. Margot stood alone. She was a very frail girl who looked as if she had been lost in the rain for years and the rain had washed out the blue from her eyes and the red from her mouth and the yellow from her hair. She was an old photograph dusted from an album, whitened away, and if she spoke at all her voice would be a ghost. Now she stood, separate, staring at the rain and the loud wet world beyond the huge glass.

"What're you looking at?" said William.

Margot said nothing.

"Speak when you're spoken to."

He gave her a shove. But she did not move; rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else. They edged away from her, they would not look at her. She felt them go away. And this was because she would play no games with them in the

echoing tunnels of the underground city. If they tagged her and ran, she stood blinking after them and did not follow. When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the

drenched windows. And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she had come here only five years ago from Earth, and she remembered the sun and the way the sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they, they had been on Venus all their lives, and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out and had long since forgotten the color and heat of it and the way it really was.

But Margot remembered.

"It's like a penny," she said once, eyes closed.

"No it's not!" the children cried.

"It's like a fire," she said, "in the stove."

"You're lying, you don't remember !" cried the children.

But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that, dimly, dimly, she sensed it, she was different and they knew her difference and kept away. There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family. And so, the children hated her for all these reasons of big and little consequence. They hated her pale snow face, her waiting silence, her thinness, and her possible future.

"Get away !" The boy gave her another push. "What're you waiting for?"

Then, for the first time, she turned and looked at him. And what she was waiting for was in her eyes.

"Well, don't wait around here !" cried the boy savagely. "You won't see nothing!"

Her lips moved.

"Nothing !" he cried. "It was all a joke, wasn't it?" He turned to the other children.

"Nothing's happening today. Is it ?"

They all blinked at him and then, understanding, laughed and shook their heads.

"Nothing, nothing !"

"Oh, but," Margot whispered, her eyes helpless. "But this is the day, the scientists predict, they say, they know , the sun..."

"All a joke !" said the boy, and seized her roughly. "Hey, everyone, let's put her in a closet before the teacher comes !"

"No," said Margot, falling back.

They surged about her, caught her up and bore her, protesting, and then pleading, and then crying, back into a tunnel, a room, a closet, where they slammed and locked the door. They stood looking at the door and saw it tremble from her beating and throwing herself against it. They heard her muffled cries. Then, smiling, she turned and went out and back down the tunnel, just as the teacher arrived.

"Ready, children ?" She glanced at her watch.

"Yes !" said everyone.

"Are we all here ?"

"Yes !"

The rain slackened still more.

They crowded to the huge door.

The rain stopped.

It was as if, in the midst of a film concerning an avalanche, a tornado, a hurricane, a volcanic eruption, something had, first, gone wrong with the sound apparatus, thus muffling and finally cutting off all noise, all of the blasts and repercussions and thunders, and then, second, ripped the film from the projector and inserted in its place a beautiful tropical slide which did not move or tremor. The world ground to a standstill. The silence was so immense and unbelievable that you felt your ears had been stuffed or you had lost your hearing altogether. The children put their hands to their ears. They stood apart. The door slid back and the smell of the silent, waiting world came in to them.

The sun came out.

It was the color of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile color. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling into the springtime.

"Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them. "You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out !"

But they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the sun burn their arms.

"Oh, it's better than the sun lamps, isn't it ?"

"Much, much better !"

They stopped running and stood in the great jungle that covered Venus, that grew and never stopped growing, tumultuously, even as you watched it. It was a nest of octopi, clustering up great arms of fleshlike weed, wavering, flowering in this brief spring. It was the color of rubber and ash, this jungle,

from the many years without sun. It was the color of stones and white cheeses and ink, and it was the color of the moon. The children lay out, laughing, on the jungle mattress, and heard it sigh and squeak under them resilient and alive. They ran among the trees, they slipped and fell, they pushed each other, they played hide-and-seek and tag, but most of all they squinted at the sun until the tears ran down their faces; they put their hands up to that yellowness and that amazing blueness and they breathed of the fresh, fresh air and listened and listened to the silence which suspended them in a blessed sea of no sound and no motion. They looked at everything and savored everything. Then, wildly, like animals escaped from their caves, they ran and ran in shouting circles.

They ran for an hour and did not stop running.

And then -

In the midst of their running one of the girls wailed.

Everyone stopped.

The girl, standing in the open, held out her hand.

"Oh, look, look," she said, trembling.

They came slowly to look at her opened palm.

In the center of it, cupped and huge, was a single raindrop. She began to cry, looking at it. They glanced quietly at the sun.

"Oh. Oh."

A few cold drops fell on their noses and their cheeks and their mouths. The sun faded behind a stir of mist. A wind blew cold around them. They turned and started to walk back toward the underground house, their hands at their sides, their smiles vanishing away. A boom of thunder startled them and like leaves before a new hurricane, they tumbled upon each other and ran. Lightning struck ten miles away, five miles away, a mile, a half mile. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.

They stood in the doorway of the underground for a moment until it was raining hard. Then they closed the door and heard the gigantic sound of the rain falling in tons and avalanches, everywhere and forever.

"Will it be seven more years ?"

"Yes. Seven."

Then one of them gave a little cry.

"Margot !"

"What ?"

"She's still in the closet where we locked her."

"Margot."

They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor.

They looked at each other and then looked away. They glanced out at the world that was raining now and raining and raining steadily. They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale.

They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down.

"Margot."

One of the girls said, "Well... ?"

No one moved.

"Go on," whispered the girl.

They walked slowly down the hall in the sound of cold rain. They turned through the doorway to the room in the sound of the storm and thunder, lightning on their faces, blue and terrible. They walked over to the closet door slowly and stood by it.

Behind the closet door was only silence.

They unlocked the door, even more slowly, and let Margot out.

THE TASKS TO FULFIL:

1. Provide brief information about the author, historical and cultural background of the story, that is closely related to your thoughts regarding content and stylistic qualities of the text under analysis.

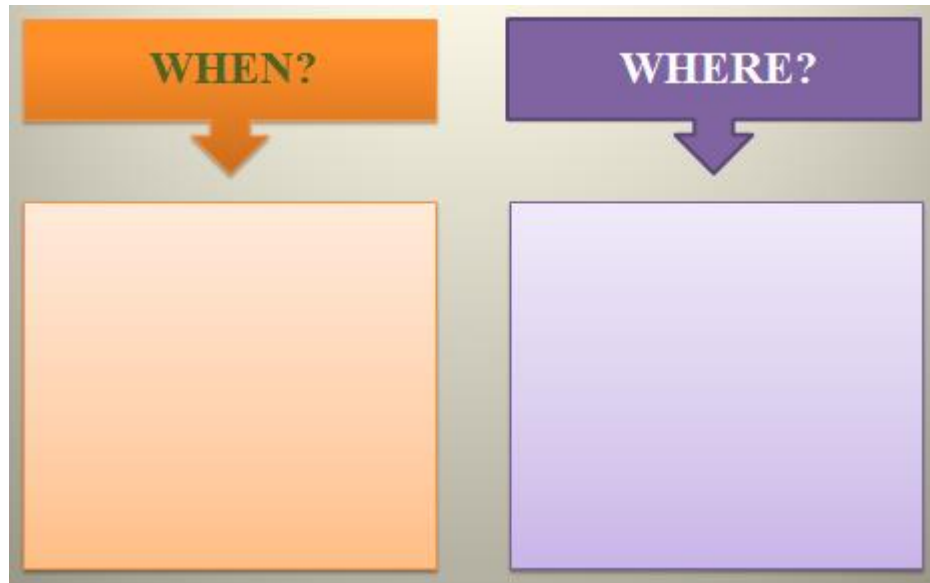
Ray Bradbury: autobiographical notes	Historical conditions of the epoque	Cultural background of the story

2. Outline the theme of the story in a compressed and exhaustive manner.

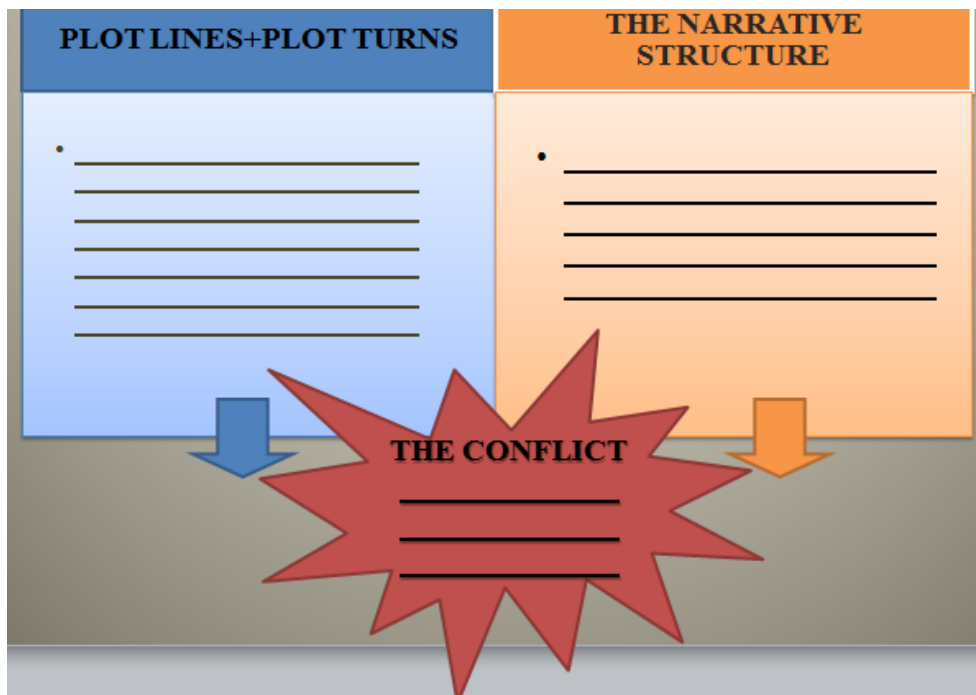
THE THEME of the story is _____

3. Identify the temporal and spatial settings of the story.

THE ACTION OF THE STORY TAKES PLACE



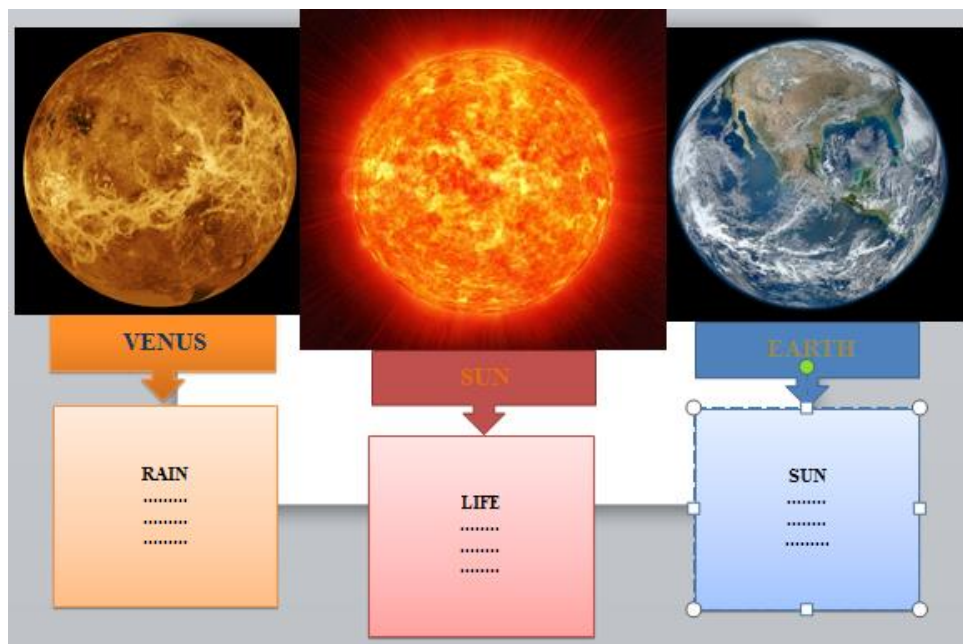
4. Present the plot lines, plot turns and the conflict of the story in a concise form, focusing on the compositional parts (*exposition, beginning of the plot, plot complications, climax or culmination, denouement, conclusion or ending*) and the narrative structure (*straight-line, inverted, complex, circular, frame*).



5. What does the title of the story suggest? Dwell upon the implication it contains. Define the type of implication it is.

THE TITLE of the story suggests _____

6. Work out the conceptual framework of the story that might be built round the following key planet concepts:

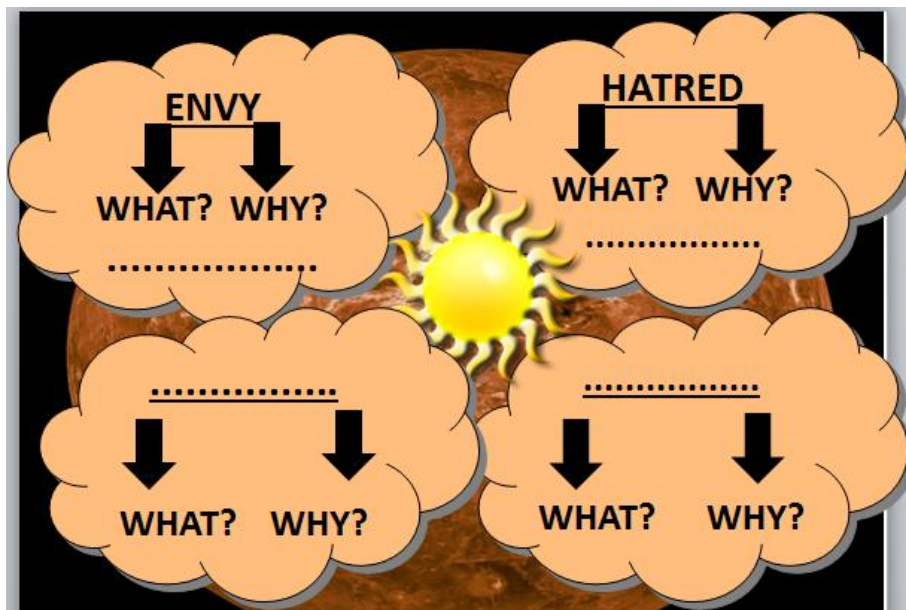


Provide the full list of descriptive, characterological, authenticity and implicit details that represent the concepts in the story.


PLANET	DESCRIP-TIVE details	CHARACTERO-LOGICAL details	AUTHEN-TICITY details	IMPLICIT details
VENUS				
SUN				

EARTH				
--------------	--	--	--	--

7. Draw the emotive map of the story, focusing on the major emotions described and the factors that account for them. How does it add to your understanding of the message of the story?



8. Draw the sensory map of the story, searching it for the things you can SEE, HEAR, SMELL, FEEL, TASTE. Highlight the different types of artistic details that actualize all the sensations you have depicted. What is the effect such descriptions produce in the story?

SENSATION	THE THINGS	ARTISTIC DETAILS
	colours	

SENSATION	THE THINGS	ARTISTIC DETAILS
	<p>the sound of rain</p>	
	<p>the fresh air</p>	
	<p>the sun on the cheeks</p>	
	<p>everything touched by the sun</p>	

9. In the story analyze the narrative method according to the scheme offered:

1. **TYPE OF NARRATIVE:** subjectivized (in the first person), objectivized (in the third person);

The narrative offered is _____
because _____.

2. **TYPE OF NARRATOR:** extra-heterodiegetic, extra-homodiegetic, intra-heterodiegetic, intra-homodiegetic;

The type of the narrator is _____

because _____

what means _____

3. **TYPE OF NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE (point of view):** omniscient (unlimited) or limited (concentrated), constant or variable (changeable);

The narrative perspective is _____

because _____

thus, time and space are represented _____

the knowledge of the narrator about the events narrated is _____

the emotions and feeling are sure to be _____

4. The author's point of view, the character's point of view, the onlooker's point of view;

In the story _____

is/are represented as _____

5. **FORM OF PRESENTATION:**

-the author's narrative: narration, expository speech (meditations), description (panoramic, general view, close-up);

-reported (represented or non-personal direct speech): inner (unuttered) or outer (uttered) speech;

-direct speech: conversation, monologue, dialogue.

In the story

the author's narrative is represented in the form of _____

reported speech is offered in the form of _____

direct speech is represented by _____

How does the recreation of the image of the author add to defining of the message of the story?

10. Define the message of the story as a conclusion from the overall analysis of the text.

You should strive to expose the main problem(s) suggested by the author by means of various textual elements, especially those of the implicit layer.

One's attempt to derive the message from the text can be facilitated by the following techniques:

- You start interpretation by making a note of all possible ideas and associations that arise either during or after reading; this facilitates spontaneous revelations of the underlying meaning.
- You single out key words or phrases (recurrent or stylistically marked units) that either explicitly or implicitly refer to the main problems of the text.
- You study puzzling or ambiguous places that may contain important implications.



UNIT 5. IMAGE OF THE CHARACTER (Theoretical Basics)

Literature:

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BASIC NOTIONS

A **character** is an actant that is identified by a set of features/properties, a proper name and is distinguished by the structure and semantic content of the language and thoughts that are assigned to it.

The classification of characters is based on three continua, or axes: **complexity**, **development** and **penetration into the "inner life"**.

The *axis of complexity*: characters vary from those constructed around one dominant trait (flat) to complex, comprising a set of features (round).

The *axis of development*: characters vary from static to fully developed ones (dynamic).

The *axis of penetration into the "inner life"* ranges from characters whose consciousness is presented from within, to those, seen only from the outside, their minds remaining opaque.

Distinctions between round and flat characters	
Flat characters	Round characters
<u>Simple and uniform:</u>	<u>Complex and manifold:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only one or two traits • characteristics can be summed up in a sentence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numerous traits • characteristics need elaborate description
<u>Stable:</u>	<u>Changable:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undeveloping • closed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing • open ended
<u>More distant from actual human beings:</u>	<u>Closer to actual human beings:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stereotypical • harder to sympathize with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not easily analyzable according to rigid formulation or preconceived notions • easier to sympathize with
<u>Their actions are:</u>	<u>Their actions are:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determinate • logically consistent with what was given earlier • not surprising to readers most of the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficult to determine in advance • not always logically consistent with what was given earlier • surprising to readers some of the time

Characterization is ascribing information to an agent in the text so as to provide a character in the storyworld with a certain property or properties, a process often referred to as ascribing a property to a character.

Until recently, characterization was understood as the text ascribing psychological or social traits to a character, but in fact texts ascribe all manner of properties to characters, including physiological and locative (space-time location) properties.

The crucial issue in the process of characterization is thus what information, especially of a psychological nature, a reader is able to associate

with any character as a member of the storyworld and where this information comes from. There are at least **three sources of such information**:

- textually explicit ascription of properties to a character;
- inferences that can be drawn from textual clues (e.g. “*she smiled nervously*”);
- inferences based on information which is not associated with the character by the text itself but through reference to historically and culturally variable real-world conventions (e.g. *the appearance of a room reveals something about the person living there or the weather expresses the feelings of the protagonist*).

Basic methods of characterization:

1. Direct definition: the personality is grasped as a combination of qualities shared by many people and represented in a story directly.

2. Indirect presentation: a trait of a character rather than being mentioned is displayed and exemplified in various ways through his/her a) **action**, b) **speech**, c) **external appearance**, d) **environment** or e) is **reinforced by the analogy**.

a) A trait may be implied both by **one-time** (or non-routine) **actions**, and by **habitual** ones. One-time actions tend to evoke the dynamic aspect of the character. By contrast, habitual actions tend to reveal the character’s unchanging or static aspect. Both one-time and habitual actions can belong to one of the following categories: **act of commission** (something performed by the character), **act of omission** (something which the character should but does not do), and **contemplated act** (an unrealized plan or intention of the character).

*Conflict creates the story, generating the plot and bringing characterisation into focus through actions. Conflict usually takes three forms, all of which can be present in a given story:

1. **person VS. person:** a direct, often physical conflict between two or more persons, usually the protagonist and the antagonist;

2. **person VS. environment:** conflict between a person (usually the protagonist) and the surroundings, often the sea, a storm or a war;

3. **person VS. self:** psychological conflict between a person (usually the protagonist) and his or her own nature, psyche, attitude, conscience, etc.

b) A character's **speech**, whether in conversation or as a silent activity of the mind, can be indicative of a trait or traits both through its content and through its form. The form or style of speech is a common means of characterization in texts where the character's language is individuated and distinguished from that of the narrator. Style may be indicative of origin, dwelling place, social class, or profession.

c) **External appearance** is used to imply the metonymic relation between external appearance and character-traits. One should distinguish between those external features that are grasped as *beyond the character's control*, such as height, color of eyes, length of nose, and those which at least partly *depend on him*, like hair-style and clothes.

d) A character's *physical surrounding* (room, house, street, town) as well as his *human environment* (family, social class) are also often used as trait-connoting metonymies. As with external appearance, the relation of contiguity is frequently supplemented by that of causality.

e) **Analogy** is a purely textual link, independent of story-causality. Three ways in which analogy can reinforce characterization are: analogous *names*, analogous *landscape*, analogy *between characters*. In all three the analogy may emphasize either the similarity or the contrast between the two elements compared, and it may be either explicitly stated in the text or implicitly left for the reader to discover.

The significance of a character can vary from the particular, the dramatization of a unique individual, to the most general and symbolic, for instance the representation of a 'Christ figure'.



FOR FURTHER RESEARCH WORK

1. Read the excerpt from the article of J.D.Jonansen Theory and/vs. Interpretation in Literary Studies about some of the approaches to the image of the character interpretation. It goes without saying that different conceptions of the image of the character in different theories do not necessarily contradict each other, but on the contrary may supplement one another. For instance, as the author of the article states, to see the folktale characters, king and troll, as bundles of features that make up two clichés that fulfill certain narrative key functions in the tale goes rather well with noticing the intrinsic relationship between donor and villain in the folktale, and with seeing this relationship as a manifestation of the conflict between peasants and lords in feudal society, or the struggle to overcome parental authority and achieve maturity and autonomy, or both.

Analyze the conceptions suggested and fill in the table that follows. Work out your own definition of the character which will comprise the key ideas of each of the approaches you've analyzed.

New criticism will analyze characters as units that fulfill structural and thematic functions within the text, and that balance each other. *Psychoanalysis*, however, will rather see characters either as fictional counterparts of real persons, or as representing certain mechanisms that together with the other characters form different aspects of a psychological problem. In *Marxist literary theory*, agents will represent either simple or complex ideological positions that are opposed to each other within the society to which they belong, and such a society is further analyzed in relation to the society within which the text was written. To *structuralism*, characters belong to the figurative or surface level of the text. On the *anthropological level of the text*, characters are summarized and distributed according to the text's actant structure, and on the level of deep structure characters are nonexistent because they are surface phenomena that are dissolved into the more fundamental play of deep level oppositions.

(J.D.Jonansen Theory and/vs. Interpretation in Literary Studies)

The approaches to the image of the character interpretation
by J.D.Jonansen

The conception	The definitions of the character	The key words of the definitions	Examples of the literary works to illustrate the characters
NEW CRITICISM			
PSYCHOANALYSIS			
MARXIST LITEARY THEORY			
STRUCTURALISM			
ANTHROPOLOGY			
AN INTEGRATED DEFINITION OF THE CHARACTER			

2. Read the excerpt from M. Turner's work *Literary Mind*. Do you agree with the author that our sense of someone's general character always guides our expectations of which roles he will play in which stories. Supply examples of the literary works in which these expectations are really fulfilled and those in which they are failed.

To recognize a story requires recognizing its roles. *Characters* can be formed by backward inference from such a role, according to the folk theory of "the Nature of Things", otherwise known as "Being Leads to Doing". In this folk theory, glass shatters because it is brittle and fragile. Water pours because it is liquid. Someone forgives because she is forgiving. A dog guards the house because it is watchful. A fool acts a fool because he is foolish. In general, doing follows from being; being leads to doing; something behaves in a certain way because its being leads it to behave in that way.

Someone who is typically in the role of *adversary* can, by the Nature of Things, be thought of as "adversarial". We develop an expectation that he will be "true to his character": his character will guide his action; his being will lead to his doing. We become primed to see him inhabit similar roles in other stories. Our sense of someone's general character guides our expectations of which roles he will play in which stories. For example, we know what Sherlock Holmes is likely to do in any story in which he exists. The influence of character upon assignment to role is so strong that the mere appearance of a person with a certain character in a story can induce the creation of the role: as soon as Sherlock Holmes enters the scene, we expect the story to develop a role for detective or puzzle solver even if the story has not previously had one.

Character is a pattern of connections we expect to operate across stories about a particular individual with that character or across stories about a group of individuals with that character. People of a particular character are expected to inhabit similar roles in different stories. We can develop a categorization of kinds of character – generous, selfish, brave, submissive, and so on. [...]

(M. Turner *Literary Mind*)

3. According to the traditional literary criticism theory, characters must be: 1) consistent: they should not change easily (this may sometimes be broken); 2) motivated: there must be reasons for their actions, and 3) plausible: they should be true to life, for example, not be exceedingly virtuous nor monstrously evil. Supply examples from literary texts of

various genres to prove or disprove the above statement. Comment on the differences in the characters' consistency, motivation and plausibility in the classical, modernist and post-modernist literature.

4. Comment on John Lye's image of the character interpretation: characters in a work of fiction are generally designed to open up or explore certain aspects of human experience. Usually there will be contrasting or parallel characters, and usually there will be a significance to the selection of kinds of characters and to their relation to each other. Supply your own examples to illustrate this conception.

5. Study one more alternative classification of characters. Comment on its argumentative background.

First-person characters may be *reliable*, telling the truth, seeing things right, or they may be *unreliable*, lacking in perspective or self-knowledge. If a narration by an omniscient external narrator carries us into the thoughts of a character in the story, that character is known as a *reflector character*: such a character does not know he or she is a character, is unaware of the narration or the narrator. An omniscient, external narrator may achieve the narrative by telling or by showing, and she may keep the reader in a relation of *suspense* to the story (we know no more than the characters) or in a relation of *irony* (we know things the characters are unaware of).

6. Study Ch.E.Larmore's conception about identification of the "good". Make use of it to work out the criteria to the definition of a good/positive character. Suggest your own conception about identification of the "bad" and a negative character. Do you think the evaluation good/bad or positive/negative can be objective? Provide your arguments for and against.

At the risk of gross simplification I shall distinguish four sorts of things that are called "good":

1. the avoidance of physical pain;
2. the satisfaction of needs;
3. whatever satisfies short-term preferences, and
4. whatever fulfils long-term preferences (projects and commitments).

I have not given "pleasure" as a category of the good because its contours are far less distinct than those of pain; I have distributed it among

the other three categories. It should also be noted that while goods of category 2 are typically states of mind (e.g., pleasure), I am not requiring that those of categories 3 and 4 be so. On the contrary, what will satisfy our preference may well be something distinct from the state of mind it produces in us, as, for instance, the friendships we want differ from the pleasure that having them causes in us. By “needs” I shall mean desires that are ours not in virtue of our having adopted them, but rather in virtue of our being the sort of beings we all are (so desires for food and sleep, for example, would be needs). Preferences, by contrast, are desires we have because we have adopted them. Of course, we cannot acquire any desire simply at will: preferences are those desires we acquire through or as a result of what we do voluntarily. I do not pretend that the boundary between preferences and needs must always be a sharp one. Furthermore, the distinction between short-term preferences and long-term projects is clearly one of degree, but this fact will not affect the points I shall make. Finally, if a person claims that something is good only for him or for some, then he is viewing it as a *subjective* good; but if he claims that it is good for everyone, that everyone has a reason to pursue it, then he is asserting that it is an *objective* good.

(Ch.E.Larmore *Patterns of Moral Complexity*)

7. Read the excerpt from the article of P.Sadowsky *Psychological configurations and literary characters: A systems view*. Do you think the general division into introvert, extrovert, and balanced types can be extended into further psychological categories? Prove your point of view. Try to develop your own criteria of such further classification. Supply each type of the character with a more or less stereotypical mode of behaviour. Illustrate it with your own examples.

With regard to the main internal elements of the psyche the postulated functional analogies are the following:

Persona – a part of the psyche responsible for the reception and storage of information from the outside. Persona is the main instrument of psychic adaptation to the socio-cultural environment. As the only psychic connection with the outside world Persona contains information pertaining to the various roles played by an individual within the group: the family, the community, the professional group, etc.

Ego – a part of the psyche containing specific information and defining what is individual and unique about it. Ego represents *self-identity*, the subjective perception of one’s “otherness” and distinctiveness from others.

As homeostatic centre of the psyche Ego must be able to select and approve those reactions that serve the realization of self-identity and individual needs, and to avoid reactions that do not serve one's specific needs.

The Unconscious – a part of the psyche containing 1) inborn responses to adaptively important environmental stimuli (the collective unconscious), and 2) acquired and later repressed registers of information (the individual unconscious). The collective unconscious includes adaptive, emotive responses to certain standard environmental stimuli acquired by humankind in the course of its evolution. The individual unconscious includes ontogenetically acquired stimuli removed from consciousness as either unessential and unneeded or else disturbing and traumatic, and consequently relegated into the unconscious as otherwise potentially threatening to the person's psychic equilibrium.

If Ego is to perform its homeostatic function as the centre of the psyche, it must be able to maintain balance between the demands of social life as determined by Persona, and the emotional pressures coming from the unconscious. Any imbalance is likely to create a potentially disturbing situation, including a partial loss of psychic independence, when Ego is responding only to one of the main sources of stimuli at the expense of the other. An individual with a repressed unconscious and concerned only with social adaptation will be emotionally crippled (an insensitive careerist, a hypocritical puritan and so on). The dominance of the Persona-Ego complex in the psyche will characterise an *introvert personality*. A person indulging his or her emotions (a romantic lover, a bohemian artist, a mystic and so on) can have, and often does, serious problems with social adaptation due to emotional exuberance and problems with self-control. The dominance of Ego-Unconscious complex in the psyche characterises therefore an *extrovert personality*.

Examples of both types abound in life and literature alike, and it is interesting to observe that in literary narratives the introvert and extrovert types, representing as they do the opposite and complementary sides of the psyche, often appear in pairs: Iago and Othello, Claudius and Hamlet, Sancho Panza and Don Quixote, Tom Buchanan and Jay Gatsby – all representing the introvert and the extrovert types, respectively, paired up in the narratives to achieve the effect of psychological and dramatic wholeness.

The situation in which the introvert and the extrovert tendencies are in relative harmony can be said to characterize a *balanced personality*. From the psychological point of view it is a highly desirable psychic configuration, characterized by inner stability and moderately successful social adaptation

coupled by satisfying if less intensive emotional life. Though in literature balanced personalities often make less attractive characters, largely due to their “unproblematic” nature. When placed center stage in literary texts balanced characters, with their preoccupation with order, social convention, and moral principles, can sometimes experience engaging dilemmas (e. g., Mr. Duffy from J.Joyce’s story *A Painful Case*, vacillating between a spiritual relationship with a married woman and a trouble-free routine life of a bachelor), but when placed between introvert and extrovert characters the dramatic function of a balanced character is often reduced to providing a psychological link between the more extreme personalities. Such seem to be the role of the rather bland Desdemona placed between Iago and Othello; of the noble but colourless Horatio connecting, especially towards the end of the play, the cold a hostile world of the court with the sensitive and volatile hamlet; of the static and sensible Nick Carraway mediating between the insensitive and cynical Tom Buchanan and the hopelessly romantic Jay Gatsby.

It is clear, however, that pure introvert and extrovert types do not exist, because Persona and the Unconscious are always connected through the homeostatic Ego. This means that neither does there exist an introvert person deprived of any emotions, nor can we talk about an extrovert person incapable of rational thinking or devoid of self-control. One can at best talk about a personality dominated by cold rationalism with repressed emotions, or a personality dominated by emotionalism resisting social pressure (e.g., the cold-blooded, cynical and “unfeeling” Iago is nonetheless motivated by such negative emotions as professional envy about Cassio’s promotion, sexual jealousy about his wife Emilia and Othello, and by racial hatred towards Othello himself).

*(P.Sadowsky Psychological configurations and literary characters:
A systems view)*



IMAGE OF THE CHARACTER **(Practical assignment)**

1. In the excerpts that follow, define the method of the personages' characterization. Provide language material to support your point of view. Dwell upon the way the descriptions offered add to revealing the characters' personality.

1. My dad, an incredibly handsome, strong, charismatic and energetic man was always in motion. My brothers and sisters and I were in awe of him. We honored him and held him in the highest esteem. Now I understand why. There were no inconsistencies in his life. He was an honorable man, highly principled. Farming, his chosen work, was his passion; he was the best. He was at home raising and caring for animals. He felt at one with the earth and took great pride in planting and harvesting the crops. He refused to hunt out of season, even though deer, pheasants, quail and other game roamed our farmlands in abundance. He refused to use soil additives or feed the animals anything other than natural grains. He taught us why he did this and why we must embrace the same ideas. [...]

Dad was also a very impatient man, but not in a middle of the night when he was checking his animals during these late night rounds. The relationship we developed from these times together was simply unforgettable.

(Bettie B. Youngs *Why I Chose My Father To Be My Dad*)

2. ONCE, IN A HOUSE ON EGYPT STREET, there lived a rabbit who was made almost entirely of china. He had china arms and china legs, china paws and a china head, a china torso and a china nose. His arms and legs were jointed and joined by wire so that his china elbows and china knees could be bent, giving him much freedom of movement.

His ears were made of real rabbit fur, and beneath the fur, there were strong, bendable wires, which allowed the ears to be arranged into poses that reflected the rabbit's mood — jaunty, tired, full of ennui. His tail, too, was made of real rabbit fur and was fluffy and soft and well shaped.

The rabbit's name was Edward Tulane, and he was tall. He measured almost three feet from the tip of his ears to the tip of his feet; his eyes were painted a penetrating and intelligent blue.

In all, Edward Tulane felt himself to be an exceptional specimen. Only his whiskers gave him pause. They were long and elegant (as they should be), but they were of uncertain origin. Edward felt quite strongly that they were not the whiskers of a rabbit. Whom the whiskers had belonged to initially — what unsavory animal — was a question that Edward could not bear to consider for too long. And so he did not. He preferred, as a rule, not to think unpleasant thoughts.

Edward's mistress was a ten-year-old, dark-haired girl named Abilene Tulane, who thought almost as highly of Edward as Edward thought of himself. Each morning after she dressed herself for school, Abilene dressed Edward.

The china rabbit was in possession of an extraordinary wardrobe composed of handmade silk suits, custom shoes fashioned from the finest leather and designed specifically for his rabbit feet, and a wide array of hats equipped with holes so that they could easily fit over Edward's large and expressive ears. Each pair of well-cut pants had a small pocket for Edward's gold pocket watch. Abilene wound this watch for him each morning.

[...]

She placed Edward on a chair in the dining room and positioned the chair so that Edward was looking out the window and could see the path that led up to the Tulane front door. Abilene balanced the watch on his left leg. She kissed the tips of his ears, and then she left and Edward spent the day staring out at Egypt Street, listening to the tick of his watch and waiting.

Of all the seasons of the year, the rabbit most preferred winter, for the sun set early then and the dining-room windows became dark and Edward could see his own reflection in the glass. And what a reflection it was! What an elegant figure he cut! Edward never ceased to be amazed at his own fineness.

(Kate DiCamillo *The miraculous journey of Edward Tulane*)

3. In a world of talkers, Mack is a thinker and doer. He doesn't say much unless you ask him directly, which most folks have learned not to do. When he does speak you wonder if he isn't some sort of alien who sees the landscape of human ideas and experiences differently than everybody else.

The thing is, he usually makes uncomfortable sense in a world where most folks would rather just hear what they are used to hearing, which is often not much of anything. Those who know him generally like him well enough, providing he keeps his thoughts mostly to himself. And when he

does talk, it isn't that they stop liking him – rather, they are not quite satisfied with themselves.

Mack once told me that he used to speak his mind more freely in his younger years, but he admitted that most of such talk was a survival mechanism to cover his hurts; he often ended up spewing his pain on everyone around him. He says that he had a way of pointing out people's faults and humiliating them while maintaining his own sense of false power and control. Not too endearing.

[...]

You don't realize how smart Mack is unless you happen to eavesdrop on a dialogue he might be having with an expert. I've been there, when suddenly the language being spoken hardly resembles English, and I find myself struggling to grasp the concepts spilling out like a tumbling river of gemstones. He can speak intelligently about most anything, and even though you sense he has strong convictions, he has a gentle way about him that lets you keep yours.

(Wm.Paul Young *The Shack*)

4. They had gone far before they came to a place where the ground became rough and there were rocks all about and little hills up and little hills down. At the bottom of one small valley Mr.Tumnus turned suddenly aside as if he were going to walk straight into an unusual large rock, but at the last moment Lucy found he was leading her into the entrance of a cave. As soon as they were inside she found herself blinking in the light of a wood fire. Then Mr.Tumnus stooped and took a flaming piece of wood out of the fire with a neat little pair of tongs, and lit a lamp. "Now we shan't be long", he said, and immediately put a kettle on.

Lucy thought she had never been in a nicer place. It was a little, dry, clean cave of reddish stonewith a carpet on the floor and two little chairs ("One for me and one for a friend", said Mr.Tumnus) and a table and a dresser and a mantelpiece over the fire and above that a picture of an old faun with a grey beard. In one corner there was a door which Lucy thought must lead to Mr.Tumnus's bedroom, and on the wall was a shelf full of books. Lucy looked at these while he was setting out the tea things. They had titles like *The Life and Letters of Silenus* or *Nymphs and Their Ways* or *Men, Monks and Gamekeepers; A Study in Popular Legend* or *Is Man a Myth?*

"Now, Daughter of Eve!" said the Faun.

And really it was a wonderful tea. There was a nice brown egg, lightly boiled, for each of them, and then sardines on toast, and then buttered toast, and then toast with honey, and then a sugar-topped cake.

And when Lucy was tired of eating, the Faun began to talk. He had wonderful tales to tell of life in the forest.

(C.S.Lewis *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*)

5. There was music from my neighbour's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from the tower of his raft, or taking the sun on the hot sand of his beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound, drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. And on Mondays eight servants, including an extra gardener, toiled all day with mops and scrubbing brushes and hammers and garden-shears, repairing the ravages of the night before.

Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York – every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb.

At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough coloured lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors-d'œuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkey bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another.

By seven o'clock the orchestra has arrived, no thin five-piece affair, but a whole pitful of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos, and low and high drums. The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas

are gaudy with primary colours, and hair bobbed in strange new ways, and shawls beyond the dreams of castile.

(F.S. Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby*)

6. “They say Aslan is on the move – perhaps has already landed.”

And now a very curious thing happened. None of the children knew who Aslan was any more than you do; but the moment the Beaver had spoken these words everyone felt quite different. Perhaps it has sometimes happened to you in a dream that someone says something which you don't understand but in the dream it feels as if it has some enormous meaning – either a terrifying one which turns the whole dream into a nightmare or else a lovely meaning too lovely to put into words, which makes the dream so beautiful that you remember it all your life and are always wishing you could get into that dream again. It was like that now. At the name of Aslan each one of the children felt something jump in its inside. Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer.

(C.S.Lewis *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*)

7. “No, no, there isn't a drop of real human blood in the Witch.”

“That's why she's bad all through, Mr. Beaver,” said Mrs. Beaver.

“True enough, Mrs. Beaver,” replied he. “There may be two views about humans (meaning no offence to the present company), but there's no two views about things that look like humans and aren't.”

“I've known good Dwarfs,” said Mrs. Beaver.

“So've I, now you come to speak of it,” said her husband, “but precious few, and they were the ones least like men. But in general, take my advice, when you meet anything that's going to be human and isn't yet, or used to be human once and isn't now, or ought to be human and isn't, you keep your eyes on it and feel for your hatchet. [...]

(C.S.Lewis *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*)

2. In the excerpt that follows define the types of characters and methods of their characterization. What kinds of conflict does the character have? What are the motives of the character? Explain their role

in text evaluation. Supply the language material to substantiate your opinion.

Elisa Allen, working in her flower garden, looked down across the yard and saw Henry, her husband, talking to two men in business suits. The three of them stood by the tractor shed, each man with one foot of the side of the little Fordson [tractor]. They smoked cigarettes and studied the machine as they talked.

Elisa watched them for a moment and then went back to her work. She was thirty-five. Her face was lean and strong and her eyes were as clear as water. Her figure looked blocked and heavy in her gardening costume, a man's black hat pulled low down over her eyes, clodhopper shoes, a figured print dress almost completely covered by a big corduroy apron with four big pockets to hold the snips, the towel and scratchier, the seeds and the knife she worked with. She wore heavy leather gloves to protect her hands while she worked.

She was cutting down the old year's chrysanthemum stalks with a pair of short and powerful scissors. She looked down toward the men by the tractor shed now and then. Her face was eager and mature and handsome; even her work with the scissors was over-eager, over-powerful. The chrysanthemum stems seemed too small and easy for her energy [...]

Elisa cast another glance toward the tractor shed. The strangers were getting into their Ford coupe. She took off a glove and put her strong fingers down into the forest of new green chrysanthemum sprouts that were growing around the old roots. She spread the leaves and looked down among the close-growing stems. No aphids were there, no sowbugs or snails or cutworms. Her terrier fingers destroyed such pests before they could get started [...]

Henry came banging out of the door showing his tie inside his vest as he came. Elisa stiffened and her face grew tight. Henry stopped short and looked at her. "Why-why, Elisa. You look so nice!" "Nice? You think I look nice? What do you mean by nice?" Henry blundered on. "I don't know. I mean you look different, strong and happy." "I am strong? Yes, strong. What do you mean by strong?" He looked bewildered. "You're playing some kind of game," he said helplessly. "It's kind of a play. You look strong enough to break a calf over your knee, happy enough to eat it like a watermelon." For a second she lost her rigidity. "Henry! Don't talk like that. You didn't know what you said." She grew complete again. "I'm strong," she boasted. "I never knew before how strong" [...]

She said loudly, to be heard above the motor "It will be good, tonight, a good dinner." "Now you've changed again," Henry complained. He took one hand from the wheel and patted her knee. "I ought to take you in to dinner oftener. It would be good for both of us. We get so heavy out on the ranch." "Henry," she asked, "could we have wine at dinner?" "Sure we could. Say! That will be fine." [...]

She relaxed limply in the seat. "Oh, no. No. I don't want to go. I'm sure I don't." Her face was turned away from him. "It will be enough if we can have wine. It will be plenty." She turned up her coat collar so he could not see that she was crying weakly – like an old woman.

(J. Steinbeck *The Chrysanthemums*)

3. In the short stories that follow analyze the characters using the questions below as guidelines.

- 1. Who is the protagonist? How do you know? Is the character flat or round? Static or dynamic? What is the degree of penetration in his/her "inner life"?*
- 2. What kinds of conflicts does the character have: (a) person vs. person? (b) person vs. self? (c) person vs. environment? In what way are these conflicts important?*
- 3. What are the motives of the character? Why does he/she do what he/she does?*
- 4. What methods of characterization are most favored by the author? Why? What effect is achieved through them?*
- 5. Who are the other characters? List them in order of importance: does your list contain an antagonistic character? If so, who is it? Why? What types are these characters: flat, round, static, dynamic? What are their motives?*

Are any of the characters symbolic; that is, do they represent not only themselves but some important meaning as well?

What Is It that You Want from Me?

Joseph Lerner

"What is it that you want from me?" Carol said. Her dachshund, Harry, jumped at her bare legs, which made her jump too. The weather, though promising, was still much too cold.

"What is it that I want?" Mike asked, walking faster to keep up with her. "What is it that I want?" he repeated.

They stopped before the office building where he worked.

"Well?" she said. "Are you going inside?"

"Come inside with me."

"I can't take the dog, remember? Unlike my company."

In his office he kept glancing out the window toward where he had last seen her. Eventually he turned to the papers and mail stacked haphazardly on his desk. "What is it that you want?" he asked, staring morosely at them.

He picked up several letters at random. One advertised baby products – formula, diapers, toys. He wondered how he had gotten on that mailing list. Another was a brochure from the company's travel agent.

It advertised specials for Aruba, the Antilles, Malta. He remembered his and Carol's first (and only) long vacation – to Thailand and Bali – just before getting married. The vacation had gone well except that when they had returned to pick up Harry from the pound they had found him so traumatized that he had become skittish and depressed for weeks.

Carol did not forget that it was Mike who had persuaded her, against her better judgment, to board the dachshund.

He put down the mail. What is it that you want from me? Early in their relationship such questions had been a game, light-hearted and teasing. During sex: what is it that you want now? Walking Harry: if dogs dream, are they random or do they spring from fear, hope and desire, like ours? With friends: which ones are true friends, and which just want something?

But lately her questions, if prosaic in one sense, were also more barbed: Don't you want a better job, have children, own our own home?

Mike got little done that morning, and at noon when a co-worker, Don, asked if he wanted to go with him and Liz, another co-worker, to lunch, he said yes, forgetting he had planned to meet Carol.

They decided on the corner deli because of its proximity, but found it so crowded they were forced to stand in line in the cold anyway.

After they sat and ordered, Liz said, "I am beside myself."

"Why?" asked Don, who had squeezed beside her in the tiny booth. People jostled each other in the take-out line just next to Mike, and he had to lean forward to hear his co-workers.

"It's my apartment," Liz said. "There's water seeping up from the kitchen floor, the fuses are always shorting, and the back door steps are broken. I've told the landlord, but he says I have to fix them."

"That's illegal," said Don. "Let me talk to my attorney."

"What's worse," Liz continued, "the landlord lives next door, and his dog is always tearing up my garden." She paused. "I'm thinking of burying poisoned food pellets out there. Just enough to make him sick," she added quickly.

Both Don and Mike fell silent. All three ate quickly – half their lunch hour already had been spent waiting and ordering – and then returned to the office.

Mike phoned Carol to apologize, but she was not available. Later in the afternoon he went to several meetings that Liz also attended, but he avoided looking at or speaking with her. He decided to leave the office early, despite the report his boss wanted completed by the next day.

On his way home he passed a lawn-and-garden shop. He stared at the window display, slick with vapor. Orchids, hibiscus and oleander gleamed, multifaceted as jewels. Before he and Carol had met he had gardened himself, and had often planted aconitum – monk's hood – or nereum – a kind of oleander, both of whose poison discouraged blackbirds and other creatures from raiding his garden. But he doubted if aconitum or nereum would work on a dog.

At his front doorstep Mike heard the TV on. That probably meant that Carol had brought Harry home during her lunch break – the dachshund was less lonely with the TV for company. But as Mike walked through the house (and called out his name) Harry could not be found.

Annoyed, he turned off the TV. He entered the kitchen, sat at the table, and gazed at the trees out the window. The dogwoods should bloom soon, he thought. They were hard-pressed to afford a house and yard so close to downtown; it was a shame not to keep a garden too. He then noticed in his pocket the crumbled travel brochure he earlier had read, and set it on the table, smoothing it out.

He heard the front door open. Carol – without the dog – entered the kitchen. She looked drawn and pale, and a few gray hairs were showing.

"Did you get my message?" he asked. She nodded. "Where's Harry?"

"He got sick at work –"

"Again?"

"– and so I dropped him off at the vet's. He has to stay overnight."

"That must be one unhappy dachshund. What should we eat for dinner?"

"I don't feel like cooking tonight."

"I'll cook."

"I mean I don't feel like eating." She sat down across from him. "Have you thought about what I said?"

"You mean – what is it that I want from you?"

"Yes."

"I haven't thought much. I don't understand. Is the question some sort of puzzle, like a Zen koan?"

"I know what I want," she said, her voice suddenly pitched high. She balled her fists, and a tear glistened on her cheek. "I'm thirty-five years old, Mike."

"There's still time."

"I don't want to wait!"

Her husband rose from the table. He left the kitchen and entered the bedroom. As he lay atop the unmade bed, he heard Carol begin to cry. Again he looked out the window. If it weren't for Harry he could plant a garden. Or quit his job and take a long trip, to Aruba, the Antilles, or Malta.



Souls

Jerry Poyner

Jamey was slight of build, less than 5'6" tall and he weighed a little less than 130 pounds. In a world of male models and movie stars, Jamey would have gone unnoticed had it not been for the extraordinary size of his soul. Jamey's soul extended almost 6 feet outward around his head and tapered down to encompass a three foot circle around his feet. With his short height, his soul ballooned into a sphere of influence of almost 12 feet, in sharp contrast to the average soul, which only extends 18 inches from the head and 4 inches from the feet.

Jamey could not carry around such a large soul without being personally aware of its presence. It bore down on him in much the same way the 300 pounds of fat burdened his Uncle Bruce.

Jamey and Beverly met at Jerry's Diner. Jamie and Beverly's souls came together the way two lovers might gently touch with a kiss. They looked at each other and as their eyes met they both smiled. Jamey stood up to walk closer to her, and said, "You have a huge soul!"

"You know don't you? You are the first person I've met that knows." Beverly said.

"Can we go someplace and talk?" Jamey asked.

"Yes, oh yes!" Beverly said, as she set the plates of food on an empty table and removed her apron. They walked out of the restaurant, each feeling the surprise from patrons as they left arm in arm.

"I thought I was the only one! I was just sure of it! Oh God, I am so glad I found you," Beverly said.

In their youth, Jamie and Beverly carried their souls with such energy that they seldom knew pain.

"Jamey, I didn't know I could be so happy and I've noticed that really foul souls don't bother me much anymore," Beverly said.

"I've noticed the same thing," Jamey said.

Unable to be apart, they opened a doughnut shop with their meager savings and worked from the early morning hours until nine each day. The doughnut shop was Beverly's idea since, as she said; "Only happy people are willing to risk the calories."

After a few years, growing human tragedies and violence on the streets clouded the joy they found in each other. Everywhere they went they could instantly transform from an intimate, loving, and happy couple, to very sorrowful souls.

Some children brought such stabs of pain that they would look at each other to see if blood was running out of their bodies from some silent wound.

They could and would have endured the endless ups and downs of life, but the lord is merciful with his gifts. The physical attacks on their bodies from their encounters began to take its toll. Before their fortieth birthdays, Jamey and Beverly, became very ill and one morning, they left the worldly vessels that so fiercely fueled and anchored their souls to this earth.

They were found in their apartment, holding and touching each other's faces, glowing with joy at their good fortune.



The Night of Iniquity

Heather Macpherson

Robert Dradbor III only ever dresses in a black, perfectly pressed button-down shirt with a red and black-checked bow tie, brown, pleated slacks, white socks, brown loafers and a brown sports jacket with green patches at the elbow. He smokes a chestnut-colored pipe with a black tip and reads Robert Frost by the light of a tall silver lamp with a 75-watt light bulb and a forest green shade, sitting in his black leather recliner, sipping brandy from a squat sparkling glass. Robert Dradbor III is a partner at a prestigious law firm in New York and makes 250,000 dollars a year. He lives with his wife, Lucinda, their two children, Dominique and Daniel and a yapping terrier named Petey.

Beneath Robert Dradbor III is perfectly pressed, impeccable daily uniform lies the secret that makes him feel pretty: a red, intricately stitched brassier with tiny black flowers on the cups and a little bow at the center. Matching red panties hide beneath his brown pleated pants. These frilly under-things were a presents from his mistress, Tabitha, who works days in the children's section of the local library and keeps her long brown hair in a tight bun at the nape of her neck and buttons her white blouses to the hollow of her throat. Tabitha owns the sleaziest bar in town and works nights as a dominatrix and topless dancer. Robert Dradbor III is a frequent patron of her fine establishment.

When Robert Dradbor III sits to eat his dinner it is always the same. His family may vary their dinner but he insists upon the same thing every night. A large, medium-rare sirloin steak, three potatoes, fourteen green

beans, a half of a peach, exactly thirty-two peas, a corn on the cob and peach cobbler for dessert. After which he retires to read in the den while his wife and children bore themselves to sleep. Every third week, every three months, as soon as their heads touch the pillow, Robert Dradbor III strolls casually out of the white front door of their Tudor-style home and transforms into a black panther with blue eyes, shedding clothing and red under garments at the front door to be collected upon his return.

Black Panther prowls city streets, feasting on rats and small homeless children. He runs directly to the local zoo, leaps over the fence and hunts zebra in their confines and although it isn't much of a hunt, Black Panther is satiated. He slinks through central park looking for young lovers to either kill or scare and is rarely disappointed. He passes the night in devilish delight, as his soul's owner would want. Black Panther must please or Robert Dradbor III will no longer be a master of universe in fine clothes, rolling in money and power. And, although Black Panther would be satisfied to roam the night forever conquering and devouring, Robert Dradbor III pulls the panther in at dawn's first light and appears to be asleep in bed just as his wife, Lucinda's, pretty green eyes flutter open to a new day.





**FINAL CONTROL ASSIGNMENT
THE STORY FOR INTERPRETATION:**

**THE BARBER WHOSE UNCLE HAD HIS HEAD BITTEN
OFF BY A CIRCUS TIGER**

William Saroyan

Miss Gamma, our teacher, said I needed a haircut, my mother said I needed a haircut, by brother Krikor said I needed a haircut: the whole world wanted me to get a haircut. My head was too big for the world. Too much black hair, the world said.

Everybody said, “When are you going to-get a haircut?”

There was a big business man in our town named Huntingdon who used to buy¹ an evening paper from me every day. He was a man who weighed two hundred and forty pounds, owned two Cadillacs, six hundred acres, and had over a million dollars in the Valley Bank, as well as a small head, without hair, right on top of him where everybody could see it. He used to make railroad men from out of town walk a long way to see my head. “There’s good weather and health. There’s hair on a head,” he used to say.

Miss Gamma did not like the size of my head.

“I’m not mentioning any names,” she said one day, “but unless a certain young man in this class visits a barber one of these days and has his hair cut, he will be sent to a worse place than this.”

She did not mention any names. All she did was look at me.

I was glad the world was angry with me, but one day a small bird tried to build a nest in my hair.

I was sleeping on the grass under the tree in our yard when a bird flew down from the tree to my head. I opened my eyes but did not move. I had no idea the bird was in my hair until it began to sing. Never before in my life had I heard the cry of a bird so clearly.

Then I realized such a thing was not proper. It was not proper for a small bird to be in anybody's hair.

So I jumped up and hurried to town to have my hair cut, and the bird flew as far away as it could go in one breath.

There was an Armenian barber on Mariposa Street named Aram who was really a farmer, or maybe a philosopher. I didn't know. I only knew he had a little shop on Mariposa Street and spent most of his time reading Armenian papers, rolling cigarettes, smoking them, and watching the people go by. I never saw him giving anybody a haircut, although I suppose one or two people went into his shop by mistake.

I went to Aram's shop on Mariposa Street and woke him up. He was sitting at the little table with an Armenian book open before him, sleeping.

In Armenian I said, "Will you cut my hair? I have twenty-five cents."

"Ah," he said, "I am glad to see you. What is your name? Sit down. I will make coffee first. Ah, that is a fine head of hair you have."

"Everybody wants me to get a haircut," I said.

"That is the way with the world," he said. "Always telling you what to do. What's wrong with a little hair? Why do they do it? 'Earn money²,' they say. 'Buy a farm.' This. That. Ah, they are against letting a man live a quiet life."

"Can you do it?" I said. "Can you cut it all away so they will not talk about it again for a long time?"

"Coffee," said the barber. "Let us drink a little coffee first."

He brought me a cup of coffee, and I wondered how it was I had never before visited him, perhaps the most interesting man in the whole city. I knew he was an unusual man from the way he woke when I entered the store, from the way he talked and walked. He was about fifty and I was eleven. He was no taller than I was and no heavier, but his face was the face of a man who has found out the truth, who knows, who is wise, and yet loves all and is not unkind.

When he opened his eyes, his look seemed to say, “The world? I know all about the world. Evil and hatred and fear. But I love it all.”

I lifted the small cup to my lips and drank the hot black liquid. It tasted finer than anything I had ever before tasted.

“Sit down,” he said in Armenian, and he began to tell me about the world.

He told me about his Uncle Misak who was born in Moush.

We drank the coffee and then I got into the chair and he began to cut my hair. He gave me the worst of all haircuts, but he told me about his poor uncle Misak and the circus tiger. He wasn't a real barber. He was just pretending to be a barber, so his wife wouldn't worry him too much. He was just doing it to satisfy the world. All he wanted to do was to read and to talk to good people. He had five children, three boys and two girls, but they were all like his wife, and he couldn't talk to them. All they wanted to know was how much money he was making.

“My poor uncle Misak,” he said to me, “was born a long time ago in Moush and he was a wild boy, although he was not a thief. He could fight any two boys in the whole city, and if necessary their fathers and mothers at the same time. Their grandfathers and grandmothers too,” he said.

“So everybody said to my poor Uncle Misak, ‘Misak, you are strong; why don't you earn money by fighting?’ So he did. He broke the bones of eighteen strong men before he was twenty. And all he did with his money was eat and drink and give the rest to children. He didn't want money.”

“Ah,” he said, “that was long ago. Now everybody wants money. They told him he would be sorry some day, and of course, they were right. They told him to take care of his money because some day he would no

longer be strong and he would have no money. And the day came. My poor Uncle Misak was forty years old and no longer strong, and he had no money. They laughed at him and he went away. He went to Constantinople. Then he went to Vienna.”

“Vienna?” I said. “Your Uncle Misak went to Vienna?” “Yes, of course,” said the barber. “My poor Uncle Misak went to many places. In Vienna,” he said, “my poor uncle could not find work, and he nearly died of hunger, but did he steal so much as a loaf of bread? No, he stole nothing. Then he went to Berlin. There, too, my poor Uncle Misak nearly died of hunger.”

He was cutting my hair, left and right. I could see the black hair on the floor and feel my head becoming colder and colder. And smaller and smaller. “Ah, Berlin ” he said. “Cruel city of the world, streets and streets and houses and houses and people and people, but not one door for my poor Uncle Misak, not one room, not one table, not one friend.”

“Ah,” I said, “this loneliness of man in the world. This terrible loneliness of the living.”

“And,” said the barber, “it was the same in Paris, the same in London, the same in New York, the same in South America. It was the same everywhere, streets and streets, houses and houses, doors and doors, but no place in the world for my poor Uncle Misak.”

“Ah, God,” I prayed. “Protect him.”

“In China,” said the barber, “my poor Uncle Misak met an Arab who worked in a French circus. The Arab and my Uncle Misak talked together in Turkish. The Arab said, ‘Brother, are you a lover of men and animals?’ And my Uncle Misak said, ‘Brother, I love everything in God’s world. Men and animals and fish and birds and rock and fire and water and everything seen and unseen.’ And the Arab said, ‘Brother, can you love even a tiger?’ And my Uncle Misak said, ‘Brother, of course, I can.’ Ah, my Uncle Misak was a very unhappy man. The Arab was very glad to hear about my uncle’s love for tigers, for he too was a very brave man. ‘Brother,’ he said to my uncle, ‘could you love a tiger enough to place your head into its open mouth?’

“Protect him, God,” I prayed.

“And,” said Aram, the barber, “my Uncle Misak said, ‘Brother, I could.’ And the Arab said. ‘Will you join the circus? Yesterday the tiger carelessly closed its mouth around the head of poor Simon Perigord, and there is no longer anyone in the circus with such great love for the creatures of God.’ My poor Uncle Misak was tired of the world, and he said, ‘Brother, I will join the circus and place my head into the open mouth of God’s holy tiger a dozen times a day.’ ‘That is not necessary,’ said the Arab. ‘Twice a day will be enough.’ So my poor Uncle Misak joined the French circus in China and began placing his head into the open mouth of the tiger.”

“The circus”, said the barber, “travelled from China to India, from India to Afghanistan, from Afghanistan to Persia, and there, in Persia, it happened. The tiger and my poor Uncle Misak became very good friends. In Teheran, in the old city, the tiger grew fierce. It was a very hot day and everyone felt ugly.

“The tiger felt very angry and ran about all day. My poor Uncle placed his head into the open mouth of the tiger, in Teheran, that ugly city of Persia, and he was about to take his head out of the tiger’s mouth when the tiger closed his jaws.”

I got out of the chair and saw a strange person in the looking-glass — myself. I was frightened and all my hair was gone. I paid Aram, the barber, twenty-five cents and went home. Everybody laughed at me. My brother Krikor said he had never seen such a bad haircut before.

But it was all right.

All I could think about for weeks was the barber’s poor Uncle Misak whose head was bitten off by the circus tiger, and I looked forward to the day when I would need a haircut again, so I could go to Aram’s shop and listen to his story of man, lost and lonely and always in danger, the sad story of his poor Uncle Misak. The sad story of every man alive.

THE TASKS TO FULFIL:

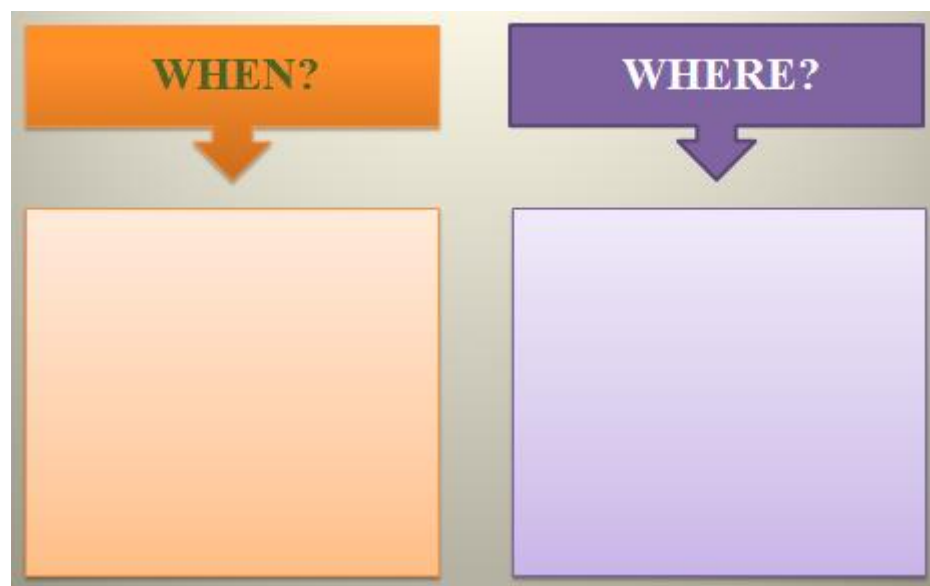
1. Provide brief information about the author, historical and cultural background of the story, that is closely related to your thoughts regarding content and stylistic qualities of the text under analysis.

William Saroyan: autobiographical notes	Historical conditions of the epoque	Cultural background of the story

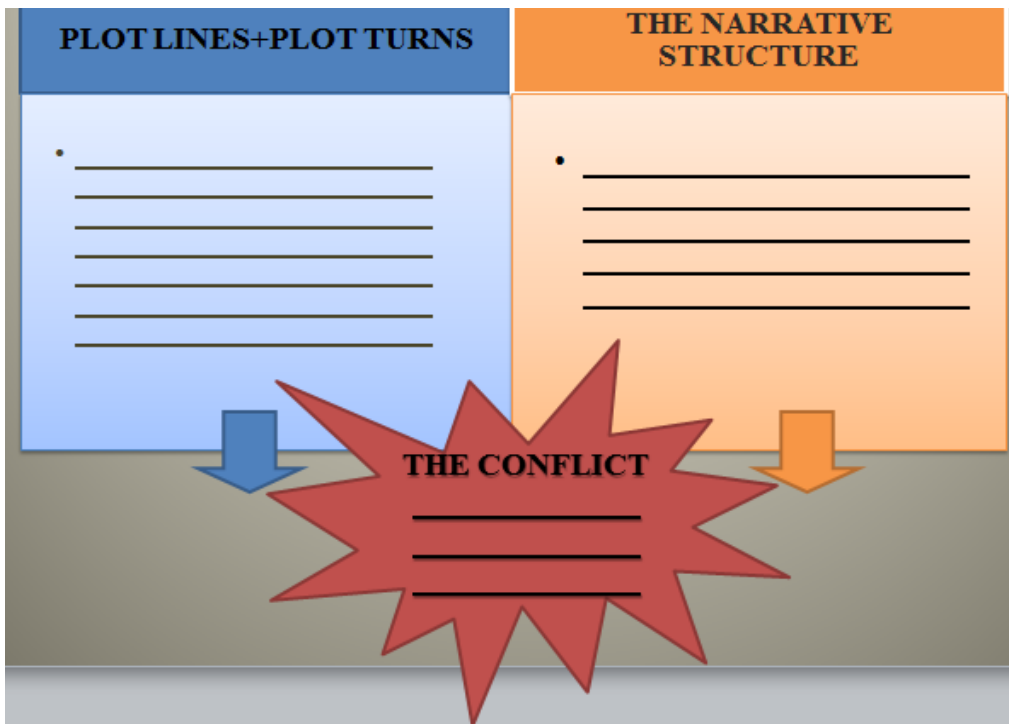
2. Outline the theme of the story in a compressed and exhaustive manner.
THE THEME of the story is _____

3. Identify the temporal and spatial settings of the story.

**THE ACTION OF THE STORY
TAKES PLACE**



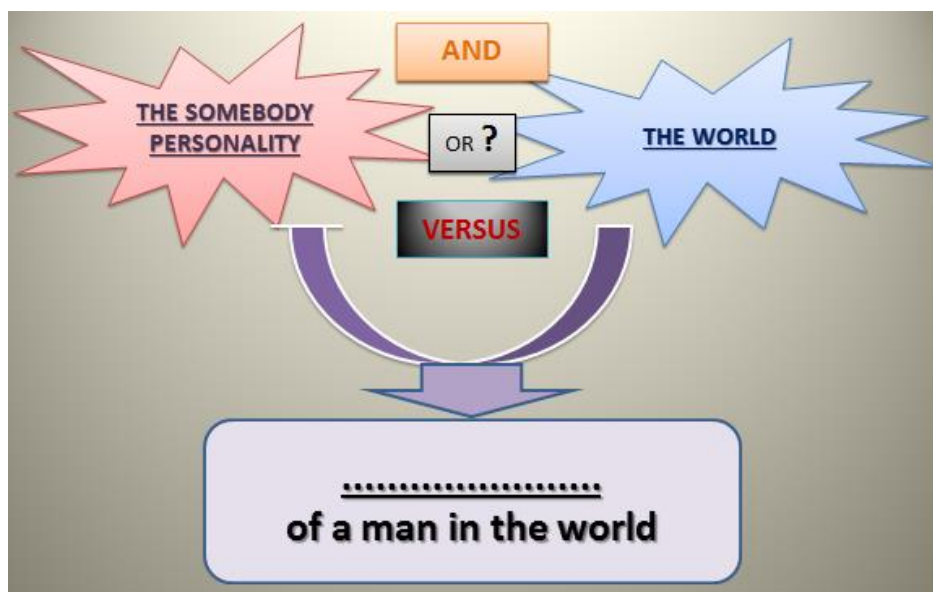
4. Present the plot lines, plot turns and the conflict of the story in a concise form, focusing on the compositional parts (*exposition, beginning of the plot, plot complications, climax or culmination, denouement, conclusion or ending*) and the narrative structure (*straight-line, inverted, complex, circular, frame*).



5. What does the title of the story suggest? Dwell upon the implication it contains. Define the type of implication it is.

THE TITLE of the story suggests _____

6. Make the conceptual framework of the story, filling in the blanks. Set the interrelations between the concepts.



Prove your point of view, analyzing the artistic details of the different types. Some of them have been already picked up to show you the example:

TYPES OF ARTISTIC DETAILS	DEPICTING	CHARACTEROLOGICAL	AUTHENTICITY	IMPLICIT
1.	<i>My head was too big for the world...</i>	<i>I was glad the world was angry with me.....</i>
2.
3.				
4.				
THE CONCLUSION				

Does it mean the same: **TO BE IN THE WORLD** and **TO BE A PART OF THE WORLD**? Why?

Was the main character a part of the world? How does it add to your understanding of the major conflict and the message of the story?

7. Ponder upon “THE STORY IN THE STORY”, that is the narration about Uncle Misak. Being **IN THE WORLD** was he **A PART OF THE WORLD**? Why?

What is the stylistic device that depicts his relation with the world? Isn't it just the same as in the case of the main character?

8. What is the way to become **A PART OF THE WORLD**? Who has followed it through? Was he successful? Why?

9. In the story analyze the narrative method according to the scheme offered:

1. **TYPE OF NARRATIVE:** subjectivized (in the first person), objectivized (in the third person);

The narrative offered is _____
because _____.

2. **TYPE OF NARRATOR:** extra-heterodiegetic, extra-homodiegetic, intra-heterodiegetic, intra-homodiegetic;

The type of the narrator is _____
because _____
what means _____

3. **TYPE OF NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE (point of view):** omniscient (unlimited) or limited (concentrated), constant or variable (changeable);

The narrative perspective is _____
because _____
thus, time and space are represented _____
the knowledge of the narrator about the events narrated is _____

the emotions and feeling are sure to be _____

4. the author's point of view, the character's point of view, the onlooker's point of view;

In the story _____
is/are represented as _____

5. **FORM OF PRESENTATION:**

-the author's narrative: narration, expository speech (meditations), description (panoramic, general view, close-up);

-reported (represented or non-personal direct speech): inner (unuttered) or outer (uttered) speech;

-direct speech: conversation, monologue, dialogue.

In the story
the author's narrative is represented in the form of _____

reported speech is offered in the form of _____

direct speech is represented by _____

How does the recreation of the image of the author add to defining of the message of the story?

10. Analyze **THE CHARACTERS**, answering the questions below.

- **THE PROTAGONIST** of the story is _____
because _____

- **THE PROTAGONIST** of the story is a _____ and
_____ character as _____

THE DEGREE OF PENETRATION INTO HIS INNER WORLD is _____ because _____

- **THE CONFLICTS THE PROTAGONIST** has are _____

In what way are these conflicts important?

- **THE MOTIVES OF THE PROTAGONIST** are _____

Why does he/she do what he/she does?

- **THE METHODS OF THE CHARACTERAZATION** that are
the most favoured by the author are _____

Why? What effect is achieved through them?

- **THE OTHER CHARACTERS ARE** _____

List them in order of importance: does your list contain an antagonistic character? If so, who is it? Why? What types are these characters: flat, round, static, dynamic? What are their motives?

Are any of the characters symbolic; that is, do they represent not only themselves but some important meaning as well?

11. Define the message of the story, which should be defined as a conclusion from the overall analysis of the text.

You should strive to expose the main problem(s) suggested by the author by means of various textual elements, especially those of the implicit layer.

One's attempt to derive the message from the text can be facilitated by the following techniques:

- You start interpretation by making a note of all possible ideas and associations that arise either during or after reading; this facilitates spontaneous revelations of the underlying meaning.
- You single out key words or phrases (recurrent or stylistically marked units) that either explicitly or implicitly refer to the main problems of the text.
- You study puzzling or ambiguous places that may contain important implications.



UNIT 6. IMAGE OF THE READER (Theoretical basics)

Literature:

1. Арнольд И.В. Стилистика современного английского языка: (Стилистика декодирования). – Л.: Просвещение, 1981. – С. 61-73, 130-137.
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4. Кайда Л.Г. Стилистика текста: от теории композиции – к декодированию. – М.: Флинта, 2004.
5. Кухаренко В.А. Інтерпретація тексту. – Вінниця: Нова книга, 2004.
6. Лукин В.А. Художественный текст. Основы лингвистической теории и элементы анализа. – М.: Ось-89, 1999.
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8. Стилистика английского языка / А.Н.Мороховский, О.П.Воробьева, Н.И.Лихошерст, З.В.Тимошенко. – К.: Вища школа, 1991. – С. 230-234.
9. Стилистический энциклопедический словарь русского языка. – М.: Флинта, Наука, 2003.
10. Ткачук О. Наратологічний словник. – Тернопіль: “Астон”, 2002.
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12. Еко У. Роль читача. Дослідження з семіотики текстів. – Львів: Літопис, 2004.
13. Cognition and Literary Interpretation in Practice // Ed. by H.Veivo, B.Pettersson, M.Polvinen. – Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2005.
14. Toolan M. Narrative. A Critical Linguistic Introduction. – London, N.Y.: Routledge, 2001.

BASIC NOTIONS

Patterns of interpretation, inscribed in literary texts as normalizing codes (in Y.Lotman's terminology), which affect the real audience's perception through creating the image of the intended reading audience are categorized as various manifestations of **addressee-orientation**.

A literary text can hardly be adequately interpreted, neither in mono-cultural nor in cross-cultural contexts, without identifying (consciously or intuitively) its linguistic **signals of addressee orientation** (SAO). Though such signals are always there in the text, pointing more or less explicitly to its dialogical dimension, their identification is by no means an easy task.

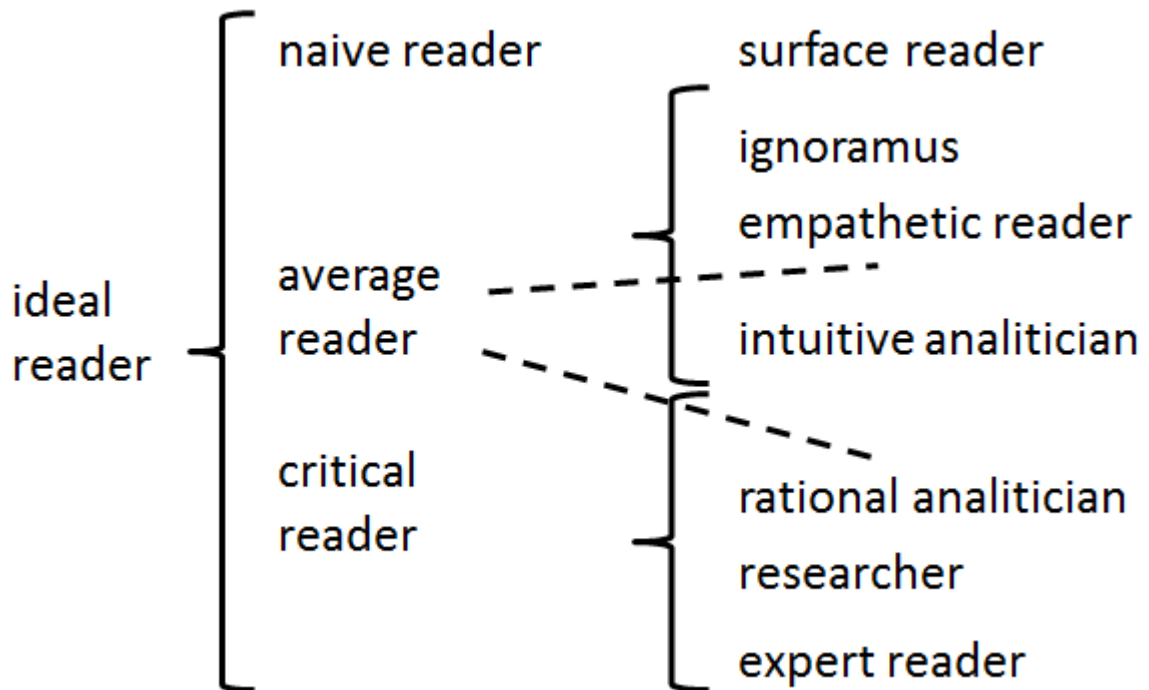
*In accordance with the **principle of dynamic hierarchy of relevance**, elaborated by G.Toury, in certain circumstances any element of a literary text can acquire any functional value, including that of an SAO, or become polyfunctional.

Literary text addressees are classified according to two criteria: (a) *external*, or *interpretational*, that is applied to a multitude of empirical readers that constitute the real or hypothetical reading audience, and (b) *internal*, or *textual*, which helps to differentiate between various textual dimensions of the reader's image, inscribed in the narrative and literary texture.

As literary communication has three major dimensions, a *real* (*empirical*), *hypothetical* (*virtual*), and *textual* ones, its addressees fall into three categories:

- **real (empirical) readers**,
- **hypothetical reading audience** that generalizes some relevant features of the empirical reading audience and gives rise to the *idealized reader*, designed for each concrete literary discourse, as well as
- **textual readers** that embrace the IDEAL READER, or the *implied, model reader*, as a counterpart of the implied author, a narrative role that is suggested by the text to its intended reading audience, and the MOCK READER, or a *fictitious reader, a narratee*, as a counterpart of the narrator, a narrative mask the intended reader has to use in order to comply with the rules of textual games inscribed in literary discourse.

Narrative varieties within each type of a textual reader may be arranged along a sliding scale – from a *naive* through *average* to *critical reader* for the IDEAL READER, and from an *alienated* to *involved narratee* for the MOCK READER.



mock reader		relevant absence		
		unmarked		
		marked		
	alienated	implicit		
		explicit		
	involved	accentuated presence		non-personified
				personified

Linguistic signals of addressee-orientation (SAO) are textual elements of any rank (from grapheme to paragraph) that *trigger* the readers' cognitive and emotional text processing and *keep it going* in line with the in-text interpretation pattern.

The mechanism behind SAO has two facets – **verbal** and **cognitive**.

Verbally, SAO emerge due to the interaction of *textual indeterminacy* and *determinacy* (global, local or localized) that give rise, respectively, to receptive hindrances (anomalies or lacunas) and clues (direct or indirect prompts as well as hints) which are foregrounded in literary texture.

Cognitively, the emergence of SAO is regulated by the principle of *highlighting/ shadowing* which makes them receptively *fuzzy* and *arbitrary*. Due to these properties of SAO, their identification in a literary text depends much on the author's and readers' shared knowledge.

*According to **the functional specificity**, the linguistic SAO are of two types – **specialized** and **non-specialized**.

According to **the distribution and range**, the linguistic SAO are of two types – **single** (global or localized) and **multiple** (local).

According to **the means of foregrounding**, the linguistic SAO are of four types – **graphical, syntactical, compositional, discursive**.

SAO			
According to the functional specificity			
specialized (addressee-bound)		non-specialized (context-bound)	
direct addresses	you-phrases	indirect addresses	implicit triggers
According to the distribution and range			
single		multiple (local)	
global	localized		
According to the means of foregrounding			
graphical	syntactical	compositional	discursive



FOR FURTHER RESEARCH WORK

1. Read the excerpt from the article of D.S.Miall *An evolutionary framework for literary reading*. Dwell upon the author's idea about literary reading being guided, like the migrating bird, by an array of navigational markers. Illustrate it on the example of any literary works you've read.

Literature invokes processes in the reader somewhat as a migrating bird depends on its navigational system. The bird does not set out with a fixed goal that it aims to reach: its orientation is guided by reference to such environmental signals as geographical landmarks, terrestrial magnetism, the sun, and the stars, all of which provide the bird with a goal-tracking system. It is the content-knowledge that modulates the migratory process of the bird, but in order to understand that process we need to know not what the bird understands about magnetism or the sun but how its systematic use of this information creates a guidance system. Similarly, the literary reader, while knowing there may be a goal to be reached (that is an interpretation of a text that is appropriate for that reader), cannot set out knowing in advance what that goal is, in the way that the reader of a repair manual or a chemistry textbook can be goal-oriented; moreover, interpretation may not even be a goal for the reader who reads for the pleasurable experience of reading rather than for meaning. Literary reading is guided, like the migrating bird, by an array of navigational markers, such as the palette of phonetic features, significant tropes, or narrative cues, and it is these that enable readers to attain their goal. Readers do not need knowledge of phonetic tone colors, or even need to be aware of their role during reading. As literary readers, in other words, we deploy a set of "content-sensitive" processes endowed on us by evolution, but fulfill these in ways peculiar to our own needs and historical context.

(D.S.Miall An evolutionary framework for literary reading)

2. Read the excerpts from the article of D.S.Miall *Beyond Text Theory: Understanding Literary Response about the phenomena defamiliarization and foregrounding*. Why do you think defamiliarization is considered to be the hallmark of literariness? Explain the following key notions of the article:

- prototypic concepts;*
 - economies of compensation;*
 - the diction of the text;*
 - the referents of the words;*
 - dichotomy of signs and objects;*
 - deviations;*
 - local level vs global level of a text;*
 - automatic nature of everyday perception.*
- Fill in the table that follows.*

Literary texts exhibit significant deviations from nonliterary prose, both at the local level of phonemics and grammar and at the global level of organization and structure. To examine these stylistic deviations and account for their psychological effects, we regard *defamiliarization* as a phenomenon that is central to literary experience: it is the hallmark of literariness. By defamiliarization we mean a process during which a reader uses prototypic concepts in a context where his or her referents are rendered unfamiliar by various stylistic devices; the reader is required to reinterpret such referents in nonprototypic ways, or even to relocate them in a new perspective that must be created during reading.

We also suggest that defamiliarization is an aspect of the reading process that is grounded in feelings. In response to stylistic devices, feelings influence a reader's departure from prototypic understandings. [...]

The origins of defamiliarization theory may be found in the Romantic period, especially in Coleridge's proposal that the purpose of literature is to overcome the automatic nature of normal, everyday perception. One aim of the poetry that he and Wordsworth wrote, he said, *was to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.*

Poetry thus overcomes custom, it defamiliarizes, and restores feelings that were blunted or decayed. A similar position is presented in one of the founding documents of Russian Formalist criticism, the essay "Art as Technique" by V. Shklovsky. *Art exists, he wrote, that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived*

and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects “unfamiliar”, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged.

The distinctive stylistic variations in literary texts complicate comprehension by challenging the familiar, prototypic concepts that readers initially apply to the text. [...] In defamiliarization theory, the meanings of literary texts are understood only when literary devices are taken into account. Within this domain, economies of compensation do not dominate; rather it is the effects of stylistic devices on defamiliarization, feeling, and individual variations in interpretation that are critical. [...]

One of the central functions of literary language is thus to loosen, or to put in question, the normal relationship between the diction of the text and the referents of the words used. This is the *poetic function* to which Jakobson referred: *the poetic function deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects.*

Following Mukarovsky, we refer to the literary devices that evoke these distinctive interpretative processes as *foregrounding*. Foregrounding includes departures from normal language use at the phonetic (e.g., alliteration, rhyme), grammatical (e.g., ellipsis, inversion), and semantic (e.g., metaphor, simile, metonymy, oxymoron, irony) levels. In comparison with normal language, foregrounding devices attract attention either because they deviate from the norm as single occurrences or because they create a pattern of recurrences or parallels. Structured foregrounding enables a literary text to retain its identity and uniqueness for readers, an identity that readers often discern but cannot clearly explain.

(D.S.Miall Beyond Text Theory: Understanding Literary Response)

DEFAMILIARIZATION				
DEFINITIONS	GROUNDS	FUNCTIONS	LEVELS OF REALIZATION	MEANS OF REPRESENTATION



IMAGE OF THE READER **(Practical assignment)**

1. Define the type of IDEAL and MOCK READERS in the excerpts offered below, supporting your point of view with enough arguments.

1. The worship of the senses has often, and with much justice, been decried, men feeling a natural instinct of terror about passions and sensations that seem stronger than themselves, and that they are conscious of sharing with the less highly organized forms of existence. But it appeared to Dorian Grey that the true nature of the senses had never been understood, and that they had remained savage and animal merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain, instead of aiming at making them elements of a new spirituality, of which a fine instinct for beauty was to be the dominant characteristic. As he looked back upon men moving through the History, he was haunted by a feeling of loss. So much have been surrendered! And to such little purpose!...

Yes: there was to be a new Hedonism that was to recreate life, and to save it from that harsh, uncomely Puritanism that is having, in our own day, its curious revival. ... its aim, indeed, was to be experience itself, and not the fruits of experience, sweet or bitter as they might be. Of the asceticism that deadens the senses, as of the vulgar profligacy that dulls them, it was to know nothing. But it was to teach man to concentrate himself upon the moments of a life that is itself but a moment.

(O.Wilde *The Picture of Dorian Gray*).

2. What you are about to read is something that Mack and I have struggled with for many months to put into words. It's a little, well ... no, it is a *lot* on the fantastic side. Whether some parts of it are actually true or not. I won't be the judge. Suffice it to say that while some things may not be scientifically provable, they can still be true nonetheless. I will tell honestly that being a part of this story has affected me deep inside, in places I had never been before and didn't even know existed; I confess to you that I desperately want everything Mack has told me to be true. Most days I am right there with him, but on others – when the visible world of concrete and computers seem to be the *real* world – I lose touch and have my doubts.

A couple of final disclaimers: Mack would like you to know that if you happen upon this story and hate it, he says, "Sorry ... but it wasn't primarily written for you." Then again, maybe it was. What you are about to read is the best Mack can remember about what happened.

(Wm.Paul Young *The Shack*)

3. My family have been prominent, well-to-do people in this Middle Western city for three generations. The Carraways are something of a clan, and we have a tradition that we're descent led from the Dukes of Buccleuch, but the actual founder of my line was my grandfather's brother, who came here in fifty-one, sent a substitute to the Civil War, and started the wholesale hardware business that my father carries on to-day. I never saw this great-uncle, but I'm supposed to look like him – with special reference to the rather hard-boiled painting that hangs in father's office. I graduated from New Haven in 1915, just a quarter of a century after my father, and a little later I participated in that delayed Teutonic migration known as the Great War. I enjoyed the counter-raid so thoroughly that I came back home restless. Instead of being the warm centre of the world, the Middle West now seemed like the ragged edge of the universe – so I decided to go East and learn the bond business. Everybody I knew was in the bond business, so I supposed it could support one more single man. All my aunts and uncles talked it over as if they were choosing a prep school for me, and finally said, "Why – ye-es," with very grave, hesitant faces. Father agreed to finance me for a year, and after various delays I came East, permanently, I thought, in the spring of twenty-two.

The practical thing was to find rooms in the city, but it was a warm season, and I had just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees, so when a young man at the office suggested that we take a house together in a commuting town, it sounded like a great idea. He found the house, a weather-beaten cardboard bungalow at eighty a month, but at the last minute the firm ordered him to Washington, and I went out to the country alone. I had a dog – at least I had him for a few days until he ran away – and an old Dodge and a Finnish woman, who made my bed and cooked breakfast and muttered Finnish wisdom to herself over the electric stove.

It was lonely for a day or so until one morning some man, more recently arrived than I, stopped me on the road.

"How do you get to West Egg Village?" he asked helplessly.

I told him. And as I walked on I was lonely no longer. I was a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler. He had casually conferred on me the freedom of the neighborhood.

And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.

(F.S. Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby*)

4. Touch the wooden gate in the wall you never saw before.

Say "please" before you open the latch,
go through,
walk down the path.

A red metal imp hangs from the green-painted front door,

as a knocker,
do not touch it; it will bite your fingers.

Walk through the house. Take nothing. Eat nothing.

However, if any creature tells you that it hungers, feed it.

If it tells you that it is dirty,
clean it.

If it cries to you that it hurts,
if you can,
ease its pain.

From the back garden you will be able to see the wild wood.

The deep well you walk past leads to Winter's realm;

there is another land at the bottom of it.

If you turn around here,
you can walk back, safely;
you will lose no face. I will think no less of you.

Once through the garden you will be in the wood.

The trees are old. Eyes peer from the undergrowth.

Beneath a twisted oak sits an old woman. She may ask for something;

give it to her. She
will point the way to the castle.
Inside it are three princesses.
Do not trust the youngest. Walk on.
In the clearing beyond the castle the twelve
months sit about a fire,
warming their feet, exchanging tales.
They may do favors for you, if you are polite.
You may pick strawberries in December's frost.
Trust the wolves, but do not tell them where
you are going.
The river can be crossed by the ferry. The ferry-
man will take you.
(The answer to his question is this:
*If he hands the oar to his passenger, he will be free to
leave the boat.*
Only tell him this from a safe distance.)

(Neil Gaiman *Instructions*)

2. In the short stories that follow, define the type of IDEAL and MOCK READERS. Identify linguistic signals of addressee-orientation and comment on their functions in the given context.

Other People

Neil Gaiman

“Time is fluid here,” said the demon.

He knew it was a demon the moment he saw it. He knew it, just as he knew the place was Hell. There was nothing else that either of them could have been.

The room was long, and the demon waited by a smoking brazier at the far end. A multitude of objects hung on the rock-gray walls, of the kind that it would not have been wise or reassuring to inspect too closely. The ceiling was low, the floor oddly insubstantial.

“Come close,” said the demon, and he did.

The demon was rake thin and naked. It was deeply scarred, and it appeared to have been flayed at some time in the distant past. It had no ears, no sex. Its lips were thin and ascetic, and its eyes were a demon's eyes: they had seen too much and gone too far, and under their gaze he felt less important than a fly.

"What happens now?" he asked.

"Now," said the demon, in a voice that carried with it no sorrow, no relish, only a dreadful flat resignation, "you will be tortured."

"For how long?"

But the demon shook its head and made no reply. It walked slowly along the wall, eyeing first one of the devices that hung there, then another. At the far end of the wall, by the closed door, was a cat-o'-nine-tails made of frayed wire. The demon took it down with one three-fingered hand and walked back, carrying it reverently. It placed the wire tines onto the brazier, and stared at them as they began to heat up.

"That's inhuman." "Yes."

The tips of the cat's tails were glowing a dead orange.

As the demon raised its arm to deliver the first blow, it said, "In time you will remember even this moment with fondness."

"You are a liar."

"No," said the demon. "The next part," it explained, in the moment before it brought down the cat, "is worse."

Then the tines of the cat landed on the man's back with a crack and a hiss, tearing through the expensive clothes, burning and rending and shredding as they struck, and, not for the last time in that place, he screamed.

There were two hundred and eleven implements on the walls of that room, and in time he was to experience each of them.

When, finally, the Lazarene's Daughter, which he had grown to know intimately, had been cleaned and replaced on the wall in the two hundred and eleventh position, then, through wrecked lips, he gasped, "Now what?"

"Now," said the demon, "the true pain begins." It did.

Everything he had ever done that had been better left undone. Every lie he had told—told to himself, or told to others. Every little hurt, and all the great hurts. Each one was pulled out of him, detail by detail, inch by inch. The demon stripped away the cover of forgetfulness, stripped everything down to truth, and it hurt more than anything.

“Tell me what you thought as she walked out the door,” said the demon. “I thought my heart was broken.”

“No,” said the demon, without hate, “you didn’t.” It stared at him with expressionless eyes, and he was forced to look away.

“I thought, now she’ll never know I’ve been sleeping with her sister.”

The demon took apart his life, moment by moment, instant to awful instant. It lasted a hundred years, perhaps, or a thousand—they had all the time there ever was, in that gray room—and toward the end he realized that the demon had been right. The physical torture had been kinder.

And it ended.

And once it had ended, it began again. There was a self-knowledge there he had not had the first time, which somehow made everything worse.

Now, as he spoke, he hated himself. There were no lies, no evasions, no room for anything except the pain and the anger.

He spoke. He no longer wept. And when he finished, a thousand years later, he prayed that now the demon would go to the wall, and bring down the skinning knife, or the choke-pear, or the screws.

“Again,” said the demon.

He began to scream. He screamed for a long time.

“Again,” said the demon, when he was done, as if nothing had been said.

It was like peeling an onion. This time through his life he learned about consequences. He learned the results of things he had done; things he had been blind to as he did them; the ways he had hurt the world; the damage he had done to people he had never known, or met, or encountered. It was the hardest lesson yet.

“Again,” said the demon, a thousand years later.

He crouched on the floor, beside the brazier, rocking gently, his eyes closed, and he told the story of his life, re-experiencing it as he told it, from birth to death, changing nothing, leaving nothing out, facing everything. He opened his heart.

When he was done, he sat there, eyes closed, waiting for the voice to say, “Again,” but nothing was said. He opened his eyes.

Slowly, he stood up. He was alone.

At the far end of the room, there was a door, and as he watched, it opened.

A man stepped through the door. There was terror in the man’s face, and arrogance, and pride. The man, who wore expensive clothes, took several hesitant steps into the room, and then stopped.

When he saw the man, he understood. “Time is fluid here,” he told the new arrival.



The Car and the Melon

Dann Casswell

On a sunny Tuesday afternoon, as we sat upon the lawn, my rather lovely girlfriend informed me very kindly that inanimate objects have feelings too. After about seven hours hard contemplation and several stiff drinks I came to the startling conclusion that for once in her – misguided and sheltered – life, she was right.

I could not find a thing without emotion.

The emotions of these thoughtless beings are easy to read; even to the untrained eye much easier to read than human Emotions, as inanimate objects are unable to hide their feelings in animation as Humans and animals are. They have no ideas about proper behaviour and can only do what comes naturally. How does a coffee cup feel? Either full and warm or empty and used. This is just one example; you will have to find your own examples about the house if you want more – as generalisations about the feelings of certain types of objects is paramount to racism in my book. Apart from feelings, often they have personality, and even (at the best or worst of times) humour. For fear of stereotyping them, many pens have humour. Disappearing when you need them appearing when you don't.

Objects with personality are usually the ones you use everyday: that stubborn old tin opener, the shower control that's full of tricks and has to be tamed.

This of course brings me to the car and the melon. The car always has personality. A good driver knows and loves his or her car. It should have a name. Maybe it needs a little encouragement to get up hills. A weekly wash to feed its vanity. Or some kind of reward, at least, for the work it puts in.

The melon (soon to give its life in interests of medical science) is the true opposite of the car. False opposite's, or common opposites, are as far as you can get from something in the same field. A square and a circle are common opposites. Up and down left and right. To clear things up further, let me explain that the true opposite of a square is a Rastafarian gentleman named Digs. He is as far from a square as you can get. There's only one Digs where as there are many squares. You can't draw Digs with a set square; he has no straight lines. Digs is completely useless to the world of geometry, and he is capable of rational thought. A square is not. The list goes on. Unfortunately for science, true opposites are completely useless. Also, a totally objective object may have many true opposites, while only one common one. Once again, it is entirely up to you to discover your own opposites for your self.

Oh yes, cars and melons.

The melon is a true opposite of a car, and I was interested to see, given the inanimate objects personality theorem, what it would be like if these two diametrically opposed creatures were to clash in deadly battle.

The car won.

And with that waste of life, Tuesday rolled into Wednesday.

Cat Fancy

Louis Strack

I'm telling you, Johnson, this is going to be the biggest development in animal-imitative cybernetics since Hayes pioneered the field way back in '14. Everybody's going to want a piece of my discovery! The military, all the megacorps, the private sector. Everyone! Even United States of Earth Defense! I'm going to be the richest man alive!

I can see you don't share my enthusiasm yet. Just wait, old friend. Accompany me to my lab, and we will see who has the last laugh. You'll be begging me to take you on as a lab assistant after I – Oh, here we are. You first, my good man. Just get the lights there on your left and go on in.

You see, I had already come up with the perfect cybernetic engine, capable of mimicking any life form. The question was, which creature would be the best showcase of my discovery? Humans and apes are overdone; you might remember Liebovitz's android last year that got everyone all excited? Yeah, I agree. Damn snake-oil salesman is all he turned out to be! His "miracle man" couldn't remember it's own name after a week. But this is different, because I've utilized a life form nobody's considered for cybernetics. It is powerful, graceful, intelligent, and best of all people love it. I chose the tiger!

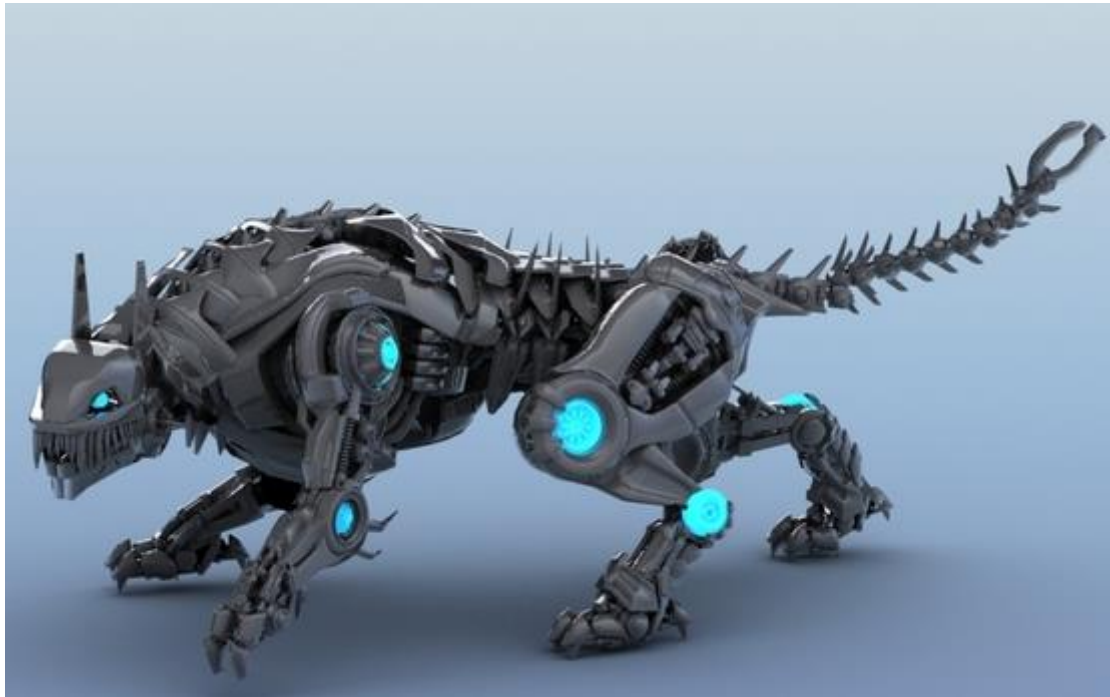
Go ahead and pull away that dust-cloth there. Go on, have a peek! Ha! Don't look so startled, Johnson. I leave it powered down when I'm not testing it. It is rather imposing, though, if I may say so. Yes, all the latest technology, including claws I had made from vanadium alloy. Cuts through steel like it's wet cardboard. Omni-directional piston ligaments, the finest photometric ocular devices I could find, and a cybernetic neural interface, which exactly mirrors a Bengal tiger. The one in New Planetary zoo, actually. The process that I used to get its mind in the computer will be enough to ensure me fame and fortune, but when they see the magnificent machine I've built to house this mind –

Huh? It did move, didn't it? I guess I left it on yesterday. No, don't look so nervous. I can shut off its main power circuitry with this remote right here. Nothing to worry about. No, it won't do anything like that. No, I really don't think it's sizing you up for a meal. Be reasonable, old – Oh, God! Johnson! The remote, where is it? Where?! Gotta find it quick, before it turns on me –

Ah, there we go! Too late to save Johnson, though. What a pity. Let's just take the power cells out of the thing. Better safe than sorry. There! God,

what a mess. Even worse, I can't call the police now, the bad publicity would overshadow my breakthrough, and definitely frighten the investors. I've got to get rid of the body secretly, somehow. I could bury it, but I might be seen. I could burn it, but the smoke would be awfully suspicious. What to do? What to –

I wonder... How fast can this cat eat?





**FINAL TEST CONTROL ASSIGNMENT
THE STORY FOR INTERPRETATION:**

POLAR BEAR

Jeanette Winterson

I am your inner polar bear. Find me before it's too late.

There's a photograph of me rafting an iceberg, the melted sea all around, the sea that should have been solid.

I was thinking about the end of Frankenstein – do you remember? The monster has fled to the icy wastes because he can find no home; the thing that he is has no place, and when something has no place, first it does a lot of damage and then it dies. The monster curses Frankenstein for creating him without a world where he can live – then as the waters break around the ice-bound ship, the monster leaps from Frankenstein's cabin and is borne away on an ice-raft into the unending night. I am thinking about the end of the world – not because I am religious, but because I am a polar bear, and the world will end for me faster than it will for you, and you'll put some of me in zoos and special chill nature reserves, but what you will really be excited about is oil and trade and who controls the North West Passage.

And I will be a monster because only monsters have no home. When you take my world away from me I'm going to come and live with you. All your civilised and all your science will be on the outside,

along with all your trade and aid. Inside, there will be me. Your inner polar bear – the wild free place white pristine – sun dropped red behind my head head back jaw open swallowing pounds and pounds of fresh killed life raw clean cold. The dive of me the weight of me. I will be everything you have lost. I will be everything you neglected. I will be everything you forgot. I will be the wild place sold for money. You see, when I lived far away, you knew I was there, and I kept something for you, even though you had never seen a polar bear or an ice floe. Even though you are not adapted to my conditions. I kept your wild, cold, raw. And the lion keeps something for you, and the mangrove swamp and the coral and the spider and the wren. You think I am a stupid polar bear? Go up into space and look back at this diamond cut planet, polar capped, white whirled. It is one planet, one place, and there is nothing else like it anywhere in the solar system. When you see it whole, you remember that it's not polar bears over there, and snakes over here; it's one place, one strange special place. It comes as a whole or not at all. You will live longer than us – my kind, not just my polar bear kind but all of us who need a home and you so envious that you want all the homes, leaving nothing you can't sell or rent. Enclosure of the whole world.

Sixty five million years ago the dinosaurs disappeared and something like a man began. There must have been some dinosaur dust left behind – how else to explain the homo sapiens you have become, greedy for everything, nothing in the whole world safe if you are here. All I can comfort myself with, as the ice melts under me, is that you are as stupid as they were. What's the difference between a dinosaur and a human being? A dinosaur destroys everything – but doesn't call it progress.

Climb on my back and I'll carry you to the top of the snow-silent mountains and let you look out over the rim of the earth. Look, beyond us are the stars, and if I reach with my paws I can use the stars as footholds. Higher now, through the witnesses, which I think the stars are - the roof of our life bright with silver eyes. What do they see? This blue planet, and near her, the white moon that holds us in her gravitational pull, so that we spin at the speed of life. Not too fast, not too slow, the speed of life.

As I climb through the stars, stretching myself into a constellation,

The Great Polar Bear, I wonder how many millions of years it will be before a wiser species than Homo sapiens inhabits the earth? And I wonder if I will ever come home? When the earth re-evolves herself, after the plagues, the bombs, the wipe-outs, the lights-out, will there be polar bears? And lions? And wrens?

When earth begins again I would like to slide down a chute of stars into an icy untamed sea and swim through the cold to the ice-floe where there will be others like me, not monsters, homed. A place to be. But until then I would rather climb away, not wait for the last piece of ice to melt, but climb into the airless cold of outer space where I too can be a witness to what happens next.

Once upon a time there was a polar bear. He had nowhere to live so he came to live in your head. You started to think polar bear thoughts about icyness and wilderness. You went shopping and looked at fish. At night you dreamed your skin was fur. When you got in the bath you dropped through nameless waters deeper than regret. You left the cold tap running. You flooded the house. You dived into winter with no clothes on. You sought loneliness. You wanted to see the sun rise after a night that lasted as long as all the things you have done wrong. You wanted to see the sun come up and no one to be near you. You wanted to look out over the rim of the world. But you live in the city and the rest is gone.

And all the longings and all the loss can't bring back the dead. The most beautiful place on earth was everywhere – a raft in the wilderness of space, precarious, unlikely, our polar bear home.

This micro-story was published in The Guardian Climate Change Special. October 2009



THE TASKS TO FULFIL:

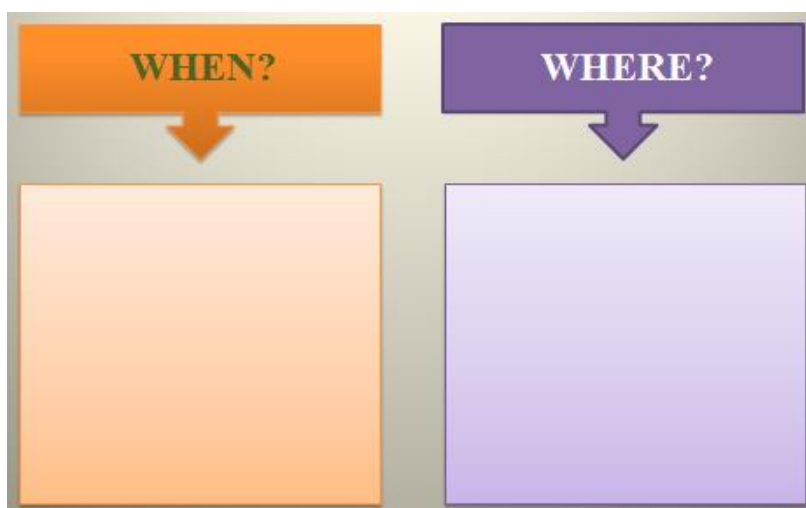
1. Provide brief information about the author, historical and cultural background of the story, that is closely related to your thoughts regarding content and stylistic qualities of the text under analysis.

Jeanette Winterson autobiographical notes	Historical conditions of the epoque	Cultural background of the story

2. Outline the theme of the story in a compressed and exhaustive manner.
THE THEME of the story is _____

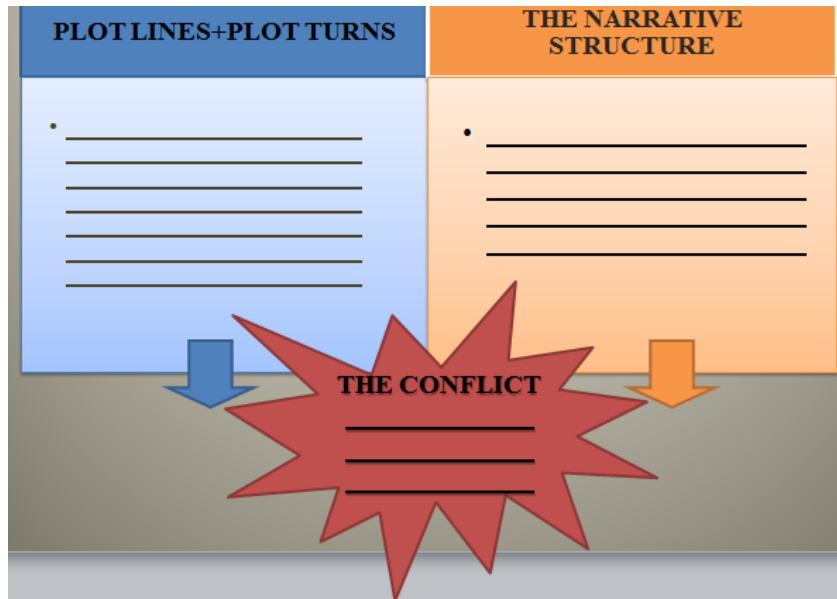
3. Identify the temporal and spatial settings of the story.

THE ACTION OF THE STORY TAKES PLACE



4. Present the plot lines, plot turns and the conflict of the story in a concise form, focusing on the compositional parts (*exposition, beginning of the plot, plot complications, climax or culmination, denouement*,

conclusion or ending) and the narrative structure (*straight-line, inverted, complex, circular, frame*).

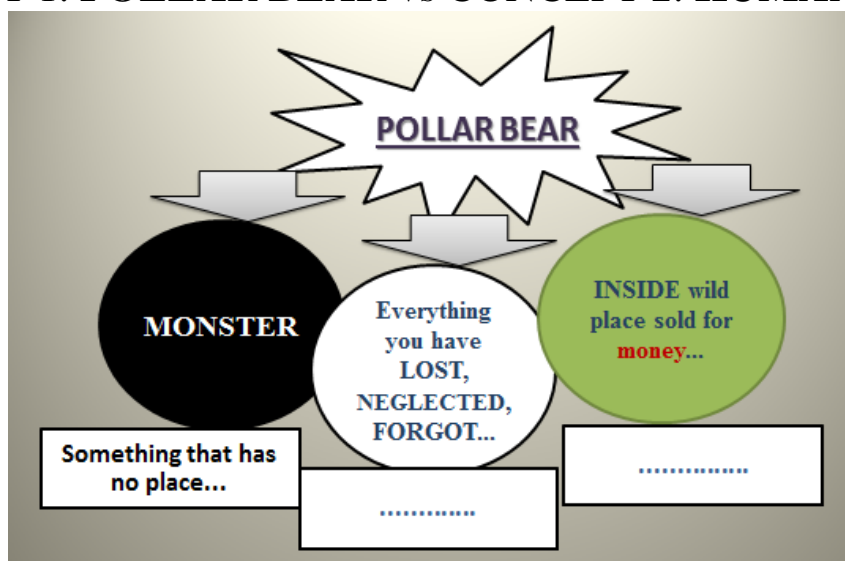


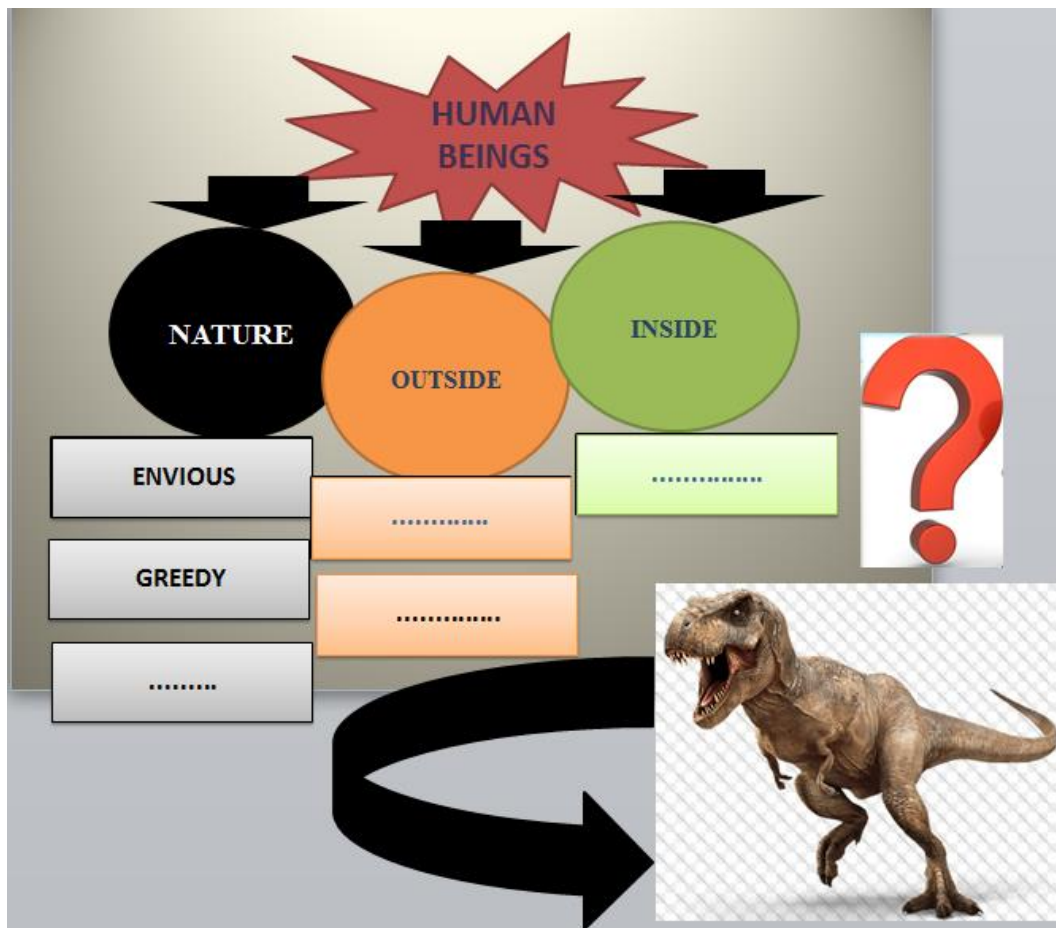
5. What does the title of the story suggest? Dwell upon the implication if it contains any.

THE TITLE of the story suggests _____

6. Make the conceptual framework of the story, filling in the blanks. Set the interrelations between the concepts:

CONCEPT 1. POLLAR BEAR vs CONCEPT 2. HUMAN BEINGS





7. Dwell upon the allusion in the story. What image is conveyed by **Frankenstein**? How does it add to your understanding of the major conflict and the message of the story?
8. Ponder upon all the cases of anthithesis in the story. How does it add to your understanding of the major conflict and the message of the story?
9. What is the role of personification in the story? Provide the examples.
10. In the story analyze the narrative method according to the scheme offered:
 1. **TYPE OF NARRATIVE:** subjectivized (in the first person), objectivized (in the third person);
The narrative offered is _____
because _____.
 2. **TYPE OF NARRATOR:** extra-heterodiegetic, extra-homodiegetic, intra-heterodiegetic, intra-homodiegetic;

The type of the narrator is _____
because _____
what means _____

3. TYPE OF NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE (point of view):
omniscient (unlimited) or limited (concentrated), constant or variable (changeable);

The narrative perspective is _____
because _____
thus, time and space are represented _____
the knowledge of the narrator about the events narrated is _____
the emotions and feeling are sure to be _____

4. the author's point of view, the character's point of view, the onlooker's point of view;

In the story _____
is/are represented as _____

5. FORM OF PRESENTATION:

- the author's narrative: narration, expository speech (meditations), description (panoramic, general view, close-up);
- reported (represented or non-personal direct speech): inner (unuttered) or outer (uttered) speech;
- direct speech: conversation, monologue, dialogue.

In the story
the author's narrative is represented in the form of _____
reported speech is offered in the form of _____
direct speech is represented by _____

How does the recreation of the image of the author add to defining of the message of the story?

11. Analyze **THE CHARACTERS**, answering the questions below.

- **THE PROTAGONIST** of the story is _____
because _____

- **THE PROTAGONIST** of the story is a _____
and _____ character as _____

THE DEGREE OF PENETRATION INTO HIS INNER WORLD is _____ because _____

- **THE CONFLICTS THE PROTAGONIST** has are _____

In what way are these conflicts important?

- **THE MOTIVES OF THE PROTAGONIST** are _____

Why does he/she do what he/she does?

- **THE METHODS OF THE CHARACTERAZATION** that are the most favoured by the author are _____

Why? What effect is achieved through them?

- **THE OTHER CHARACTERS ARE** _____

List them in order of importance: does your list contain an antagonistic character? If so, who is it? Why? What types are these characters: flat, round, static, dynamic? What are their motives?

Are any of the characters symbolic; that is, do they represent not only themselves but some important meaning as well?

12. Define the type of IDEAL and MOCK READERS. Identify linguistic signals of addressee-orientation and comment on their functions in the given context.

13. Define the message of the story as a conclusion from the overall analysis of the text.

You should strive to expose the main problem(s) suggested by the author by means of various textual elements, especially those of the implicit layer.

One's attempt to derive the message from the text can be facilitated by the following techniques:

- You start interpretation by making a note of all possible ideas and associations that arise either during or after reading; this facilitates spontaneous revelations of the underlying meaning.
- You single out key words or phrases (recurrent or stylistically marked units) that either explicitly or implicitly refer to the main problems of the text.
- You study puzzling or ambiguous places that may contain important implications.

THE SUGGESTED PATTERN OF A LITERARY TEXT INTERPRETATION

1. *Brief information about the author, historical and cultural background of the text generation,*

which should be closely related to the interpreter's thoughts regarding content and stylistic qualities of the text under analysis.

2. *Theme (thematic planes of the text),*

which should be outlined in a compressed and exhaustive manner, referencing the whole text or a portion of it.

3. *Settings (temporal and spatial),*

which are usually outlined within the interpreter's delineation of the theme.

4. *Plot (plot lines), composition and partitioning of the text.*

Plot lines, plot turns and the conflict should be presented by the interpreter in a concise form, focusing on the main presentational sequencing, compositional parts (exposition, beginning of the plot, plot complications, climax or culmination, denouement, conclusion or ending) and the narrative structure (straight-line, inverted, complex, circular, frame). Within the complex narrative structure plot digressions are to be identified and classified as flashbacks, flash-forwards and retardations.

5. *The narrative method:*

a) type of narrative: subjectivized (in the first person), objectivized (in the third person);

b) type of narrator: extra-heterodiegetic, extra-homodiegetic, intra-heterodiegetic, intra-homodiegetic;

type of narrative perspective (point of view): omniscient (unlimited) or limited (concentrated), constant or variable (changeable);

the author's point of view, the character's point of view, the onlooker's point of view;

form of presentation:

-the author's narrative: narration, expository speech (meditations), description (panoramic, general view, close-up);

-reported (represented or non-personal direct speech): inner (unuttered) or outer (uttered) speech;

-direct speech: conversation, monologue, dialogue.

6. *System of images:*

types of characters: main or secondary, protagonist or antagonist, flat or round;

characterization (presentation): direct or indirect;

image of the reader;

images of animals, plants, landscapes, natural phenomena, emotional states.

In description of images a special attention should be paid to artistic details.

7. *Tonal system:*

a) tone (slant/vein): formal, casual, agitated, lyrical, dramatic, impartial, moralizing.

atmosphere (mood): peaceful, cheerful, pensive, gloomy, mysterious, cheerless;

stylistic effects: ironical, satirical, bright, unexpected, profound, depressive, exhilarating, etc.;

d) expressive means and stylistic devices, with figures of speech laid a stress upon.

8. *Message of the text,*

which should be defined as a conclusion from the overall analysis of the text. The interpreter should strive to expose the main problem(s) suggested by the author by means of various textual elements, especially those of the implicit layer. One's attempt to derive the message from the text can be facilitated by the following techniques:

The reader starts interpretation by making a note of all possible ideas and associations that arise either during or after reading; this facilitates spontaneous revelations of the underlying meaning.

The reader singles out key words or phrases (recurrent or stylistically marked units) that either explicitly or implicitly refer to the main problems of the text.

The reader studies puzzling or ambiguous places that may contain important implications.

(According to Інтерпретація художнього тексту // Воробйова О.П., Іноземцева І.О., Подолян І.Е., – 2004.)

EXTRA SHORT STORIES FOR INTERPRETATION

The Snow Horse

Jeanette Winterson

Christmas Eve. Snow had fallen snow on snow, snow on snow, until the city lay underneath its white pelt like a steaming animal.

We had ignored the weather warnings and escaped in the Jeep, feeling smug about our Advanced Snow System, and guilty about owning a four-wheel drive. My partner is deep Green. I am a shade of yellow.

Boffin, our dog, who knows everything, is black and white.

Still, we had given money to charity, bought a free-range goose, that had been given therapy before slaughter, and wrapped our Christmas presents in back copies of *Le Monde*.

We were warm and cosy, happy, and then we started to fight. Every year it's the same; the Christmas crack-up, the Yule yowls, the Xmas Exit, the Goodwill gladiators razoring each other to pieces. Over what?

'Why did you buy a Singing Poinsettia?'

'You don't like the real ones.'

'So you thought a rubber one that sings Jingle Bells would be better?'

And then... 'If you kiss someone at the office party for more than 10 seconds, should you tell your partner?'

'Definitely not.'

That's why I don't trust you...'

I read somewhere that most affairs start at Christmas, and so do most divorces. You spend all year saying nothing to each other, then it all pours out on the motorway like a diesel spill.

I cautiously put my hand across to your seat. It's good that legs don't have teeth. 'Listen, we're both tired, let's just get to the cottage, unpack, have a bath, and be in time for Simon's party.'

'I don't want to go to his bloody party.'

Simon is local gentry. I like him, Fiona doesn't like him, and she likes his wife even less since she served up fox fritters one lunchtime. It wasn't really fried fox; it's just that they have a different sense of humour in the country.

Live and let live, I say. Fiona says, 'Try telling that to the Hunt.'

So we agree to differ, because I come from the country and she comes from the city, and because things are complicated enough without fighting with someone you love.

That's what I tell Boffin, anyway.

By the time we had reached the cottage and unpacked a year's supply of E-free mince pies, eco-bones for Boffin, and our Forest Friendly tree, we had disagreed about everything from Global Warming, ('darling, there is six inches of snow on top of the outside loo seat'), to how to cook a goose, (she wanted Jamie Oliver, I voted for Bob Cratchit's recipe in A Christmas Carol).

I like a roaring fire downstairs, and a freezing cold bathroom upstairs, because that feels like a traditional British Christmas. Fiona likes lots of central heating and no soot. I even like the word 'soot'.

Of course, she decides she won't come to the party. I sulk, eat six mince pies, and nothing happens. If I am going, I've got to go now. If she is staying, she's got to stay.

'Please come with me.'

'Simon is a prat in a cravat, and Geraldine is as hospitable as a skewer.'

'There will be lots of people there that we know.'

'Yes, and most of them support the death penalty.'

I went upstairs to get my shoes and tip-toed out of the raging cottage into the quiet of the snow. I took a deep breath.

Just as I was starting the car, Fiona poked her head out of the kitchen window. 'You're crazy to drive in this anyway. Don't take the short cut, will you?'

I didn't answer. The window slammed shut.

I like driving. The white road was shiny and clean. There were deer herding together where the fields closed into woods. I was just beginning to relax, when the sky opened as though it had been torn with a knife, and snow hit the car like someone had thrown a quilt over me. All over me. I had to stop.

I got out of the car into a whirlstorm of white. The wind was slicing across the road, lifting the already fallen snow in freezing fillets. This wasn't the stuff of Christmas cards; this was lethal. I got back in, put the wipers and the windscreen heater on full blast, and began to move forward at about 10mph.

A figure stepped out into the road.

I braked, and wound down the window.

The face looking in at me was red and wild, with a black beard and black eyes. He had a hat pulled down low, and his mouth was a slot of teeth. He was the rough shape of human.

‘Can you give me a ride? Not far, not far at all.’

‘Are you broken down?’

‘I am, yes.’

‘Where’s your car?’

‘I never said anything about a car.’

I was uneasy, but he had already opened the door, and was standing letting the wind blow in, snow hanging from his beard.

‘Can you take me as far as the Merrymouth Inn?’

It was on my way. I couldn’t say no. He got in. The temperature in the car dropped. I presumed it was the ice on his clothes.

‘Do you want to sling your coat in the back and dry off?’

‘No, not at all. I’m fine as I am now, I am.’

‘Where are you from?’

‘Connamara, if we turn back in time, and it’s the time of year for that, sure it is.’

‘This snow came out of nowhere. I suppose you were walking to the pub and got caught?’

‘No, not at all.’

We were silent for a while, inching along the frozen highway. I fiddled with the radio – there was a ghost story just beginning. My passenger suddenly leaned forward and turned off the radio. Before I could protest, he offered to tell me a ghost story of his own, by way of payment for the ride, he said. I nodded. At least we wouldn’t have to make conversation.

He glanced at me, and began:

‘There was a man making his way home on the Wool Road from London to Hereford. He had sold his sheep at a good price, and bought himself a good white mare, and bolts of cloth and fine stuffs for his family, for he had married better than himself, and he hoped to show something to be remarked upon, for his labour and his wits. His goods were travelling slower behind in a cart, but he carried his money on his person. It was the 21st of December, and as cold and dark a night as ever fell at the end of a day.

He had ridden on past the coaching inn where his companions and servants took their rest that night. He wanted to get further, and his mare was willing, and he reckoned another fifteen miles could be got this day and the next, and so bring him home the sooner for the Feast of Christmas.

But there was strange work abroad, and a band of men ambushed him and robbed him, and left him for dead by the roadside, and they would have taken his white mare too, if she hadn't bolted.

In the long hours of the night, the snow fell, and by morning the man's body could not be seen. His companions and servants came past him on the road, and went on all unknowing, until they reached the further inn, and found he had never been there. While they were debating the matter, the white mare came galloping up, still saddled, but wild with fright, and she led them back to her master, where he lay wounded for his life, and fair dead of the bludgeoning and the cold. Then what happened never should have happened. His men convinced themselves that as they had had no hand in his ruin, they might honestly profit from his downfall, and they made away with the remainder of his goods.

The one who rode the white mare had reason to regret it soon, for she threw him and cracked his skull, and returned her way, weary and hungry, back to the body of her master, where she lay beside him, white in the white snow, trying with her love to bring him to life again.

She perished there beside him on the road.

There's a story in these parts that anyone who meets this man – not as he was, mind, but meets him nonetheless, and helps him, will see that horse too, when he has need of her. See her white and high as the moon, white against the white of the hill.

'Have you ever seen her?' I asked

He laughed. 'Seen her? Oh yes, and you too, perhaps.'

'I don't believe in ghosts.'

'No, not at all, you don't?'

'No, not at all.' I laughed uncomfortably. 'I don't.'

'What is it that you do believe in?'

I didn't answer. I know all about the things I don't believe in, but belief sounds too much like fanaticism to me. I mumbled something about equality and justice.

'Fine words' said the man, 'very philosophical I'm sure, but when you come to lay your hand on it, what does it mean?'

I had felt uncomfortable. Now I felt resentful. Why was I being lectured by an old tramp?

The snow had eased a little and we were in sight of the Merrymouth Inn. The man began to open the door before I had time to stop properly. He got out and looked back at me, tipping his hat. 'I'll tell you what's true as I

stand before you. There's three things to believe in: Believe in yourself. Believe in what's better than yourself. Believe in the one you love.'

He stood back. 'Now there's no fancy philosophy there, but there's solid things to put to the test. Merry Christmas to you.'

I smiled. Mad bastard. Let him freeze to death.

As I pulled away, I caught myself up in my thought. He had rattled me all right. I was angry, and why? What had he done wrong? Nothing. What had he said that was so bad? Nothing.

What do you believe in then? His voice coming back to me.

In myself? That's a difficult one. Does he mean like George Bush or like Ghandi? In something better than myself? Does he mean like old-fashioned God or new-fangled world peace? Too abstract... why am I even thinking about this? But I am, so, maybe something better than myself is... well let's face it, even the dog is better than myself; he's loyal, trustworthy, never lies.

Ok, the dog, I believe in the dog. What else? While I was struggling with the second part, as well as the first, I strayed forward to the last – the one you love.

I love Fiona – but believe in her? What would that mean? Complete trust. A kind of peacefulness. Belief is not knowledge – it's not about the facts. It's certainty where there is no certainty – at least not logically. It isn't rational, which is why it has this fanaticism feel to it, and why I am wary of it, and why I look at its dark face, when its shining face is... suddenly, right above me, the beginning of the moon, white light in a white sky.

What do you believe in then?

I stopped the car and switched off the engine. This high ridge has a view for miles across the fields – the white flat squares marked off by dark hedge lines. Far in the distance were the massed lights of the town. Behind me, the road was empty and quiet. The snow storm had driven everyone home. In the field next to me, a small flock of sheep were gathered round a long galvanised trough. In the silence I could hear their flat teeth placidly grinding swede.

From the top of the drift I could see my destination; the black bulk of the house, its windows brightly lit. I had only another mile or so if I took the short cut.

Don't take the short cut will you?

But now I was late, and the house was so near. To go all the way round the road would be at least four miles, and the snow was just beginning again,

innocent, gentle, but with a purpose to it. In half an hour there might be another blizzard.

Yet there was no wind, and the sky had cleared. I got out of the car to inspect the top of the drift and its first sloping bend, or bending slope. This was a short cut to the village that generations of farm workers and servants had used in all weathers, but they had been on foot, or at best on a four-legged animal. I looked at my Jeep. Four-wheel drive is the up-to date version of four-legged traction. If a horse could get down here, so could I. A horse comes without an Advanced Snow System. This is England, not Iceland. I smiled at my own nervousness, and turned back to the car.

So still. The sky in its night-coat worn through with stars. One, brighter than the rest, hung low in the valley. All I had to do was drive towards it, and it felt seasonal and simple, and I threw off the strangeness of my earlier encounter, and got inside the warm cab, and eased the car into second gear. The deep lane closed around me.

It was steeper than I remembered. Tentatively I applied the brake and the back end shifted. All right then, no braking, just trust the car to do the job and sit tight. I inched forward, conscious of the car creaking, and the muffled noise under the tyres. An owl flew straight over the windscreen, its face a white warning.

There was so much white that I began to mistake the bending dipping track for the steep verges on either side. I over-steered, and lurched up the bank, skidding down again, half sideways across the road. It was so narrow, I could hardly right myself, the car wheels slipping stupidly as I tried to reverse. I pulled myself round, trod on the brake out of habit, and stalled the car. Before I could get the handbrake on, I was sliding forward, with no four-wheel drive and no engine. I grabbed the handbrake and stamped on the brake, only to slide forward faster on the sheer ice, as the back wheels locked.

At that second a sheet of snow hit the windscreen from a shedding tree, and my world went completely white. I could hear what sounded like an avalanche, and I knew the avalanche was me, picking up speed down the track, as the dead Jeep became nothing but its own weight. The last thing I remember was opening the side window and turning my head. There was a horse. A white horse.

Then the white world turned black.

It was my mobile phone ringing that brought me round. For seconds or minutes, I don't know, I sat quite still, noticing, without emotion, that snow had blown in through the open window of the Jeep, and made a white

cushion on the passenger seat. The cushion was studded with red berries. Red berries. I put out my hand in slow motion. No, not red berries, red blood.

I tried to move – yes, I could move alright. I tried to open the door – no, it was stuck on my side. I slid across the blood-written snow cushion, and dragged myself through the passenger window. I fell into deep snow, snow falling heavily all around me. The fender of the Jeep was twisted under a farm gate.

Without thinking, I opened the back of the car and took out the two travel rugs we keep there. I wrapped them round my head and shoulders. Then I got the bottle of whisky I had been taking to my host and shoved it in my coat pocket. Blood fell from the cut over my eye onto the white ground. I stooped down and picked up a handful of crystal snow and packed it against the cut. It felt cold and light and clean.

I took a swig of the whisky and started walking.

I saw them straight away – the footsteps. Footsteps walking down the drift, from the ridge towards the village. New footsteps, very new, because the snow was falling so fast now.

I followed them like a child, and then I noticed something else, appearing right beside them, but suddenly appearing, although this was impossible, and in my slowed down state I stood letting the snow cover me, trying to understand it. Very clearly, marked into the lane, were the prints of a horse's hooves.

'He must have jumped the hedge' I thought, knowing that horses don't jump unless someone is riding them, or unless they are very afraid.

'My head is hurt' I thought. 'I must keep going. I must get to the house.'

Then, like an idiot, I remembered the phone in the car. I turned to go back, but if I did that I would be walking away from the footprints. And away from the horse. I don't know why I did what I did at that moment. But instead of turning back, I walked on.

'I am sorry I shouted at you.' I said out loud, though there was no one to hear. 'I am sorry you aren't here now.' I put out my hand to hold your hand.

When I was little, my parents rowed most of the time. I remember sitting on the stairs in my pyjamas and dressing gown listening to them fighting. She wanted more money, he wanted a different life. When they divorced I promised myself I wouldn't fight anyone I love. It's a promise that breaks like cheap glass.

I was close to the bottom of the track now, and the few village houses were dark. Why was everyone out? Were they all at the party? The wind was getting up, flinging gusts of snow into my face like a wet mask. ‘Not far now’ I said to myself, ‘Keep walking’

But I wasn’t walking, I was falling.

The sky in its night-coat worn through with stars. The comets with their burning tails driven by solar winds. A red planet in the East; the sun or Mars? A birth is something to believe in. A new beginning is something to believe in. Always a new beginning a different end.

It was Fiona standing over me. There were voices far off, but her face near, and she was holding my hand.

‘I knew you’d take the short cut’ she said. ‘I came after you. I rang Simon and he went looking for you when you didn’t arrive at the party. Geraldine came and picked me up, they were both so kind, I wish I hadn’t said the things I said. I thought you were dead, we found the Jeep...’

She was crying. I squeezed her hand. I felt very close to her and very far away from myself.

‘I saw your footsteps’ I said – ‘and the horse. ‘Did you see the snow horse?’

‘A horse?’

‘When you walked down the drift there was a horse next to you, did you not see him?’

I lay awake all through that Christmas Eve night, you sleeping beside me. We were in a big bed, the moon standing guard outside the window. There was the owl again – K-wick, K-wick, and nearby, the long hoot of her mate. Then I heard it, unmistakable, the steady clip of hooves under the window and towards the drift, and out, further and further, faster and faster, on the high old coaching road, beneath the rack of stars.

Directed-study questions:

1. Ponder upon the meaning implied by the title of the story. Why do you think the horse is specified as “snow” but not as “white”? Does the notion “snow” render some additional sense?

2. Find the episodes in the story in which the utmost “contradictions in terms” are dwelled upon. How does it add to the depicting of the image of the character?

3. Find all the cases of similes the main character uses to describe:

- a) the town;
- b) the suppressed negative emotions;
- c) the sky;
- d) the snow;
- e) the main character's behaviour.

What are the expressive means the similes are grounded on? What stylistic effects are created as a result of such blending?

4. In what episodes of the story does the reader's suspicion over the reliability (or reality) of the old man start rising? What are the means that bring mysticism to the image of the old man?

5. Dwell upon the concept BELIEF that is embodied in the story. Compare the approaches the main character and the old man rely on deciphering it. What is the major difference that accounts for the chasm in their understanding of the same concept? Follow the track of the thoughts of the main character who tries to fill in the frame of the concept offered by the old man. Do you see any flea in his way of thinking?

6. Can you draw the parallel in depicting the images of THE HORSE and THE CAR? What do these images stand for? How does their recreation add to the development of the story?

7. What is the symbolic inference in the image of THE HORSE?

8. Find the episode in which the main character subconsciously has reconsidered the basics of his outlook. How has it happened? What are the implicit and explicit means this change is depicted in the story?

9. What is the message of the story?



The Mistletoe Bride

Jeanette Winterson

It's the custom in these parts to play Hide and Seek on Christmas Eve. My new husband wishes to prolong the chase. I am his caught thing, but he has not had me yet. He says that after dinner, when we have eaten our fill, and before supper, when we shall sit round and tell a wintry tale, all the ladies present shall hide, and all the gentlemen present shall seek them.

It is a moment for a stolen kiss. It is a moment outside of time. We wear our masks. We hide.

It is my wedding night. The custom of these parts is for the new bride to marry on Christmas Eve. It is an holy time, but glowing with strange lights. It is not yet Christ's day; it is still the day of unexpected visits and mummary.

My dress is white, with a tiny red stain; stain of berries, stain of robin red breast, stain of my maidenhead. My husband chooses where the stain shall be. Mine is over my heart.

I come from wild country though I am gentle born. My husband is double my age at thirty-four. He tells me I am as near an animal as humankind can be. He means it well, thinking only that I travel without trace and fall without a mark. I am light-boned.

He loves my waist, slender as a rope. He says my hands and feet are as delicate as a web. He calls me his spun thing, and one morning he gently unwound my hair and kissed me.

I am my father's youngest daughter, and had been warned of a convent life. My dowry is small, but my husband is rich, and cares nothing for his wife's jewels. He would rather I shine beside him, than glint dully behind the Church walls.

I was glad to travel this way, though I came on horseback and not by coach. The land is white-covered, bedded down under the snow. My horse's bridle was traced with frost.

My breath was thick from the riding; it steamed the air in evaporating cones. I fancied I could read sentences in the white breath of my mouth. It was as though I was talking to myself in a vaporous language no one else understood. My breath formed words – LOVE.

BEWARE. The game amused me through the long icicle of our journey. As we rode, my husband stood up in his stirrups, and cut a low bunch of mistletoe from an oak tree, as we passed through the Bowland

forest. He fashioned it into a crown and hung it on the pommel of his saddle. He said it was for me, when we married. He called me his mistletoe bride.

I looked sideways at him, so confident and happy. I was shy and gentle, and I liked his certainties and his easy manners. He made me feel safe, though I am nervous by nature.

Nervous as a hare after harvest. I need cover. My husband said he would cover me. All his men laughed and I blushed. But he is not unkind.

As we rode, my childhood self rode with me for part of the way. Then at a crossroads, she turned her horse, and waved goodbye. I had thought of my life at home, and nothing else, for miles and miles. I knew that I was leaving a house and a family, but I was leaving myself too. I wept a little when she had gone, and my maid thought I was tired, and held my hand.

There were other selves who disappeared on that bleak road: My free, careless, unconsidered self – the one I am when alone, could not come with me, though she tried.

The more my soon-husband talked amiably of my duties as his lady, the more I felt myself caught in a long day of orders to give, and visits to receive. It would not be fitting for the Lord's wife to throw a cloak over her shoulders and run out into the rain.

But this was growing up, and surely nothing to fear. A new self was waiting to meet me. The person I would become was standing at the castle gate.

Is that her – looking older, graver, darker? She nodded to me as I rode over the tongue of the drawbridge. She did not smile.

I loved the music and the dancing. My new husband held my hand and whispered to me that he would always find me, wherever I hid, he told me he could scent me. He said he was my gentle hunter. He said I should have run of the house where I pleased. It was my house. No harm could fall to me there.

Then the music stopped and he clapped his hands. Laughing, the men covered their faces and began to count out loud, while we ladies ran giggling and chattering down corridors long as sleep.

I did not know any of the ways. The heavy candles in the mullions stood like servants, but they hardly lit the dark stone. I chased alongside a girl of my own age, who seemed to map every twist and stair. We came to a quiet landing, where a pair of doors was stood open onto a deep room. I hesitated and looked in. She called me, but still I hesitated and looked in.

The bed was carved and turned back. There were petals thrown over the pillow, the last of the roses, kept white and fresh for tonight. On the

identical tables at each side of the bed, was a copper holder and a fresh taper. The tapers were not lit, only the light of the fire showed me the scene.

I walked in shyly, on tiptoe, because I knew without knowing, that this was the bridal chamber. This is where he would bring me when he found me. This was where we could begin our life together.

Laid on the turned back sheets, like sleeping knights, were two garments, both white, though his had embroidery of leopards and hinds. It made me smile to see us already at peace and asleep, and I wondered how many years we would lie side by side, until time claimed us. On the pillow, resting on my shift, was the circle of mistletoe - mysterious, poisonous, white as death, green as hope.

Impulsively, I took the pendant from my neck – it had been my father's gift as I left his house. I put the pendant on my husband's garment, and kissed it before I turned away.

I was trying to tell him that I was his. There would be no need for him to claim me.

Full of happiness, I ran out of the room, quick as a shadow. No one was near by, but I felt that if he came anywhere, he would come here. I would hide in a cupboard or a chest, not far away.

There was an old oak trunk at the end of the passage. I had to struggle to lift the lid, I could barely see what I was doing, then, as if to help me, the moon slanted through the mullion, as pale as my skin, as clear as my happiness.

I looked out. The strange figure was still at the tongue of the drawbridge. I saw the fast moving clouds and the frozen smile of the moat. This was my home. I would never leave.

As I stood, I heard voices spiralling towards me. Someone was coming round and round the turret stair. With all my strength I heaved open the lid and jumped in. It was deeper than I thought, almost three feet down, and I could sit quite comfortably while I waited.

Yes, it was husband's voice. He was talking to a woman, but I did not recognise her tones. He said 'No, not in there,' and I guessed he must have searched for me in our chamber. With a note of peevishness, she said 'Where then? Where? Haven't we come far enough?' There were footsteps coming towards me. Soon he would lift the lid.

'Here' he said. 'Here, out of the light.'

There was silence, or something like silence, if kisses and touches are silence. I pushed as hard and as quietly as I could and put my eyes to the slit I made under the lid of the chest. The moon showed me everything.

My husband had his hands on the breasts of a lady I had seen at the feast. He was pressing them, and lowering his head to kiss the nipples. Her hands were round his thighs, anxiously, eagerly, unbuttoning him to where he sprang.

I wanted to stop looking. I had seen this before, in daylight and in my dreams. I had seen the rough hands of grooms on the soft bodies of our servants. I watched him and I wanted him. He was my husband, I was in the second of throwing back the lid and confronting them, when he turned her round and pushed her front-down onto the box. My hands flew away, and I heard a click, and then the sound of him above me.

The heavy box withstood the assault. I put my hand up, right under her belly. I ran my hand along the lid to the place where he must have entered her. I breathed with them both, and waited.

This was my wedding night.

I was beginning to feel hot and faint. There was too little air. I had to get out. I heard them moving away, and I turned on all fours and pushed up at the lid with my back.

Nothing happened.

My body sweated in terror. I took a deep breath of what air was left, air as dry and old as my happiness had become, and then I painfully rolled over and used both my feet to attack the lid.

It was yielding, it was yielding, but it wouldn't give. The little click I had heard, so innocent and brief, had been the lock, unused for who knows how many years?

I started to shout. Surely he would hear me? Surely someone would come? But why would he come to his bridal chamber without his bride? I remembered what he said – that he would always find me. Always could wait until tomorrow. I needed him now.

I must have fainted, because when I woke I was sitting with my dolls in the schoolroom at home, and I hadn't lost my childhood self at all, I had become her. I was singing a little song about the sun rising over the river, and suddenly I realised, with a terror I had never known, that I would never see the sun rising again. Behind my eyes was a glowing red ball, and my body was like mist evaporating.

LOVE. BEWARE. The words filled the smaller and smaller space of the chest, the smaller and smaller space of my chest. With my last breath I ... With my last breath I...

Didn't die. I do not know what final power aided me. I hardly know what happened, but the lid opened for me like an Aladdin, and I crawled out and lay on the dark stone.

When I found my strength, a single purpose filled me; to get away. I unfastened my wedding dress, and threw it into the chest and closed the lid tight. I went into the bridal chamber, where our effigies still slept, and took warm clothes of my husband's from his closet.

The clothes were too big, but my body was my own. I dressed quickly, and stole some precious gold and silver stuff, and a necklace, to sell. Some instinct took me back down the passage past my emptied coffin, and I found a narrow staircase, leading down, and down.

This staircase brought me down the side of the castle to an underground route that led beyond the drawbridge. As I came out into the light, I saw the dark and hooded figure turn to me. I shook my head. Not here, not you, not death. They say that no one can choose the day of their death, but perhaps there is a day when we can choose life. In the white, still frost, that hardened the stars and brightened the ground, I wanted to live at least one more day. Cold or hunger might kill me, but I would not die of suffocation. I would have suffocated in his bed as surely as in his box.

There was a star straight above me. I followed it in a swoon of cold, until the dawn bells rang Christmas Day.

Years later I heard the story. I had become a legend. Yes, me, the Brewer at the Convent of the First Miracle. It is my work to turn water into wine.

The nuns took me in, washed me and dressed me, and called me their Christmas gift.

Every year, they said, there is some mystery that cannot be explained. They asked for no explanation, and I gave none.

I am happy here, not enclosed at all, because if my daily round is limited, my spirit roams where it will.

Then one snowy day, just at the shortest day of the year, a man came by to wheel and deal for barrels of my winter Meade. While he was eating with me, he mentioned that the Lord of the Hall was to be married, after three years of mourning for his lost bride.

She is often to be seen on a frosty night, haunting the battlements of the castle where she fell. She fell into the moat, and the cold covered her over again, before anyone could find the place.

Then he leaned forward confidentially, and whispered to me that there was another story too, told by servants, amongst themselves. Her wedding

dress had been found in an old chest, her body utterly decayed. 'When they lifted out the dress, her body was nothing but dust. Dust!' As he was going on his way, I asked him to deliver a gift from the nuns to the Lord, in honour of his wedding day. It was a barrel of my best wine, but before he took it, I went out into the woods and cut down a mistletoe bough.

Carefully, I pinned it to the barrel. Let the Lord of the Hall make of it what he will. Mistletoe – the ancient plant of winter life. The green amongst the white. Green as hope, white as death. Mysterious. Poisonous. Self-renewing.

In a few days it would be Christmas; the day of birth and beginning. I had lost one life and found another.

Nothing is as it seems. That had been bitter to me once. But isn't it the meaning of the story of a stable and a star?

In the cry of a baby, in the course of a star, in the trust of strangers, in the telling of a tale, there is hope.

Like others, I had found it.

Directed-study questions:

1. How are the concepts TIME and SPACE represented in the story?

2. Trace the symbolism of the phytonym mistletoe. What does this symbol imply in the story you've read? Do you know any British traditions connected with mistletoe? Are there any other phytonyms in the story? State which of the phytonymic implications can be regarded as trite. Point out the fragments containing deep phytonymic implications.

3. Compare two SHE-SELVES the main character opposes in her meditations: SHE-before marriage and SHE-after marriage. What makes the difference? How does the personage's attitude to this forthcoming transformation in her personality and mode of living characterize her?

4. What is the basic stylistic device/expressive means the description of the main characters is based on? What is the stylistic effect of its usage? To make the difference between the main HE/SHE characters more vivid, fill the table that follows with the oppositions implied or stated explicitly in the story.

POINTS FOR COMPARISON	HE	SHE
AGE		
BACKGROUND		
SOCIAL STATUS		
APPEARANCE		
CHARACTER		
MANNER OF CONDUCT		
...		

5. Dwell upon colour symbolism in the story. How does it add to recreating of the image of the character / setting / atmosphere?

6. Draw the EMOTIVE MAP of the story. Make it two-faceted: depict the emotions experienced by the main characters through out the whole story and the emotions provoked in the readers who follow the plotline development.

7. Decipher the reminiscence used at the end of the story. How does it correlate with the main character’s statement “Nothing is as it seems”?

15. What is the message of the story?



Roman Short Story

Jeanette Winterson

Rome. La Dolce Vita. Rome. The Eternal City. Rome, where the snow falls through the unclosed dome of The Pantheon.

I thought you were disappearing – the white snow wrapping you. Your outlines wavered. You sparkled. You had stepped inside an ordinary phenomenon and you had turned into a miracle. You were not disappearing, you were landing. Where you landed was me.

The Pantheon – 27 BC, Marcus Agrippa designed it. 125 AD, Hadrian rebuilt it. 609 AD, it was consecrated as a Christian site. Later, much later, Pope Urban VII stole its bronze roof for his fat baldacchino – St. Peter's bed canopy, swollen as sex, hijacked into piety.

The Pantheon – 43 meters high. 43 meters in diameter. The open dome is 9 meters across, and under its weather-changed mysteries, I found you.

Sunlight-shafted in summer. In winter, a falling cylinder of snow. Spring blossom turns the stone floor bridal, and autumn leaves hang in its wind currents. Withered like parchment, crunched with drought, your future might be here. Catch one. Read it. What does it say?

Seasonally adjusted, but indifferent to time, the Pantheon waits its moment, lazy for the miracle, but prepared to let it happen, especially if the tourists are looking the other way.

There was no one there. The guided-group-Free-on-Sunday, were between the second and third chapel on the left – tomb of Raphael.

I stood alone, or so I thought, until the dome poured snow and you stepped out of it – time's hologram, and snap-shot splendour.

There was no photograph. It doesn't matter.

'Have we met before?' I said.

'Yes,' you said, which was strange, because we hadn't.

We agreed to share a taxi to the Vatican. I wanted to look at the looted bronze and you wanted to fill a phial with Holy Water for your mother.

'Is your mother a Catholic?'

'No, but she doesn't take any chances.'

We went inside, and walked over to the Michelangelo sculpture of Mary and the dead Christ. The proportions are wrong, which is why it works so powerfully. Mary is about eight feet tall, judging from the measurement of her limbs. Inside the Christian emblem is a lost goddess.

Pagan Rome. Christian Rome. Somewhere Michelangelo didn't take any chances either.

'Do you remember that lunatic who came here in the 1970's and tried to smash the thing with a hammer?'

'Why would anyone want to do that?'

Why indeed? But things of beauty are destroyed forever. We do it all the time.

I hid inside my own thoughts for a moment. I was in this city because I had taken a hammer to my life, and a restoration job wasn't possible. I would have to make something new using what material I had. It isn't always easy to know the difference between vandalism and change. We are more complicated than works of art, though usually less important. Once I'm gone, it won't matter, all the more reason then, to try and get it right while I'm still here.

'They never get it right,' you said.

What? Were you reading my mind?

'The Holy Water. Either the place is bird-bath deep in the stuff, or there's not a drop for a dying soul.'

Yes that's it. I was smiling. Maybe there is a God after all. Maybe this is a message not to be too tough on myself. I began to think about kissing you.

We went down onto the river and walked along its wide banks until we could come up in the Trastevere district. I like the rough feel of the place, the coffee served hot and cheap, the trattorias without menus – just a couple of tables, and eat whatever is in the kitchen. I asked for meatballs and bitter red salad. You got a plate of lentils and sausage.

Roman Rome, Renaissance Rome, Modern Rome. How have they learned to live so well side by side? For us, the idea of progress means that the past is gone. Most likely the past gets forgotten. At best it turns into history. Here, the past stays alive in buildings and DNA – the Caravaggio faces, the group of boys on a street corner, the washing stretched between a Tiberius pillar and a medieval roof-brace.

It was always so. The Forum has a medieval town inside it. The medieval buildings by the Coliseum open onto eighteenth century houses. Modern Romans get on a tram by the eighteenth century Teatro Argentina and glide into the suburbs behind the RipaHotel, ultramodern stop-off for airline pilots and Japanese.

I took you onto the tram. We watched it coming towards us. ARGENTINA it says in digital letters at the head of its military-green body. I first started riding it because it sounded so romantic; would it take me to ranches deep in pampas grass under star-punctured skies?

No. It took me to the suburbs, the places where visitors don't go – but here too, Rome is re-inventing itself, and turning warehouses into apartments, that look back to Rome's beginnings – the Coliseum, lit and visible, monument to death and change – like Rome herself.

We never look at someone we know unless we are angry with them, or unless we want to kiss them. Familiar faces are always blurred faces. The pleasure of someone new is in the looking. I was watching you closely as we stood together on the packed tram.

This longing I feel is not quite authentic. It is the city that is seducing me. I run my fingers over the stones and time tingles my fingertips. Past and future are electrically present here. I might meet Shelley on the Spanish Steps. I might meet myself, twenty years from now, living in an apartment that looks onto a Byzantine mosaic.

Possibility becomes suggestive here. Rome is a porous city. Pouring through me, are the chances I might take. You seem like a chance.

So we walk until late at night, dropping into bars for Prosecco, telling each other stories that may or may not be true. Facts matter less here. The feeling is everything.

We guess at faces. We pin identities like medals on unsuspecting strangers. We watch for ghosts – there are always ghosts, haunting street corners and the porticos of churches. Then it happens as I hoped it would, and laughing to dodge the millionth scooter of the day, we are in each other's arms, and the laughter turns to kisses.

I won't see you again, I am sure of that, but it doesn't matter.

We went back to my apartment.

In the morning I was woken as I am always here, by the early noises of the street market; feet on the pavement, voices arguing, crates shunted in and out of vans, a bird whistling in a cage, and behind that, a fountain, and behind that, the rumble of the traffic.

I leave the window open, even in winter, because I like the smells; rocket and onions, the red earth of porcini, the black earth of truffles, the clay on the potatoes, and the warm greenhouse smell of tomatoes sprayed with water to keep them fresh.

My body was perfectly still, but fully alive, and I thought that this is what happiness is – these moments of calm aliveness.

You were next to me sleeping. I held your hand. I love the warmth and simplicity of another body sleeping next to me.

I can't keep this day. I can only live it now. I can't save it up for another time. Another time will be another time. This is today. My gift. One life. One day.

I got up quietly, dressed and went downstairs and drank coffee standing up in a little bar. I was sleepy and happy, not because I wanted anything but because I didn't. It will be enough to go now, to wrap the day round me like a warm coat.

I walked across to the church and lit a candle in the ultra modern Offertorio Electrico, then, just to be sure, I bought an old-fashioned taper too. I prayed for you, even though you are an invention – a story I told myself, because Rome is a story that has never stopped telling itself – lovers, murders, buildings, power, scandal, sex.

At the church door I saw you leaving the main door to our apartments. You live there and so do I. I know nothing about you, except that you are Irish, and that one day you asked me if I knew about the Number Eight tram – Argentina.

I think I'll run and catch up with you. Who knows?

It doesn't matter. This is my day. This is Rome. I need to be as true as an animal and as wise as a saint. I shall need the luck of the devil if I am to hold it all in my hands.

'Ciao Bella!' My grocer throws me an apple – a model of the world in little, original sin, and the spinning globe, and just an apple.

This day. Don't drop it. It will be gone soon enough.

Directed-study questions:

1. What are the major images the story incorporates? Are they developing parallelly or are they interwoven? In what way?

2. Elicit as detailed information as possible about the three images recreated in the story. What are the dominant stylistic devices or expressive means each of them is based on? Fill in the table offered:

	IMAGE 1	IMAGE 2	IMAGE 3
STYLISTIC MEANS			
LEXICAL MEANS			

3. Do you agree that antithesis is the skeleton of the story? Illustrate it with the examples from the text.

4. Enumerate all the historical places and artifacts mentioned in the story. Provide additional information about them. What kind of artistic details do they belong to? What function do they perform in the story?

5. Is the perspective of Rome description objectivized or subjectivized? Support your point of view with the examples from the story. What makes subjective suggestions of the narrator objectivized?

6. What are the perceptual channels Rome is depicted through in the story? Think about other ways of “perceptual” description of something or somebody. Give examples.

7. Find the excerpt in which the ontogenesis of feeling is implicitly described. What feeling is it? Do you agree it is the easiest and the most natural way of its development?

8. Decipher and explain the meaning of the following statements:

- ...*“things of beauty are destroyed forever”*;
- *“It isn’t always easy to know the difference between vandalism and change”*;
- ...*“the idea of progress means that the past is gone”*;
- ... *“happiness is the moments of calm aliveness”*;
- *“We are more complicated than works of art”*.

9. Is it possible to be “as true as an animal and as wise as a saint”? What does each of these comparisons presuppose? Rephrase the comparisons using adjectives. What is implied in “the luck of the devil”? How is it related to being “as true as an animal and as wise as a saint”?

10. What are the major concepts the author develops her story around? How does she evolve each of them? What sense does she fill them with? What are the ways of the concepts verbalization? How are the concepts interrelated?

11. Read the excerpt about TIME perception. How does it correlate with the concept TIME in the story? Translate the excerpt offered into English. Give your own examples to prove that TIME perception can be different?

“Чтобы узнать цену года, спроси студента, который провалился на экзамене.

Чтобы узнать цену месяца, спроси мать, родившую преждевременно.

Чтобы узнать цену недели, спроси редактора еженедельника.

Чтобы узнать цену часа, спроси влюбленного, ждущего свою возлюбленную.

Чтобы узнать цену минуты, спроси опоздавшего на поезд.

Чтобы узнать цену секунды, спроси того, кто потерял близкого человека в автомобильной катастрофе.

Чтобы узнать цену одной тысячной секунды, спроси серебряного медалиста олимпийских игр”.

Б.Вербер “Империя ангелов”

12. “The rough feel of the place” – explain the meaning of the phrase. Have you ever experienced this sort of feeling? When? Describe your sensations.

13. Find the excerpts where the narrator turns to “embodied” verbalization describing her sensations. What effect is being created?

14. Can you find anything special about the composition of the story? Do you think the author has succeeded having chosen this way of her thoughts lay out? Why?

15. How would you characterize the style of writing?

16. Can you guess the gender of the narrator? Try to prove it. Do you think the narrator is reliable? Why?

17. What is the message of the story? What life philosophy is promulgated?



Gossamer

David Gaffney

Just tell her. Just open up your heart and spill it out. That's what some people do. But Damien's plan was special and as he began to put it into action, everything in the universe seemed to click into place, and all things rang with Emma; even the muted throb of the car's engine sang her name – Emma, Emma, Emma. He looked in his rear mirror at the diminishing oblong that was Industry House. Emma would be sat there this very minute, right next to Damien's empty desk. Every evening she lingered in his thoughts. Did he exist in hers? He was about to find out.

At the junction he hesitated. Usually he turned right and headed straight for junction nine. Fourteen minutes and three junctions later he'd roll off the slip road and another eight minutes thirty saw him in his flat eating toast and staring at the fridge. But tonight was different. Instead of turning right, he turned left, then left again, and into the supermarket car park where he stopped. He laughed and slapped his hands on the steering wheel in a rapid tattoo. 'Woo-hoo,' he cried, self-consciously. Exuberance didn't come easily to Damien; he couldn't understand why people whistled and hollered out at concerts – he was unable to find the motivation within himself, even though he was sure he enjoyed the gigs as fully as he was intended to. Tonight was different. A new life was spread out before him, a life that would give the answer to the one question that mattered; could Emma love him as he loved her? He sat for a time listening to the ticking of the metal as the bonnet cooled down.

Half an hour later he glanced at himself in the rear mirror. 'Bye-bye, Damien Jones, legal consultant. Nice to know you.'

In the supermarket toilets Damien's transformation took place. He climbed into baggy blue overalls, glued on a false beard, jammed a woolly hat onto his head and balanced a pair of giant oval green-tinted spectacles on his nose. He nodded at his reflection in the mirror, made a gun with his finger and pointed. 'Hey! Kev! Kevin. Kevo. Kevvy. Kay. Kev. K.man. The k-master. What's going on mate? What's going on pal, mate, pallo, matey – What's happening dude. Hey, how you doing? How's it hanging? What's going down – dog. Dog? What's new? Hey, lad, what's the crack? What's new fellah?'

More of this, and more, and yet more, until slowly, incrementally, Damien, the dull, be-suited legal consultant disappeared and Kevin the down-to-earth cleaner was nodding and smiling back at him from the mirror.

There was a bold swagger in his walk when he left the supermarket toilets. Mr De Niro had immersed himself into his new role.

Back at Industry House he waited for the security man to buzz him through. Normally the man would have recognised him and given him that ironic half salute he seemed to reserve for Damien and Damien only. Damien could never think of anything to say to the security men. Some of Damien's colleagues chatted away to them, but Damien had no idea what they spoke about. He didn't even know the names of the security people, never seemed to need to. Mate was always enough.

Donny, the shift supervisor, had constructed a miniature living room in the corner of the utensil cupboard – coffee table, stool for his feet, pile of Daily Mirrors for cultural diversion and an arm chair in which he was sat, sipping from a jam jar an amber liquid the consistency of varnish. A tiny radio on the front of his baseball hat emitted the soft drizzle of drive-time pop. Damien had no idea there were people in the utensil cupboard. He was entering a new world, all the more fascinating because it was hidden away inside the same building in which he worked during the day.

'Here,' Donny said. 'Have a look at this.'

Damien went over and Donny showed him a Polaroid of a crumpled bundle of blankets with, sticking out of it, a tiny baby's head that was wrinkled like a monkey's, and very red.

'My grandson,' he said. 'Two pounds only, that's what he weighs. Born last week.' He slid the picture back in his wallet. 'He's in an incubator, ventilated at the moment, but they expect him to be breathing for himself in a few days.' Donny's eyes were filling with water.

'I'm sorry. They can work wonders now, you know.'

'I know. His oxygen level is a bit high. The mix, you know? Forty per cent. Normal is twenty one per cent so they need to get it down to twenty one per cent. I didn't know there was twenty one per cent oxygen in the air, did you? I thought it was all oxygen, to be honest.'

'Your grandson looks great. I'm sure he'll be OK. I'm the new fellah by the way. Kev.'

Donny indicated a sheet of paper blu-tacked to the back of the door. 'Take a look at the rota. You're on bogs.'

'Sorry Donny, I can't do toilets. My, er, skin condition – I did tell them at the interview.' He hadn't gone to all this trouble to be stuck inside the toilets, seeing no one. The whole idea was to hang about near Emma, get her talking and find out what she really thought about him.

Donny twiddled the volume knob on the side of his baseball cap. 'What?'

'The skin condition. Didn't they say?'

Donny pushed his lips out, emitted a long puff of air and twiddled up the volume on his hat.

Plucking fag-ends from lukewarm puddles of urine and wiping slithery snot trails off the tiles did not help Damien in his quest to discover the secrets of Emma's mind. The only advantage to being on toilets was the faint thrill to be had from cleaning the seats in the women's cubicles, and to be honest even that wasn't worth it. He was about to pack the job in altogether when Donny asked to see him in the utensil cupboard again.

The cupboard looked different. A new lamp sat on the table, its light softened by a coloured cloth that Donny had thrown over it, giving the room a gelatinous green glow. There were a few sofa cushions on the floor which weren't there before, and Donny indicated Damien should sit down on one, which he did. Then Donny lifted a demi-john out from behind a metal cabinet and poured two servings of the viscous brackish brew he'd been drinking the other night into two jam jars.

'You'll join me, won't you?' he said. 'Tomato wine. I make it myself. Sometimes I sit here and listen to the music, sip the wine. It's like a little island away from everything.'

'I bet,' Damien said. 'How's your grandson?'

'He's, he's not that good. He's, uh, he's had a stomach infection and they had to scan it. And then one of his lungs collapsed and they had to put a machine on him to drain that. So he's in the wars to be honest, not so good. Tough little mite, though. But I've been doing my garden plan.' He nodded his head towards a pile of graph paper on which were drawn neat circles and oblongs and a winding path. 'For when he comes out. Me and the missus, we're gonna make that garden for him and he'll be round when his mum's at work. His mum's on her own you see, so she'll need us. And in a city, you need a garden. At the moment it's just a big empty space – all lawn.'

Damien looked at the diagrams and Donny explained which were planters, which were beds, which were raised, everything. He had a sheet of paper on which the cost of all the materials was laid out in a complicated matrix of heading and sub-totals, above a timeline showing completion dates for each element.

'If he's out by next month we will have made a start. From next month's salary I'll get the top soil, from the next I'll get shrubs, the month after that

the rocks for the rockery. You see? It'll all be great. When he gets out. No pond by the way. You'll have noticed that. No pond 'cos of little Sid, see?'

'Oh,' said Damien.

They sat in silence for a few minutes.

Then Donny said, 'You can re-tune the radio if you want. It's in my hat. I bet you wondered where the music was coming from 'He chuckled.' A radio in a hat. My daughter got me this. Sid's mum. It was a joke present, I don't imagine she thought I'd wear it. But I do. Come on, you tune it in. The tuning knob's here,' he tapped the side. Damien said he was happy with the station as it was, but Donny shook his head. 'No, no, no. You're young, put something else on. Whatever you want. You've got ten minutes before your shift starts. Enjoy yourself.'

So Damien began to turn the knob on Donny's hat. The speaker whistled, squealed, spat static, hissed at him, but no other station could be found. Fuzzy voices drifted past below the crackle, but he couldn't catch them, couldn't get just the right notch on the dial. Up close he could smell Donny's breath – tobacco, tuna fish, foul tomato wine – and he wanted to move away as quickly as he could.

'I can't,' Damien said. 'You'll have to do it.'

'Ok, Ok,' Donny said, 'Sit down. What I've really asked you here for is about your work in the toilets. This is a piece of card onto which I have sellotaped an object. The item was found,' he paused and leveled his face at Damien's, 'on one of your toilet seats.'

Suddenly they were Damien's toilet seats.

'What do you think it is?'

'I think it's a hair.'

'It is a hair. And what sort of hair do you think it would be on a toilet seat?'

'Well, Donny, you know, there's bound to be the odd one. Toilets aren't really my thing, I think I'd be better off doing the office. My skin, you see. Remember I told you about my skin?'

Donny took a sip from his jam jar and Damien did too and they both looked at the hair sellotaped to the card.

'What are you doing to do with it?' Damien wondered whether it would be filed as part of his personnel record. But Donny picked it up and flipped it over his shoulder. 'You have my full respect as a professional,' Donny said. 'I didn't find that hair on one of your toilet seats. It's one of mine. It was a test, to see whether you would lie. But you didn't. You admitted that you weren't perfect and agreed that it could have been there, that you could have missed

it, and that's good. I like a man who recognises his own imperfections. I'll tell you what I'll do for you. From tomorrow night you can do the office, OK? Dawn will go back to toilets. She likes 'em anyway, and she's good at it. Damn good.'

To clean his own office. This was what Damien had been waiting for. The next evening, as he applied his beard glue and polished his oval reactalites, he felt a quiver of excitement. For the first time he would be somebody else. He would hear what Emma said about him when he wasn't there.

It was strange to see his own desk from a new perspective. It looked dirtier than he'd expected. Why had he left it so untidy? Case files all over, some gaping open, innards disgorged, revealing confidential case information for anyone to read. How was he expected to clean a desk in this state? How thoughtless the daytime Damien was. There was even a half drunk cup of coffee he hadn't bothered to take into the kitchen. It would be he, the evening Damien, who would make this trip, tip the fermenting contents into the sink, rinse the cup and place it in the dish washer. How difficult would it have been for the day time Damien to have done this? Not very difficult at all. There were scraps of paper on the floor that had missed the bin and here was a chewing gun wrapper that he'd just left sitting on the desk. What a slob. Damien was learning so much about himself already. He looked at the way the daytime Damien had personalised his desk; the postcard from Blackpool he'd thought so ironic looked, from this new vantage point, like a clumsy advertisement for a quirky personality, an attribute that, in honesty, Damien did not possess. And the gig tickets he'd stuck up as proof of an active social life had become more crinkly and faded than he'd realised. Damien moved a few things about and dragged a cloth up and down listening to the conversation Emma was having with Rebecca.

'What do you think of this lipstick? Too bright? My lips are so fat. I think this deep colour over-emphasises them. You know what I've got Becky? I've got big, plump, near-to-exploding bicycle tyre lips' Emma moved her lips apart making a popping sound. 'Look at me, I'm like a fat ugly fish.'

Emma's lips were indeed special. Like an over-engineered solution to some problem, something sexual, possibly.

'No way,' said Rebecca. 'You've got good lips. Emphasise those LIPS girl. Those lips are your ATTACK BRAND.'

Emma broke into a larky smile. 'You think so, darling?' She pouted into her pocket mirror, Jagger-style.

Damien turned to Emma. 'He's a bit messy, this fellah.'

Emma looked as surprised as if Damien's mop head had begun to recite poetry.

'What?'

'This desk. Messy.'

'Oh, that's Damien's desk. He's mortal busy.' She put away her mirror and tapped her computer keyboard. 'Rebecca, look at this site, here. Haircut One Hundred are so the eighties.'

'Should I throw this out?' Damien said, holding up the lump of hematite the daytime Damien had collected from his hometown in West Cumbria and left on his desk as a conversation starter.

'No, no, no,' cried Emma. 'That's one of Damien's special things'. She exchanged a small smile with Rebecca. 'Damien likes to collect.'

'Sounds a bit of a saddo.'

'He's all right.'

She turned her face back to the screen.

Donny called him into the utensil cupboard again the next night, and again he had made some changes. Damien had to struggle through a bead curtain Donny had hung up behind the door and a photo of a Dolphin with the words run free underneath was on the wall.

Little Sid was getting over the chest infection, and he was off the ventilator, he was in oxygen still, but breathing for himself. His oxygen was down to thirty per cent and he was getting back some good bloods. They took bloods every hour to see whether they needed to reduce the oxygen mix. Donny was there last night. Bells clanged, monitors beeped, alarms shrieked, babies stopped breathing and nurses panicked. One nurse even ran across the ward, pushing visitors out of the way. That wasn't right. It was, he explained, a nightmare. His daughter was going through a lot of stress.

'How's the garden plan?' Damien asked.

'Well, look, I've made a new start. There were too many planters on the last one, and the raised beds might have been dangerous for Sid, so we've changed it around a little. What you think?'

Again Damien looked at the circles, squares, oblongs and winding path.

'It's gravel there instead of grass, and here we'll have wood chippings. See? See? And see this?' He took out a small pot in which a plant the size of a cashew was coiled. 'This is a tree fern. It takes twenty, thirty, forty years to mature. I can't afford a big one. That's gardening. You plant things you won't live to see the beauty of. In the winter you have to take it indoors and wrap

its roots up in a blanket. Imagine that? Like it's a little dog or baby. That's what attracted me.'

'It's going to be nice,' Damien said. 'Nice for little Sid.'

'For little Sid, yeh. You like this music?'

'Classical? No.'

'Me neither.'

The next night Damien again spent a long time cleaning his own desk, listening to Emma and Rebecca talking about travel. For Emma, every sunset, cathedral, or mountain-top was a heartbreaking, moving experience. Damien longed to experience it with her. He watched Emma's mouth as she spoke, remembering his name on her lips the night before. He's all right. That's what she'd said. All right. That was good, all right was good. He remembered how the two of them used to chat about some reality TV show. They had laughed together, and once, while laughing, Emma placed her hand on Damien's upper arm. One evening Damien had dropped into the conversation that he was off to see The White Stripes and Emma said that she was desperate to see them herself, but Dunc – the bloke she lived with – hated gigs. Before he could stop himself Damien had asked Emma if she'd like to come with him. A thick membrane grew between them. The air tightened. They were both thinking about Emma's hand on Damien's upper arm.

During a lull in the two girl's chatter he turned to Emma. 'You know, this fellah, I clean his desk, and I have no idea who he is.'

'Join the club,' said Emma.

'I've heard he's very popular.'

Emma slotted her eyes. 'How long have you been working here?'

'Long enough. Hours and hours scraping shit off this ungrateful bastard's work station.'

'JESUS. You need to be less, like, involved with your work?'

'I know. It's just, you clean someone's desk you feel you really know them.'

'You ever met Damien?'

'No, I'm a creature of the night.'

She stared at him.

'Late shift, you know?'

Emma leaned back in her chair and put her hands behind her head. 'OK. Describe what you think Damien is like, based on his desk. And we will tell you how well you do.'

Emma's world view accommodated a hunch that all people have a certain level of extra sensory powers, so he wasn't surprised at this exercise. He gripped his chin and stared at the desk for a long time. 'He's single.'

'Ding.' she said. 'But how did you know that?'

'No family pictures, no kids, nothing like that. But I sense there's a special someone in his life.'

'Oh yeh, how do you get that?'

'See all these little postcards he has stuck up? I bet if you took one down it would have a little personal message on it.'

'Well, you're wrong there 'cos I've taken them all off and had a look. They're blank, blank, blank. Like his life.'

'Oh Emma, don't,' said Rebecca.

'Well, listen to Houdini here.'

Damien made a mental note to put a few messages on the back of the next postcard he stuck up – something spicy to intrigue these prying women. There was one fact about Damien that no one should ever know; his life had no meaning.

The next morning the daytime Damien spotted Donny up a ladder, fiddling with a light fitting. Damien went over, in his smart suit, note pad against his chest and pen dancing between his fingers.

'How's it going, mate?'

'Nothing you need to worry about,' Donny said. 'Soon have it done.'

He wondered why Donny didn't tell the daytime Damien about little Sid and the garden plan. What was the difference? He was still a human being despite the suit. Still a person.

Later he found a post-it note on his bucket. Kev. See me in the utensil cupboard. Donny.

Donny was in a good mood. He had tuned the station to radio one and a dance track was buzzing out.

'See,' he pointed to the radio. 'For you. Give you a boost before your shift.'

'How's little Sid's chest infection? Improved?'

'Not much change, but last night, I was in there, and we got him out of the incubator and we all had a hold. His little fingers have a strong grip, for someone so tiny. Not feeble. We fed him a couple of inches of milk in a syringe.' He held his thumb and forefinger apart to indicate the portion of milk. 'That's all his little stomach can handle. Have some wine.' He shoved a half full jam jar into Damien's hand.

'You know Donny, I'm not too mad about wine. More of a lager man.'

'No class,' Donny laughed. 'That's your problem. You need to be more aspirational. You know, Kev, I sense you could do better than this. That's why I asked you down here tonight. I saw something in the paper for you and me.' He took out an ad and held it up.

MAKE THOUSANDS GROWING MUSHROOMS.

'I'm thinking, when the garden's finished for little Sid, I might get a shed and that's where you fit in. You and me, we could be business partners in the mushroom business. They send you spores and you do the growing and then they find you a market. This fellah here, see the quote? He made five hundred a week, just from his shed. From a few spores. What do you say? You and me?'

Damien took a sip of the tomato wine and winced at the rancid taste. 'I don't know Donny. I haven't got the capital.'

'Where's your entrepreneurial spirit?'

They sat in silence for a time, listening to a rap track followed by some yearning ballad from the latest indie wonderkids, sipping their tomato brew until Donny finally said, 'Well, you know, you're probably right. Mushrooms. You know what they are? They are sinister. Did you know they were fleshy? I never eat them myself. Fungus aren't they? But others shovel them down. Who's to stop them?'

Emma was rummaging through some papers on Damien's desk when he approached.

'Here he comes, international man of mystery. You know, cleaner man, I can never find anything on Damien's desk.'

'Well,' he said. 'He's a sensitive sort.'

'How do you work that out?'

'The way he orders the items on his desk. It looks like a chaotic mess, but it's kind of intuitive. Means he's good with other people's feelings.'

'Not too sensitive I wouldn't have thought,' said Emma.

'I don't know,' Rebecca offered. 'Damien told me he cried his heart out at Toy Story.'

'Male sentimentality.' Emma snorted. 'That's not sensitivity. Sensitivity is what you anticipate, what you infer, what you deduce. It's about putting out antennae. My boyfriend, Dunc, is dead sensitive. Let me tell you what he did last week. I went to the town hall for a council tax form and I had to walk past a long line of taxi drivers queuing up to renew their licenses. I'd forgotten it was that time of year. And seeing them all queuing up reminded me of my dad, who died last August. He was a cabbie and when I was an eleven year old girl he used to take me with him to renew his license and

we'd queue up together with all the other drivers, and have a laugh. It all flooded back, and I got quite upset, so I rang in sick and went straight home. And you know what? There was Dunc waiting for me, a big mug of hot chocolate in one hand and tissues in the other. He'd taken the day off as well. He knew I'd have to walk past the taxi drivers, knew that I'd be upset, knew that I would ring in sick, knew I'd need some company.'

Rebecca looked at Emma for a long time. Then she said, 'Hardcore. I would keep hold of him, mate.'

Damien cleared all the papers off the desk and threw every one into the recycling bin. Emma watched him with her eyebrows raised. Then he gave his desk a really good clean - polished it too. He would never clean it again. Whilst he scrubbed he thought about Dunc, Dunc with his heightened sense of other people's feelings.

When he went to hand in his notice he found that the utensil cupboard had changed completely. The bead curtain had gone, as had the picture. Only the chair remained and Donny was sat on it in silence. His radio hat was on the floor, next to a heap of torn up graph paper.

'Sid,' he coughed. 'You know.'

'Oh.'

Damien picked up the graph paper and began to smooth it out. 'You know Donny, you shouldn't give up on the garden plan. Because you know what? Your daughter, she'll meet someone else. There'll be another kid, and they'll need a garden the same way Sid did. This garden should be like in memory of little Sid. Little Sid's garden.' Damien touched Donny's shoulder. Donny squeezed his fingers into his eyes. His body vibrated and from his throat came a noise like soft humming.

'You should go home Donny. I came to tell you that I'm leaving. I'm not cut out for this sort of work. I'm sorry. Dawn said she would do my shift tonight.'

A few months later Donny's wife opened the door to find Damien standing there. In his hand was a gleaming new garden spade, its price tag still attached.

'I've come to help Donny,' he said. 'With the garden.'

She brought him inside. Donny hadn't lived there for a long time. Damien asked about Sid and she told him that there was no daughter, never had been, and no little grandkids. Donny had a few cleaning jobs she said. As well as offices, he cleaned a ward at the children's hospital. He used to get attached to the poor wee mites, get really choked up. He was a good man.

She took Damien out the back. There was no garden, just a dusty cement yard with a little raised pond in the middle. Damien went to the pond and looked in. Just under the surface, he thought he could see Donny's face, beyond reach, and still receding.

Directed-study questions:

1. What perspectives did the transformation of Damien into Kevin offer to the main character? Have you ever dreamed of something of this sort? Do you believe that a new vantage point can change radically perception of the things? Speak about the experience of your own.

2. What made the “new world” Damien had entered fascinating?

3. How do the very first sentences of the story introduce the reader into the problem of the main character? Comment on it.

4. What are your first impressions of Donny? Describe this personage deciphering explicit and implicit information given. How does the last passage of the story contribute to his depiction?

5. What is the conflict the story revolves around?

6. Fill in the table with the information given in the story to recreate the images of the personages depicted by different methods:

	Methods of characterization				
	Direct	Indirect (through)			
		Speech	Actions	Appearance	Surrounding
DAMIEN					
DONNY					
EMMA					



They're Made out of Meat

Terry Bisson

This story originally appeared in *Omni* April 1991 and was nominated for the Nebula Award.

"They're made out of meat."

"Meat?"

"Meat. They're made out of meat."

"Meat?"

"There's no doubt about it. We picked up several from different parts of the planet, took them aboard our recon vessels, and probed them all the way through. They're completely meat."

"That's impossible. What about the radio signals? The messages to the stars?"

"They use the radio waves to talk, but the signals don't come from them. The signals come from machines."

"So who made the machines? That's who we want to contact."

"They made the machines. That's what I'm trying to tell you. Meat made the machines."

"That's ridiculous. How can meat make a machine? You're asking me to believe in sentient meat."

"I'm not asking you, I'm telling you. These creatures are the only sentient race in that sector and they're made out of meat."

"Maybe they're like the orfolei. You know, a carbon-based intelligence that goes through a meat stage."

"Nope. They're born meat and they die meat. We studied them for several of their life spans, which didn't take long. Do you have any idea what's the life span of meat?"

"Spare me. Okay, maybe they're only part meat. You know, like the weddilei. A meat head with an electron plasma brain inside."

"Nope. We thought of that, since they do have meat heads, like the weddilei. But I told you, we probed them. They're meat all the way through."

"No brain?"

"Oh, there's a brain all right. It's just that the brain is made out of meat! That's what I've been trying to tell you."

"So ... what does the thinking?"

"You're not understanding, are you? You're refusing to deal with what I'm telling you. The brain does the thinking. The meat."

"Thinking meat! You're asking me to believe in thinking meat!"

"Yes, thinking meat! Conscious meat! Loving meat. Dreaming meat. The meat is the whole deal! Are you beginning to get the picture or do I have to start all over?"

"Omigod. You're serious then. They're made out of meat."

"Thank you. Finally. Yes. They are indeed made out of meat. And they've been trying to get in touch with us for almost a hundred of their years."

"Omigod. So what does this meat have in mind?"

"First it wants to talk to us. Then I imagine it wants to explore the Universe, contact other sentiences, swap ideas and information. The usual."

"We're supposed to talk to meat."

"That's the idea. That's the message they're sending out by radio. 'Hello. Anyone out there. Anybody home.' That sort of thing."

"They actually do talk, then. They use words, ideas, concepts?"

"Oh, yes. Except they do it with meat."

"I thought you just told me they used radio."

"They do, but what do you think is on the radio? Meat sounds. You know how when you slap or flap meat, it makes a noise? They talk by flapping their meat at each other. They can even sing by squirting air through their meat."

"Omigod. Singing meat. This is altogether too much. So what do you advise?"

"Officially or unofficially?"

"Both."

"Officially, we are required to contact, welcome and log in any and all sentient races or multibeings in this quadrant of the Universe, without prejudice, fear or favor. Unofficially, I advise that we erase the records and forget the whole thing."

"I was hoping you would say that."

"It seems harsh, but there is a limit. Do we really want to make contact with meat?"

"I agree one hundred percent. What's there to say? 'Hello, meat. How's it going?' But will this work? How many planets are we dealing with here?"

"Just one. They can travel to other planets in special meat containers, but they can't live on them. And being meat, they can only travel through C space. Which limits them to the speed of light and makes the possibility of their ever making contact pretty slim. Infinitesimal, in fact."

"So we just pretend there's no one home in the Universe."

"That's it."

"Cruel. But you said it yourself, who wants to meet meat? And the ones who have been aboard our vessels, the ones you probed? You're sure they won't remember?"

"They'll be considered crackpots if they do. We went into their heads and smoothed out their meat so that we're just a dream to them."

"A dream to meat! How strangely appropriate, that we should be meat's dream."

"And we marked the entire sector unoccupied."

"Good. Agreed, officially and unofficially. Case closed. Any others? Anyone interesting on that side of the galaxy?"

"Yes, a rather shy but sweet hydrogen core cluster intelligence in a class nine star in G445 zone. Was in contact two galactic rotations ago, wants to be friendly again."

"They always come around."

"And why not? Imagine how unbearably, how unutterably cold the Universe would be if one were all alone ...".

Directed-study questions:

1. What is the metaphor the story is based on? Write out all the descriptive and characterological details to recreate the image of THE HUMAN BEING. Work out a frame which will depict the essential functional particularities of a human being.

2. Ponder upon the opposition of two concepts MEAT vs SENTIENT MEAT. What makes meat sentient? What do you think disables a human being to be regarded as somebody superior?

3. Find the descriptions of orfolei and weddilei. What makes them superior to human beings? Do you agree that it is really so?

4. Compare the official and unofficial strategies which were regarded as alternatives. Why do you think the second was chosen in favour of? What does the resolution made imply about the narrator?

5. Who is the narrator? Recreate his image making use of indirect methods of characterization applied.

6. Dwell upon the idea implied in the last sentence of the story. How does it characterize the narrator? The human beings?

7. What is the message of the story?



Seraphim

Gaye Jee

The street lamps cast pools of light on the wet cobbles, illuminating the heads of the saints as they keep their stony vigils on the walls of Charles Bridge. Fog rising from the river curls its tentacles between the statues, wreathing a head for a few seconds or obscuring entire sections of the ancient walls. The Vltava flows oily and invisible thirty feet below. A bell somewhere in Hradcany strikes three.

The sound of running footsteps batters the muffled air, and then a cry. Jakub, his bare feet filthy and bleeding, almost catches his wife's shoulder as she flees under the gothic archway of the Bridge Tower. But a chipped cobble tears the ball of his foot and he sprawls on the wet stones. By the time he heaves himself upright again, she is poised on the wall between the statues of St Joseph and St Francis Xavier. She briefly turns her face towards him, her features blurred by the fog into a pale moon partially eclipsed by black hair.

"Witch!" he screams, "Whore! Come back here and ..."

Just as he thinks she is about to step into the air, the drifting mist obscures her figure only to part again as he reaches the place where she stood. The wall is empty.

Fifteen year old Katerina pulls her coat close round her thin body and slips back out of sight under the Bridge Tower. She runs home through the streets of Prague's Old Town and sits shivering in her bed.

The next day, her grey-faced father says,

"Your mother's gone. Gone like the cheating whore she is."

He glances at Katerina's crushed expression and adds,

"It's no use crying. She's gone for good this time. Off with one of her men."

It's possible this is what's happened. He's heard nothing from his neighbours about a drowning and he could easily have imagined what he thinks he saw. Katerina says nothing. But then, she always says nothing. She hasn't spoken since she was two years old.

With Josefina gone, Jakub has another problem. Although her crystalline voice was untrained, his wife had earned much more than he by singing in the vestries of churches, at private parties or on the bridge, accompanied by her scratchy cassette recorder. When the weather is fine he earns a few crowns sketching tourists on the bridge, just as he has always done, but it is very little compared to what his wife, with her waist length black hair and wide red mouth, could make. Sometimes she would come back with more money than he could make in a week. Visiting Americans and Japanese were, she told him with her glittering smile, extremely generous.

From her room in the attic, Katerina had often heard her mother's melodious, tinkling laugh when Jakub was away. Creeping down the creaking stairs, she had seen candlelight flickering on the windowsills in her parents' bedroom, the heavy crimson wrap sliding off her mother's shoulder, the entwined limbs. Later, finding her daughter on the bottom step, Josefina would sit next to her and pull the girl's head onto her shoulder. Katerina would watch as the man dropped bank notes on the bed side table and, his face averted, hurry down to the front door and out onto Kamzikova Street.

"Men ... my darling, you must know how to use them, you know," her mother would say, stroking her daughter's hands and laughing gently. "What are you thinking little one, you who see so much and say nothing?"

She would search her daughter's face with her eyes and then pull the girl to her once more.

"You and I, darling, we have each other. That is what is important. I do what I must do to make money for us. Your father is an idiot, so I must protect you. You must remember that whatever happens, we will be always be together."

We will always be together.

Now Josefina is gone and her father is broken and wordless. She saw him chase her mother into the street that night. He had found her sprawled asleep across the bed, the crimson shoes with their dagger-like heels still on her feet, a lover's note and enough money for a month's rent lying on the floor among the dust. Katerina saw him strike her mother's face with the back of his hand, a scarlet crescent against the white skin.

Three weeks later Jakub is sitting at the wooden table in the hallway. He has enough money left to buy food for the evening meal, or to get drunk. He curses his wife and his silent daughter in her tiny room at the top of the house.

Katerina is standing at the window which looks out over the roofs of the old town. If she leans out and looks to the left, she can see the top of the town hall tower from her window. As she waits, breath drawn in, she hears the astronomical clock striking the hour. She closes her eyes to see the figure of Death pull the rope he holds in his right hand, while inverting the hourglass he holds in the other. Presently she feels warm dry lips against her cheek and turns to embrace her mother. Her room is empty but for her bed, a wooden chair and the closet in which she hangs her clothes. Josefina's voice curls into her mind like smoke; she is singing Gounod's Ave Maria, shivering the high notes like the topmost leaves of a silver birch.

When all is silent in her head once more, Katerina puts her fingertips to her lips. They feel warm and slightly buzzy. When she opens her mouth, the music in her head begins again and she finds herself singing as effortlessly as sunlight pours through an open casement. Jakub raises his face from his hands and takes the steps two at a time, bursting into his daughter's room. He looks about wildly, expecting to see Josefina. But there is only Katerina standing by the window, her eyes startled, her fingertips once more trembling at her lips.

The next day Jakub and Katerina walk to Charles Bridge, his hand gripping her elbow. He finds a place between the stalls selling city scenes, trinket boxes and cheap silver jewellery and places the cassette player between them on the wall. The girl shivers in the sharp wind and watches the clouds scudding across the face of the pale lemon sun as it rises above the spires and bell towers of the Old Town. A few yards away, an old man in a long, shabby overcoat is setting up a glass harmonica. His face is so thin and white it seems pared to the bone, yet he grins and cracks jokes, calling out to passersby. He pours water into each wine glass, each a little more than the last until he achieves a full three octave instrument.

"Thought by some to be the medium through which the angels can sing directly to us, and used by the great Mesmer himself to condition patients before hypnosis, I give you, ladies and gentlemen ..."

A pause, as he drips more water from a plastic can, and runs his moistened finger round the rim of several adjoining glasses to test the pitch. Each gives up its luminous golden tone like the dying breath of a song thrush.

"... the original of the instrument known as the seraphim, the eumelia, the claviclindre ..."

Jakub presses the button on the cassette player. The opening bars of Dido's lament sough from the machine. He takes his daughter's arm and turns her away from the wall to face the passing tourists. For a few seconds she looks confused, clutching her coat round her thin body. Then she begins to sing, her voice trembling silver above the glass harmonica's spun gold. As her voice grows in power, the small crowd which has gathered round the harmonica, turn to find out where the new sound is coming from. The old man glares irritably at Jakub as his carefully prepared audience drift the twenty feet up the bridge to listen to the shivering girl.

And as his daughter sings, Jakub sees again that night when Josefina broke away from him, the weal on her face flaming red. Whore.

Deep down, he had always known how she got her money. But he became tired of her taunts, the way she mocked his inability to sell his real paintings for money. He'd taken his shoes off at the front door so as not to wake her – and found her lying across the bed saturated by the body of another man. He stood over her, fists clenched, his face rigid with fury and grief. As if she sensed him – or perhaps she thought her lover was still there – she opened her eyes and – she smiled. He dragged her off the bed and out into the hallway where Katerina stood unnoticed at the top of the stairs. Then she mocked him, fanning his anger until he could bear it no longer and slapped her hard across the face. Still she smiled, laughed, in his face. He twisted her arm up her back until she cried out in pain. He pressed his mouth to her ear.

"I'm going to kill you, do you hear?"

She stepped backwards, grinding her stiletto heel into the toes of his left foot. Gasping with pain and surprise, he released her and she fled down the stairs and through the front door of the apartment.

He chased her through the old town and under the gateway to the bridge. She turned then and called to him,

"I curse you, little man. I'm sick of living like an animal with you."

He was almost close enough to grab her shoulder, but as he reached out his arm, the broken cobble pierced the flesh of his foot.

And Josefina runs to the wall and looks down at the water. She is a strong swimmer. If she can make him believe she has drowned, she can disappear and find somewhere new for her and Katerina to live. One of her lovers will help. She must do this for Katerina. In a few days she will watch for her daughter coming out of the apartment and take her to a new home.

Safe, away from the murderous Jakub. She climbs on the wall and glances towards her husband who is getting to his feet. She steps into the air and, her scarlet dress flying around her body like wings, waits for the shock of the icy water.

Katerina is singing a Hungarian folk song, the penultimate song in her mother's repertoire. Jakub rattles the already heavy bag as one by one, the people, as though hypnotised by his daughter's voice, drop into it whatever notes and coins they find in their pockets. She is staring straight ahead, her eyes lifeless and unfocussed, her mouth the only animated part of her body.

The glass harmonica player can bear it no longer. The subtle tones he can tease out of his instrument are completely overwhelmed by the silvery flood of notes issuing from Katerina's mouth. He marches along the bridge and shouts to the people,

"Why are you listening to this silly child? Can't you hear she has the voice of a common music hall singer? My glass harmonica is far more rare. You'll not see another like it in the city!"

A few of the crowd turn their heads, irritated at the interruption, and then turn back again, listening even more intently. The old man is furious at being ignored, his eyes blazing black and furious in his bone-white face. He pushes his way through the crowd, shouldering people aside until he reaches the front of the semicircle which has formed around the girl. She has just begun her final song. Ave, Maria, gratia plena ...

Jakub, moving among the people at the back of the crowd, hears a disturbance, but cannot see what is happening. By the time he has worked his way to the front, the old harmonica player has gone right up to Katerina and is shouting in her face. She seems unaware of his presence. Taking this for insolence, the old man slaps her sharply on the cheek. The people in the crowd gasp, but do nothing, remaining motionless as though they have lost the ability to move. Katerina's eyes, still unfocussed, fill with tears. Her mouth stops forming the words and hangs open slackly, a thin ribbon of drool stumbling down her chin. But the singing continues. Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus ... Enraged, the old man picks up the cassette player and throws it into the water.

"See, it wasn't even her singing. It was a ..." The cassette player hits the water. And still the singing continues, rippling out of girl's gaping mouth. People begin to back away. Jakub goes over to his daughter and shakes her by the shoulders. She begins to vomit, but even her retching cannot drown out the singing which continues unabated from her lips. The harmonica player's eyes bulge almost out of his skull. He grabs Jakub by the sleeve.

"She's a witch", he breathes. "A witch!"

Abruptly the singing stops. Katerina turns and walks along the bridge, bumping into people and knocking over tourist stalls. Jakub follows, but is impeded by the street vendors who are trying to collect up their scattered wares. She climbs on the wall of the bridge between the statues of St Joseph and St Francis Xavier and steps out into air, the sunlight blazing a silvery corona round the black core of her descending body.

When the river is dragged, they search for many hours before finding her among the foundations of an old building. She is entangled in the bones of a woman's decaying fish-nibbled corpse which floats upright, anchored by an ankle wedged in the masonry, scarlet dress flowing in tatters like weed in a mill race. The partially exposed bones of the mother's arms form a perfect, protective circle around her daughter's body.

Directed-study questions:

1. Try to identify the time and place of the events described making use of the authenticity artistic details. How do they add to recreating of the atmosphere of the story?

2. Comment on the images of Jakub, Josephina and Katerina – the main characters of the story. By what direct or indirect methods are they represented?

3. Dwell upon the relationship between the main characters: Jakub ↔ Josephina, Jakub ↔ Katerina, Josephina ↔ Katerina. Is this information given directly or implicitly? What is the major conflict of the story?

4. What does the title imply for you? Who is a seraphim? Why do you think the story is entitled in such a way?

5. Dwell upon the major concepts embodied in the story. What are the linguistic means of their representation?

6. What is the message of the story?



The Man Who Married Himself

Charlie Fish

'Why not?'

With those two words, my good friend Reverend Zatarga changed the course of my life. When he said them to me, he had just spent two hours on the telephone with Bishop Fleming discussing various sections of the Bible in excruciatingly fine detail. He pointed out that Leviticus warns Christians not to marry their sister, aunt, mother, mother-in-law, daughter or even their granddaughter (should they be tempted). But nowhere in the good book is there a rule against marrying oneself. So when I told Reverend Zatarga that was exactly what I wanted to do, he eventually conceded those two fateful words:

'Why not?'

Of course, the Bible also neglects to forbid anyone from marrying great-grandmothers, tables or pet fish. I wouldn't be surprised to learn that Bishop Fleming ended up marrying his beloved French poodle as a result of all this. Or his blanket – after all he's been sleeping with it for years. Anyway, once I convinced the good Reverend to let me marry the man of my dreams, I had to convince my mother and father. I'd have to say that between an international religion, firmly established for two millennia, and my own humble parents, my parents were far more difficult to persuade.

My mother just wouldn't take it seriously at first. OK, very few people took it seriously, but I needed her to know I meant it. She kept asking me silly things like 'Why marry – you can just live with yourself?' or 'What will you wear for the wedding?'

And sadly, it drove my father quite mad. Literally. For years after the wedding he spent days typing up articles for a wide variety of news journals, record books and space administration newsletters claiming that he was the first person to have had sex in space. He seemed quite convinced, despite the fact that the closest he had come to space was the big button on his computer keyboard. When asked who he had allegedly had sex with, he would usually pause briefly for dramatic effect, turn his wild eyes towards you and yell shrilly: 'Myself!'

I would have hoped that I could trust my best friends to be sympathetic towards my cause, but I think it was all a bit of a joke for them. They were often supportive, but after the wedding they just spent a lot of time making fun of me. Some of the wedding presents I received from them were quite demeaning: pornographic magazines, silk gloves, even a ceiling mirror. And

I'm disappointed in them for not stifling their mirth when Reverend Zatarga recited the marriage vows: 'Will you keep yourself as a husband, to live as one in marriage? Will you love and comfort yourself, obey and honour yourself in sickness and in health, and be faithful to yourself as long as you shall live?' I swear one of my friends wet himself laughing.

I had a great honeymoon in Las Vegas, gambling away all my savings with nobody to nag me about how much money I was spending. I had a penthouse suite in the Luxor hotel for the night of consummation.

I had many reasons for getting married when I did, apart from the tax benefits of course (trying to make the tax inspector understand that I was my own spouse was hell, though). Ever since I understood the concept of wedlock, I longed for a partner that I could trust. I wanted to have someone with me always, to whom I could tell all my deepest, darkest secrets without having them laugh at me. Unfortunately, although getting girlfriends was usually not too big a problem for me, I tended to have excruciatingly bad taste. Then I realised that my perfect partner was closer to home than anyone could have realised.

Altogether, I think the marriage was a great success for the most part. I rarely argued with my spouse; in fact I found myself to be the best conversation holder around. The few times that I did argue, I always won. And the sex was, well – it was whatever I made of it. There was some media intrusion of course, lots of cheap journalists trying to cash in on this unusual union. I found some of their articles amusing, and others quite offensive, especially the ones dubbing me the most conceited and/or narcissistic man in the world. I don't think I'm such an egotist, I just happen to enjoy my company.

I suppose it was a hormonal thing, a stage of life or something, that made me suddenly crave a child. The cliché is that I realised I was mortal, and I therefore wanted to pass on my genes. So after many days weighing up the pros and cons I decided to split up from my husband in order to find a wife. I had a chat with Reverend Zatarga, and he informed me that I couldn't just file for a divorce on a moment's notice. I had to have legitimate justification. Curiously, wanting a baby wasn't on the list of good reasons to divorce.

As the good Reverend explained, I could only divorce if I had been living apart from my spouse for at least a year which would be difficult without major surgery or if my spouse had treated me cruelly or been imprisoned for at least a year. I wasn't particularly willing to beat myself up a bit or lounge around in prison just so I could divorce myself. That left one

option: Adultery. I just had to have sex with someone other than myself; normal, straight, human sex, and I could be free from the bonds of marriage.

And so it was that I reluctantly removed my wedding ring and started searching for a mate. My friends were cruel about it, saying that I was separating to stop myself from going blind. I think my mother was relieved when I told her that my relationship with myself was coming to an end. My father just paused for dramatic effect, turned his wild eyes towards me and yelled shrilly: 'Myself!' Maybe he really is on another world.

I expected it to take me quite a while to find someone who was both willing to sleep with me and who hadn't read the newspapers enough to know that I was already married, but I soon found a plain-faced Malaysian girl who was relatively easy to seduce. The sex was, to be honest, rather disappointing. It seemed that she knew almost nothing of what turns a man on, whereas by that point I myself had become quite an expert. I suppose it wasn't great for her either – I wasn't practised in pleasuring members of the fairer sex.

The divorce was easy after that. It seemed that the church was keen to split me apart, as if my marriage had been a big mistake. I felt quite lonely for several months after the break-up. At least the local psychiatrist (specialising in multiple personality disorders) stopped sending me his damned business cards every week.

It took me nearly a decade to find a good wife who didn't think she'd be marrying into a threesome. Most of that time was just waiting for the media to forget about 'The Man Who Married Himself'. Meanwhile, I wrote an autobiography with that very title. Included in the book was a detailed account of my marriage to myself, including the ups and downs of living with myself, how I dealt with everyone's criticism of me and my husband, and some intimate details of my relationship. I think it was these sections that made the book a real success when it was published some years later. People were just curious to read about the implications of such an unusual marriage. I suppose it made people think. They would read my book and ask themselves: 'Am I easy to live with? If I had to live with me, could I do it?' They all stopped searching for their Mister or Little Miss Right for just a moment to ask themselves if they would ever make a good spouse for anyone.

I didn't hear of any copycat self-marriages, which probably either means the media lost interest or the church is determined not to let it happen again. Anyway, that's all behind me now. My wife and I have just moved into a new home, big enough to accommodate our new child when he is

born. I am happy now. In fact, right now I can't wipe the smile off my face. You see, our next door neighbours are Bishop Fleming and his lovely wife, the French poodle.

Directed-study questions:

- 1. How can you classify the title of the story? Is it suggestive? How would you decipher it?**
- 2. What has turned to be the final argument that persuaded the main character to marry himself? What do you think encouraged him to make such a decision?**
- 3. What was the attitude of the main character's parents and friends to the decision he has made? Has their opinion approved or disapproved of him in his undertaking? How does it characterize the personage?**
- 4. What are the advantages of his being married to himself? Do you find them reasonable or dubious? Why?**
- 5. Decipher the notion of "a narcissistic man" or "egotist". How does the main character's decision to have a child suit this image?**
- 6. What may be referred to the implications of such an unusual marriage? What does it make people think? Have you ever asked yourself the same questions the people from the story do?**
- 7. Have you ever searched for your Mr. or Miss Right? Recreate His/Her image focusing on the crucial features He/She has to possess. What domains (physical, psychical, social, moral, etc) do these features mainly belong to? Do you fit the same requirements you set?**
- 8. Read out the final passage of the story. How does it add to recreating of the concept of self-marriage?**
- 9. What is the message of the story?**

10. Recreate the context the phrases are used in the story.

- to change the course of one's life;
- to discuss in excruciatingly fine detail;
- to end up doing smth;
- to be supportive;
- to nag about;
- the concept of wedlock;
- to be a conversation holder;
- to be practiced in smth;
- the ups and downs of living.



Staring Me In The Face

Glynis Gertsch

The tray didn't just hit the floor. It crashed and smashed his lunch to pieces. Serves you damn well right, I thought. You were staring again.

He stood stock-still and looked down at the food. Suddenly I got up and moved towards him. I hadn't intended to, hadn't wanted to help him. I called to the woman behind the counter. She closed her mouth and brought a cloth to clean up the mess. I picked up crockery, put it on the tray. There was a sippy stain on his trousers and through it you could see just how bony his knees were. Like the rest of him. All bones, dangling jacket and hanging trousers. Stooped shoulders and mile-long arms. Then he smiled at me. A wonderful smile that creased up his worn face and totally surprised me.

"Thank you."

I shoved the tray at him and went back to my table.

I worked at a large publishing company and ate lunch in the canteen. I had noticed him because he stared at me. He was weird-looking. His hair was badly cut and his clothes were ancient and dull; too-short corduroys, baggy at the knees and colour-less sweaters, dotted with fluff. Often he sat alone and just picked at his food. Or he read and jotted things down.

A few days after the crash, he stopped at the table I was sharing with Mark from proof reading, and asked if he might sit down. I said the seats were taken and continued eating. He apologised and took his tray off somewhere else.

"What's your problem, Leanna?" asked Mark.

"No problem. It's just that I like to choose who I share my mealtimes with."

"A bit rough on the old chap though."

I shrugged.

It was Mark who told me more about him. He had gone over to scrounge a cigarette. By the time he came back to the table, I had my head stuck into the news-paper.

"Interesting chap. Sub-editor. Been all over the world," said Mark.

I decided to find the newspaper more interesting and finally Mark shut up and finished smoking.

"Asked your name," he said.

"He what?"

"Yeah."

"What'd you say?"

"Leanna, of course."

I folded the newspaper.

"I've loads of work this afternoon."

"Said you look familiar," said Mark. "Like someone he knew."

"Someone he knew?"

"Yeah. Could be strategy. Maybe he fancies you."

"Fancies me? But he's old."

"Only old enough to be your father."

I grabbed my tray and left the table.

I didn't do much work that afternoon. I kept wishing Mark hadn't said what he had said. Old enough to be your father.

The following week I took along a book to read during lunchtime. When I got into the lift on my floor, he was already inside. He greeted me so I had to reply but I didn't smile. We were alone and that worried me. I wondered whether I should get out at the next floor and walk up the stairs to the canteen. Don't panic, I thought. Just because he's stared at you for ages doesn't mean he's going to do anything.

"Well, I suppose one of us should press the button or we'll be here all day, won't we?"

I'd been so busy wondering what he was going to do and expecting him to do something, that I'd completely forgotten to do anything myself. I felt like an idiot and this made me smile and I hadn't wanted to. He smiled back, his blue eyes crinkling right up to the grey hair at his ears and making him look ... nice. Then there was a slap. My book hit the floor. I bent down and so did he, and we bashed heads. At that moment, the lift shuddered to a stop

and the doors seemed to fling themselves wide open. I was so embarrassed, I marched out of the lift, straight towards the queue at the counter. I ordered without looking at the menu and took my tray to a table where there was only one empty seat. I breathed a sigh of relief and began to eat. But the salad stuck in my throat when I noticed that everyone else at the table had already finished lunch and they were getting up to go. I glanced over at the counter. He was paying and in a second, his eyes would scan the room to find me. I ducked my head. Waited. Any minute now he'd sit down with his tray.

Short Stories from Australasia. My book appeared in front of my eyes. His fingers were the longest I'd seen and his nails were manicured. I hadn't thought he'd bother.

"You left it in the lift," he said. "May I sit down?"

His voice was soft. Cultivated. What could I say? The tables were all pretty full so I nodded. He said bon appétit and began to eat. I'd always thought he picked at his food. But as I watched, I noticed that he selected small pieces, speared them and moved them carefully to his mouth.

"Have you been there?"

"Been where?" I was totally dazed. From dropping my book and banging my head and everything.

"Australia, New Zealand."

I stared at him and thought again of what Mark had said about me reminding him of someone. An Australian? Maybe an ex-girlfriend or wife?

"Not such a strange question," he said. "You're old enough to have travelled there. And Katherine Mansfield, Janet Frame, are most likely in the book."

His smile crinkled up his eyes.

"No, I haven't and yes, they are," I said.

That's how it started. He asked me a question, nodded when I spoke and then asked another. I was off, talking about reading, books and all that stuff I love.

Days later Malcolm passed our table with his tray and spontaneously I said a seat was free. Mark stared at me and I felt a rush of heat to my cheeks.

After that, Malcolm often sat with us and he and I discussed a lot of things. We spoke a little about ourselves too. I told him how Mom had brought me up on her own at the start of the Hippie Era. He said he had married during that time but divorced a few years later. Mark asked me how come Malcolm and I always had so much to talk about.

"He's easy to talk to. And he reads a lot."

"You two got so much to say, I don't get a chance to open my mouth all lunch-time."

"You do. You shove food in."

One lunchtime Malcom asked me if I'd like to go to a reading with him.

"Um. Don't know."

"Amelia Turner. Shortlisted for the Booker Prize last year."

I wanted very much to go. But although I no longer thought Malcolm quite so weird, I wasn't sure if I wanted to go out in his company.

"Afterwards, I'll cook us curry. Do you like it? "

"Love it."

"Me too. Settled then?" he asked and smiled his soft smile.

It didn't surprise me that I nodded.

After the reading and the curry dinner, I went into Malcolm's sitting room where there were more books than I'd ever seen on anyone's shelves. I began to read the titles.

"Help yourself," said Malcolm.

"Thanks. But if I read a book, I have add it to my collection."

"Strange, same here." He waved his arms towards the shelves. "But look where it's got me."

"I'd hate to be without books. They're ... friends."

"That sounds like lonely," said Malcolm.

I turned and pulled out a book.

"Are you?"

"Am I what?"

"Lonely?"

I shrugged.

"Not really."

"Not really but what?"

My voice came from a distance as I tried to answer him.

"I'm choosy about my friends. Don't have a great many."

"I'm listening," said Malcolm and sat down, indicating the armchair opposite him.

"My childhood was ... I mean, my mother loved moving around. She had no trouble putting down roots all over the place. I hated it! Books were the constant things, so I buried myself in them."

"Hell, sounds familiar."

I sat down in the armchair.

"I had very academic parents," said Malcolm. "Was an afterthought, perhaps a mistake even. They loved me in their vague intellectual way but left me alone to get on with growing up. Hence the books."

"That's lonely, too," I said.

When I left, I took along a couple of Malcolm's books.

My friendship with Malcolm grew but my curiosity remained. Who did I remind him of? My mother? If so, could he be my father? Although Mom had never bothered with books, our physical similarities, apart from my tallness, were undeniable. She had never told me much about the man who had fathered me. Clever, was all she had usually said. Once though, when I had been ill with chicken pox, and hot and scratchy, she had relented.

"What was he like?"

"Skinniest man you ever saw."

"Where'd you meet him?"

"In a park. I was catching a suntan and these papers started blowin' in my face. I was a bit cheesed off at them blowin' all over me and then this man comes runnin'. He grabbed and grabbed but couldn't catch them all. So he jus' stood still, a helpless look on his face. It was so funny, I started laughin'."

"And then?"

"I helped and we chased all over the place after the papers. When we sat down to get our breath back, he told me he was a student. He was ever so clever. Can't remember what the devil it was he was studyin'. Somethin' I'd never heard of then or since."

"Why didn't you marry him?"

"Marry him? Good Lord, Leanna, I wasn't ready to marry and he wasn't the type I'd have wanted to marry by a long shot."

"What else did he look like, Mom?"

"Lord, stop the questions, child. Get some sleep."

She saw my disappointment however, and said she would write it all down for me. Put it in an envelope to open when she was dead and gone. I was happy with that. On a wet, slick highway, driving to France for a weekend, she was involved in an accident and died instantly. I was twenty-three then and on my own feet but as I sorted through and packed up the belongings in her flat, I felt like a child again. I looked for the envelope but didn't find one. For a long time after, my mother's death and not knowing who my father was, made me feel as though I was drifting on a sea without horizons.

One lunchtime I just decided to brave it and ask Malcolm who I reminded him of.

"Met her while I was a student," he said.

"Was she studying too?"

"Oh, heavens, no. That was what attracted me to her. She was ... so different."

"What were you like?" I asked.

"Like? Much as I am now. Nose in books, bit of a loner. Not very interesting. Not for a live wire like she was."

"Go on," I said.

"She fell pregnant. I was very happy until she told me she didn't want my help. Thought she'd change her mind, though, as the pregnancy advanced but when I attempted to see her, she told me to leave her be. I was very hurt but accepted her refusal to involve me. A few months later, I took a job I'd been offered in New York. Salary was dreadful but I thought it would be for the best."

"Was it?" I asked.

"No. When I returned, they'd moved. Left no forwarding address."

"So you never knew whether it was a boy or ...?"

"A girl?" asked Malcolm.

I nodded.

"A boy," he said. "Had the approximate date and went to the Registry of Births to look it up."

I sat there, trying to take in what Malcom had said. I felt as though I'd been flattened by a truck.

"Somewhere out there I have a child I know nothing about," Malcom continued. "I was stupid. Rushed off instead of staying to have a share in my son's life."

"I thought perhaps it was a daughter."

"Beg your pardon?"

"A daughter. Me."

"You thought I was ... your father?"

"Books, curry, I'm tall. We ... we like the same things."

"We definitely have things in common but I'm not your father." He looked at me.

"I'm so sorry to disappoint you, Leanna." I tried to smile.

"We're not related but we can be something else."

"What?"

"Can't you think of anything?"

"Uh uh."

"Friends."

"Friends?"

"It's been staring you in the face for weeks." Malcolm's use of that phrase made me burst out laughing.

"Let me in on the joke sometime," he said.

"Okay," I said. "Tell you sometime seeing we're friends."

Then I smiled. And my smile was as wide and warm as the one he smiled in return.

Directed-study questions:

1. Comment on the phrase "drifting on a sea without horizons". Reconstruct the context it was used within the story. How does it reveal one of the main ideas of the story?

2. Why did Leanna feel as if flattened by a truck during the last conversation with Malcolm? What accounts for it?

3. Why do you think Malcolm rejected the idea of being a father to Leanna? Is there anything implied in such a resolute reaction?

4. Do you consider the end of the story to be a happy end? Or perhaps the story is open-ended? Dwell upon possible versions of its continuation. Do you think Leanna – Malcolm relations have any perspective? Why? Trace all the nuances in their relations development. What accounts for their bridging the gap in between.



Old Ghosts

A.J. McKenna

It is Jim Brennan's birthday. He awakens on this humid August morning, startled by birdsong echoing across the garden outside and, for a long time, he stares in confused remembrance towards where the swelling orange sun is burning the faded floral wallpaper across from his tumbled bed.

'It's my birthday,' he finally realises. 'I'm seventy-six today. Where did it go?'

Climbing painfully from a sore mattress, standing in striped pajamas by the window, Jim stares gardenwards. There's much to be done. Later. Much later. These days it's all weed killing, backache and wishes. Outside in the sunrise garden roses are already awake, clematis climbs like a growing child and all the border marigolds are on fire.

'It's my birthday.'

Next door's dog barks. A cat scales a glass sharp wall and drops beside its shadow under an apple tree, stalking anxious sparrows with the first sun. Under the broken birdhouse a mouse plays with a nibble of yesterday's bread. Shadows shrink in bright shyness against all the garden fences and the last star melts into dawnrise. There's heat in the breathless August day already.

Jimmy Brennan, seventy-six, sitting in his kitchen. Silent. The house, holding its breath around him, the roof heavy and oven baked. Jim's thick veined hands brush toast crumbs from the plastic tabletop and when he moves his faded slippers feet dust dances giddily on the sun patched carpet. He listens to the awakening of the new day: the clock on the dresser ticks hurriedly and the letter box snaps awake.

Jim walks to the hall and picks up bills and ads that promise discounts and holidays abroad. Jim has never been out of Ireland, never crossed the sea. His tired eyes examine the envelopes at arm's length. There are no birthday cards to sigh over – these days who would know?

Returning to the familiar kitchen he slides a knife along his letters, slitting out their folded information. It's better than nothing. Even if the electricity is red and overdue. At least, they keep in touch. No longer absorbed in his letter opening task Jim looks at the sunlight shining blindly on his glazed, brown teapot and then, laying the bad news aside for later, he pours more lukewarm tea. He sits and thinks about birthdays back then. Cakes and ale, songs and celebrations and the long dead who cared. Back when.

'Time flies,' he says.

He's talking to himself most days – who else will listen? Up in the still shadowed parlour a clock chimes the hour and Jim rises tiredly and prepares to face the day. When he turns on the wireless the news assaults his soul. The world is littered with dead children and pain. Bad news amuses while the ad men slip in a jingle. The world has gone mad with cruelty and nobody seems to have noticed. He turns a dial and foreign voices cackle urgently in the ether. Talking violence in tongues, telling of the rapes of children, no doubt. The media loves abusing the innocent with their excited updates and urgently

breaking stories. It was different back then. It seemed quieter and children could play on the streets. Back when.

Ring- a- ring- a- rosy!

Jim smiles and finds Mozart and the morning is saved by Cherubino. Then he dresses and walks, cane and cloth cap, to the front door and checks the windows and the bolts and all's secure. When the nighttime house creaks with its own age, Jim thinks of burglars and imagined violations and trembles in case they invade him.

What a world!

Jim swings open the front door and sees Ellen Kelly stands there, smiling like sunlight.

'Happy birthday, Jim.'

No longer astonished, Jim smiles back and sighs because Ellen isn't really there.

Ellen Kelly, fourteen last week. He's been seeing Ellen a lot lately. She walked behind him all the way to the hushed library yesterday and when he sat to rest in Carolyn Park she was standing under a tree, waiting in its shade.

'I didn't forget,' Ellen says.

'I know, I know.'

'Will you come out to play?'

'I can't Ellen. You're dead.'

The sun slides down the street and settles on Jim's house and Ellen fades like a startled shadow.

'Poor Ellen,' Jim whispers sadly. 'My poor dead darling.'

Jim avoids the supermarket. It's too complicated. Grim checkout people urgent to get home. Kids breathing asthma. Babes bawling immediate needs. Bald headed young men pushing forward, rings in their ears, rape in their shiftless eyes. Never stare back. Girls demanding more. Car parks cluttered with stress earned money. Housewives hurrying, car exhausts, liberated women with little freedom. The exhaustion of super markets and too much choice. Too big, too modern. Too lonely for Jim.

He goes to smaller stores, chats with familiar people and gets milk and eggs and a small loaf of fresh bread. Further along, outside the charity shop, Mrs Barret from number twenty-nine nods an inquisitive greeting.

'How are you keeping?' she asks, looking past him at the bargains in the window.

'Grand, thank God. Yourself?'

'Couldn't be better.'

Life is strangled with polite lies.

Jim walks home through the heating streets towards sanctuary at seventy six.

In his armchair in the parlour looking out on the road. Hearing the parlour's ten time chime and the long day stretching ahead like a dreadful eternity. The terror of ten a.m. Nothing to do and outside bright girls hurry through the morning, sun on their heads, time on their hands. Feet clattering, black tights, skirts just short of sin. Making promises.

I'm glad I'm not young anymore.

Jim despises this time of day. Already too hot for the garden and nothing to fill the mind until making something at lunchtime. Light sustenance for the long afternoon lengthening drearily ahead like an empty road going nowhere. Jim tries to read but even in glasses the words are a blur.

'Ellen,' he whispers and her name rings in his head like a tolling bell.

Ellen Kelly, Kelly Ellen, Kellen Nelly.

Jim plays with her. His eyes close. He becomes delirious with dreaming and hears distantly the brass handle under the Brassoed letterbox clattering once. Jim shuffles down the hall and when he cautiously opens the wide door Ellen is there, fifteen and lovely, framed in the sun like a miracle. Ellen Kelly, budding with womanhood and childfresh happiness.

'Will you not come out to play, Jim?'

From behind, a different ghost in the dark hallway, Jim's mother, smiling.

'He's got to do some shopping for me, Ellen dear.'

Jim, sixteen, between women, inter Ellen's, adolescently happy.

'I'll come along with you, then,' Ellen, always agreeable. 'We'll go to the shops together. If that's all right?'

Mother agrees, loving neighbour Ellen like the daughter her grey age longs for.

'Of course it's all right with me, darling.'

Jim and Ellen walking down the path with mama at the door, waving like a mother, waiting until they are beyond the gate, forever worrying about crossing roads and unsuspected illnesses. Tuberculosis, Pneumonia. Polio. Measles. Mumps. You name it. Young people often died young back then.

Jim and Ellen, heads tilted, magnetic affection drawing them closer, talking, laughing, a pair apart from others. In love. Ellen's raven hair curling around her tiny, elfin ears. Ellen, quiet and reliable as the moon.

'Will you love me forever?' Jim asks.

'Forever and ever,' Ellen assures, squeezing his hand.

On the way back they short cut thorough the August woods. A long

short cut. Still talking, their words tumbling like thistledown on the hot butterflyed silence. In the deep green they settle in shade and kiss among fernleaves, innocently. They kissed like that for years.

Life, a summer holiday until seventeen. Then. Jim goes to Cork with his father. A business trip. Magnificent Cork and boat bobbing, cathedraled Cobh and then the Metropole Hotel. Swanky. Dinner and desserts. Black ties, brown cigars. Gin and tonic with a twist of lemon. Now Cork is always dry gin and a twist in Jim's fading memory. Bitter lemon.

Jim with father's friends. A party and the talcum smell of sex. Dad leaves early with a friend. Dad feels only half married. Winking a man's signal. Permission to sin. A bird in the bush.

Jim dancing until dawn with necklace and pearls. Back at her oak roomed upstairs house she says her parents are away and Jim is still not sober.

'Let me help you to bed,' he says, learning the rules of the game and when to cheat.

Sixteen Ellen smelled of love and roses. This girl is twenty and slick with gin. Pearls in her ears, stones in her heart. Bath naked she drips rich. Jim falls into her and is devoured. Ellen, sweetest sixteen, gave him everything except that. Her tended flesh is reserved for the marriage bed. Jim wanted more. Pearls before swine.

Mea culpa, Ellen -mea maxima culpa!

The blonde one came to Dublin with the snow, passion pursuing Jim all grown up and knowing. Blood on snow. Seventeen Ellen, discarded, like a toy wound down, broken and useless.

'Don't you want me anymore?'

'No.'

Tears on Ellen's bitten lips. Eyes red with pain. Soul seared. Ellen goodbye.

'No. I don't want you.'

Jim brave and final, cruel as winter. Abandoned Ellen, quietly waiting for him to mature.

Next year he took the pearly girl away. Holidaying. Not even saying goodbye to pale Ellen, eighteen and alone with sickness teasing her young pink lungs, her heart dark with love. Ellen's innocence like petals blowing on grass, dancing redly away. Crowns of thorns for Ellen's virgin bridehood. Veils of tears.

Ellen ill.

On Jim's return his mother greets him with rubbing, folded fingers. Wet cheeks.

'Poor Ellen,' mama whispers. Respect for the dead.

Jim matures. Instantly.

Too late.

Ellen's black blood on her spitting lips. The flowers on her grave stiff in frost. Brown leaves tumbling, flying wildly in the frozen air, reburying her. No more warm kisses and a heart soaring with love. Ellen nineteen, never twenty. Mama behind the coffin, mama in her own maternal grave. And rain for fifty long years and more, after that.

My darling gone for evermore!

Clock chime. Ding. One. Ding. Two. Et Cetera.

Jim struggles from a dream speaking her name into the listening shadows.

'Ellen?

The pitch dark shadows silent as love words from dead mouths. Marble graveyard lips, cold as stone. Ivy and moss. Memories haunting his present. Jim shivers and steps into the window sun. Rubs his thick veined hands. Prays. Then he makes lunch. Tomatoes and ham. He dreams the evening away – half out of life. On the radio a woman sings Four Last Songs. You don't have to know the language.

Such sweet sorrow. Who said that?

Later, a seat in the garden looking towards the singing sunset. There is nothing to see except blackbirds and sparrows; nothing to hear except the noise of butterflies' wings.

Even later, the clock in the parlour chimes twelve heartbeats. Night comes hot and bothered.

Climbing into an empty bed, Jim turns off the sidelight and watches the shadows huddling against the floral wallpaper. Stars look in at his graying face. A hot August moon in the open window. Soft as silence, quiet as apple blossoms falling, gentle as Ellen's dimpled smile. Ellen's same sad glad smile standing there by his bed. Faithful Ellen, waiting.

'Do you want me now?'

Yes! Dear sweet God – yes!

He says 'I can play now, Ellen, If you like. I'm finally, properly dead.'

'I'm glad. I've been waiting for such a long time!'

Jim rising from his bed, leaving his seventy-six years between the laundered sheets. Soaring through the moonlight with Ellen in his arms, the pair of them shooting like comets into Eternity while the clock in the parlour stops.

Forever and forever.

Directed-study questions:

1. Specify the temporal and spatial settings of the story. Why do you think these descriptions are offered at one of the strongest positions of the text? What do they imply?

2. What function do the descriptive details in this story perform? Illustrate your answer with the excerpts from the story.

3. Trace the vector of the flashes back and flashes forward in the story under the analyses. How does the abundance of them influence the plotline development?

4. Why do you think the author uses nominative sentences to depict the recollections in such a detail? What is the stylistic effect being created?

5. What are the major images the story incorporates? By what language means are they recreated?

6. Decipher the title of the story. Does it by some means reveal the concept of it? Try to prove it analyzing the major concepts of the story offered. Would you entitle the story differently? Offer the possible titles of different types (suggestive, symbolic).

6. Dwell upon the opposition PAST-PRESENT represented in the story. By what means does the author convey the contrast in between? Analyze the positive and negative connotations available. Fill in the table offered:

.....	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
PAST		
PRESENT		



Death By Scrabble or Tile M For Murder

Charlie Fish

It's a hot day and I hate my wife.

We're playing Scrabble. That's how bad it is. I'm 42 years old, it's a blistering hot Sunday afternoon and all I can think of to do with my life is to play Scrabble.

I should be out, doing exercise, spending money, meeting people. I don't think I've spoken to anyone except my wife since Thursday morning. On Thursday morning I spoke to the milkman.

My letters are crap.

I play, appropriately, BEGIN. With the N on the little pink star. Twenty-two points.

I watch my wife's smug expression as she rearranges her letters. Clack, clack, clack. I hate her. If she wasn't around, I'd be doing something interesting right now. I'd be climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. I'd be starring in the latest Hollywood blockbuster. I'd be sailing the Vendee Globe on a 60-foot clipper called the New Horizons – I don't know, but I'd be doing something.

She plays JINXED, with the J on a double-letter score. 30 points. She's beating me already. Maybe I should kill her.

If only I had a D, then I could play MURDER. That would be a sign. That would be permission.

I start chewing on my U. It's a bad habit, I know. All the letters are frayed. I play WARMER for 22 points, mainly so I can keep chewing on my U.

As I'm picking new letters from the bag, I find myself thinking – the letters will tell me what to do. If they spell out KILL, or STAB, or her name, or anything, I'll do it right now. I'll finish her off.

My rack spells MIHZPA. Plus the U in my mouth. Damn.

The heat of the sun is pushing at me through the window. I can hear buzzing insects outside. I hope they're not bees. My cousin Harold swallowed a bee when he was nine, his throat swelled up and he died. I hope that if they are bees, they fly into my wife's throat.

She plays SWEATIER, using all her letters. 24 points plus a 50 point bonus. If it wasn't too hot to move I would strangle her right now.

I am getting sweatier. It needs to rain, to clear the air. As soon as that thought crosses my mind, I find a good word. HUMID on a double-word score, using the D of JINXED. The U makes a little splash of saliva when I put it down. Another 22 points. I hope she has lousy letters.

She tells me she has lousy letters. For some reason, I hate her more.

She plays FAN, with the F on a double-letter, and gets up to fill the kettle and turn on the air conditioning.

It's the hottest day for ten years and my wife is turning on the kettle. This is why I hate my wife. I play ZAPS, with the Z doubled, and she gets a static shock off the air conditioning unit. I find this remarkably satisfying.

She sits back down with a heavy sigh and starts fiddling with her letters again. Clack, clack. Clack, clack. I feel a terrible rage build up inside me. Some inner poison slowly spreading through my limbs, and when it gets to my fingertips I am going to jump out of my chair, spilling the Scrabble tiles over the floor, and I am going to start hitting her again and again and again.

The rage gets to my fingertips and passes. My heart is beating. I'm sweating. I think my face actually twitches. Then I sigh, deeply, and sit back into my chair. The kettle starts whistling. As the whistle builds it makes me feel hotter.

She plays READY on a double-word for 18 points, then goes to pour herself a cup of tea. No, I do not want one.

I steal a blank tile from the letter bag when she's not looking, and throw back a V from my rack. She gives me a suspicious look. She sits back down with her cup of tea, making a cup-ring on the table, as I play an 8-letter word: CHEATING, using the A of READY. 64 points, including the 50-point bonus, which means I'm beating her now.

She asks me if I cheated.

I really, really hate her.

She plays IGNORE on the triple-word for 21 points. The score is 153 to her, 155 to me.

The steam rising from her cup of tea makes me feel hotter. I try to make murderous words with the letters on my rack, but the best I can do is SLEEP.

My wife sleeps all the time. She slept through an argument our next-door neighbours had that resulted in a broken door, a smashed TV and a Teletubby Lala doll with all the stuffing coming out. And then she bitched at me for being moody the next day from lack of sleep.

If only there was some way for me to get rid of her.

I spot a chance to use all my letters. EXPLODES, using the X of JINXED. 72 points. That'll show her.

As I put the last letter down, there is a deafening bang and the air conditioning unit fails.

My heart is racing, but not from the shock of the bang. I don't believe it – but it can't be a coincidence. The letters made it happen. I played the word EXPLODES, and it happened – the air conditioning unit exploded. And before, I played the word CHEATING when I cheated. And ZAP when my wife got the electric shock. The words are coming true. The letters are choosing their future. The whole game is – JINXED.

My wife plays SIGN, with the N on a triple-letter, for 10 points.

I have to test this.

I have to play something and see if it happens. Something unlikely, to prove that the letters are making it happen. My rack is ABQYFWE. That doesn't leave me with a lot of options. I start frantically chewing on the B.

I play FLY, using the L of EXPLODES. I sit back in my chair and close my eyes, waiting for the sensation of rising up from my chair. Waiting to fly.

Stupid. I open my eyes, and there's a fly. An insect, buzzing around above the Scrabble board, surfing the thermals from the tepid cup of tea. That proves nothing. The fly could have been there anyway.

I need to play something unambiguous. Something that cannot be misinterpreted. Something absolute and final. Something terminal. Something murderous.

My wife plays CAUTION, using a blank tile for the N. 18 points.

My rack is AQWEUK, plus the B in my mouth. I am awed by the power of the letters, and frustrated that I cannot wield it. Maybe I should cheat again, and pick out the letters I need to spell SLASH or SLAY.

Then it hits me. The perfect word. A powerful, dangerous, terrible word.

I play QUAKE for 19 points.

I wonder if the strength of the quake will be proportionate to how many points it scored. I can feel the trembling energy of potential in my veins. I am commanding fate. I am manipulating destiny.

My wife plays DEATH for 34 points, just as the room starts to shake.

I gasp with surprise and vindication – and the B that I was chewing on gets lodged in my throat. I try to cough. My face goes red, then blue. My throat swells. I draw blood clawing at my neck. The earthquake builds to a climax.

I fall to the floor. My wife just sits there, watching.

Directed-study questions:

1. Comment on the first paragraph of the story. What kind of a compositional block does it constitute?

2. Dwell upon the type of the conditional sentences: *If she wasn't around, I'd be doing something interesting right now. I'd be climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. I'd be starring in the latest Hollywood blockbuster. I'd be sailing the Vendee Globe on a 60-foot clipper called the New Horizons – I don't know, but I'd be doing something.[...] If only I had a D, then I could play MURDER. That would be a sign. That would be permission.* What is the implication in such a choice of the grammatical construction?

2. How do the following statements of the main character help to identify his personal qualities? Specify them filling in the table that follows:

STATEMENTS	QUALITIES
1. <i>I should be out, doing exercise, spending money, meeting people. I don't think I've spoken to anyone except my wife since Thursday morning. On Thursday morning I spoke to the milkman.</i>	
2. <i>I find myself thinking – the letters will tell me what to do. If they spell out KILL, or STAB, or her name, or anything, I'll do it right now. I'll finish her off.</i>	
3. <i>I hope she has lousy letters. She tells me she has lousy letters. For some reason, I hate her more.</i>	

4. *I feel a terrible rage build up inside me. Some inner poison slowly spreading through my limbs, and when it gets to my fingertips I am going to jump out of my chair, spilling the Scrabble tiles over the floor, and I am going to start hitting her again and again and again. The rage gets to my fingertips and passes. My heart is beating. I'm sweating. I think my face actually twitches. Then I sigh, deeply, and sit back into my chair.*

5.

4. What makes the atmosphere of the story tense? Find the means the concept HOT is verbalized. How does its representation in the text add to recreation of the setting? What is the tone of the narration?

5. Trace the stages of the emotional state the main character is exposed to through out the story. What is the peak of the turmoil of emotions he experiences? Does it coincide with the climax of the story?

6. What is the message of the story? Have you ever visualized your dreams? Do you often verbalize your desires? Do you believe in the power of thought? Word?



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