CLARE 109:
ARTS AND LITERATURE
A TEXT FOR STUDENTS

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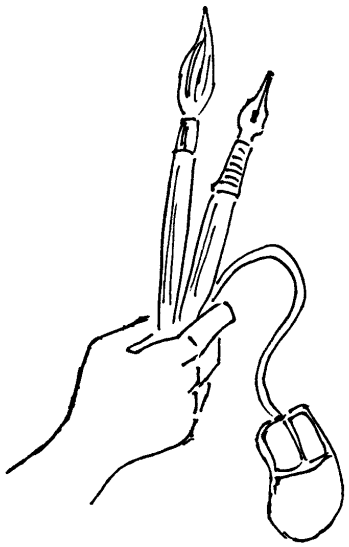

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Chapter 1.

Introduction: the nature of art and aesthetics

Art and emotion

Conceptual or verbal discourse is able to transmit information, not how you feel. Since each of us is a whole person, an "I," and not just an intellect, it is important how we feel. Art affects you precisely as an "I" and makes you feel something, rather than transmitting some conceptual information. Art has intellectual components, of course, but they are always enhanced by emotional. This is the point of art: to affect directly our sense perception and emotions. This is also why art is often more powerful than concepts and words. Due to its nature art is also capable of training and controlling human emotions.

Art and other areas of human life

Art is something important, desirable, pleasurable, something people need and want. Since art has to do with personal emotions, one can use art to draw on these emotions for other reasons.

For example, another thing that is important, pleasurable, and desirable for humans is sex. What happens to sex in society? It is used as a commodity in commerce/business to sell products. It is used within the power structure either to obtain power or to enjoy and demonstrate power. It is used in religion since all religions regulate sexual behavior.

The same thing happens with the arts. They are used in the same major areas to enhance them: the arts sell (as a commodity or promotional tool); they are used in connection with politics to promote agendas; they are used in connection with religion to enhance religious experience.

Art as art (art and the aesthetic sense; art and beauty)

Art and aesthetic perception, or our sense of beauty, also have something to do with cognitive functions and knowledge. For example, symmetry and proportion is importnat to many arts: just as in mathematics, physics or geometry. Also the sense of what is appropriate (taste, style) or the sense of balance is important to the arts: just like in ethics where we strive for a balanced behavior and what is appropriate.

Another crucial area is the disinterested nature of our appreciation of art, which is called the aesthetic attitude. By learning to view the arts in a disinterested manner (i.e., apart from any personal interest or gain), we also learn to transcend our personal interest in morals.

Finally, art and beauty are important to enhance our sense of transcendence. Art and beauty are immediately pleasing but the reasons for this

are unclear. This means that the rules and principles of art are beyond us or *transcend* us: possibly indicating the presence of a higher principle (e.g., the divine) in the universe.

Art and religion

Why study the arts and religion together?

Historically most religious traditions—from aboriginal cultures to world religions—used the arts. At the same time, historically most of what we now call "art" were religious objects or depicted religious themes.

Historically, both communities and private individuals invested in religious art as if it were one of the most important enterprises. At the same time, there were many religious controversies and even wars around art (until the present!), which resulted in mass destruction of art objects and even in deaths of their supporters.

Human perception of the world is synaesthetic, i.e., not only language faculty is used but also vision, hearing, and other senses. Faculties such as vision, hearing and language are heavily interdependent, so there is no reason to prioritize only one of them.

There is also evidence that areas other than language (i.e., vision and hearing, or traditional artistic media) can express certain part of our experience, such as religious, better and reach people at a deeper level.

How the arts contribute to religion

The arts have always been used to express the divine, e.g., in Christian liturgical services. What is their role? Do they simply enhance certain texts, meanings, and feelings? Or are they essential to our perception of the divine? Indeed, if reality has a divine origin then whatever is part of it must be germane or at least analogous to the divine.

1. Generally, the arts, due to their strong emotional impact and ability to act immediately and directly upon our perception, prior to conceptual thinking, can enhance any area of experience, including religious experience.

2. Specifically, both natural and artistic beauty is capable of evoking what is called the sense of transcendence, or the presence of some deeper (divine) principles in the world. Art and beauty are immediately pleasing but the reasons for this are unclear. This means that the rules and principles of art are beyond us or *transcend* us: possibly indicating the presence of a higher principle (e.g., the divine) in the universe.

The arts are used for these purposes by most religious traditions, but specifically in the Christian tradition by the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic traditions.

Tensions between the arts and religion

Historically, both of the above points also caused concerns about the use of the arts by religion.

1. The strong emotional impact of the arts causes a concern that the audience will simply be distracted by the beauty they perceive and focus on the arts themselves, not on the words of the scriptures, religious ideas or sentiments. This concern generated strong anti-artistic tendencies, especially in the Protestant tradition, some branches of which rejected visual arts altogether.

2. The second concern is just how well the arts can represent the divine and what exactly they represent. According to some traditions, only the words (scriptures) and speech can convey correct dogmas and ideas about the nature of God, and the arts do it very imprecisely and vaguely and can simply "lead astray" instead of conveying the correct teaching. The traditions that for this reason reject any visual arts, especially representational, are, e.g., Jewish and Muslim: see section on *iconoclasm* below.

Principles Common to all of the Arts

All art, through an appeal to one or more of the *senses*, conveys some type of an impression that elicits *delight* or *pleasure* from the audience. Thus art poses a brilliant solution to the problem of *objectivity* vs. *subjectivity*: the subject, the audience, draws meaning and delight from the *object*, the work of art. That subjective delight is based on *objective* principles of art inherent within the universe.

All art is characterized by *unity, coherence,* and *emphasis.* The work of art is a unified whole, its individual parts are related to each other, and the interpretant is provided with clues as to what should be emphasized in the composition, a process called *localization* when applied to narrative art. Thus art possesses *integrity* or *wholeness*, with all elements of the art form working to achieve a unified effect. Conversely, if a work of art were to *disintegrate*—say if the pages of a book were reassembled in no particular *order* or a statue were smashed into a dozen unrelated pieces—we would be justified in saying that the work of art no longer existed. Thus every work of art is a *composition*, something new that has been created by assembling different parts in an *orderly* fashion. And it has been fashioned by a *maker*, *creator*, *author*, or *artist.*

An important universal principle in all arts is *contrast* that always has a predictable dramatic or disturbing impact, as opposed to *uniformity*. Several other principles can be roughly classified under the category of contrast. The presence or lack of *balance* has either a calming or an unsettling effect. All art makes use of both *symmetry* and *asymmetry* as organizing principles. Thus pleasant and unpleasant sound combinations play against each other in music—

known specifically as *consonance* and *dissonance.* Different patterns of line and color exhibit symmetry and asymmetry in painting, as do shapes and texture in sculpture, and smooth and rough language in literature. While *harmony* as applied to music has the specific definition of the simultaneous sounding of tones *in a pleasing manner*, it also has the larger definition of the *pleasing arrangement of parts* in any type of composition. *Rhythm* refers to the occurrence of strong or weak *beats* in a musical composition, but it also has the larger aesthetic meaning of the patterned repetition of a formal element in a work of art. Thus the use of vertical and horizontal lines in a painting can set up a rhythmic pattern, or the interplay of long and short sentences in a novel, or the interplay of solo dancers vs dancers grouping together in a dance ensemble.

Every art has a *medium* through which it communicates pleasure: music through the meaningful arrangement of *sounds* produced through musical instruments or the human voice; painting through images of *sight* depicted on a two-dimensional canvas with paint; sculpture through the employment of *sight* and *texture* shaped as a three-dimensional structure with plaster, stone, wood, metal; architecture through the employment of *sight*, and *texture* shaped as a three-dimensional structure that displays both *internal* and *external* space; literature through an evocation of all the senses through the medium of *language*.

a. Formal Elements Common to the Arts and Literature

Form: The shape or outline of the work of art as determined by its parts: the movements of the dance, the arrangement of words on the page, the sequence of sounds in music, the interrelation of line, color, and texture in painting.

Medium: specific material or vehicle: oil, acrylic, marble, musical instruments, meaningful sounds.

Line or contour: path of a moving point, linear perspective or simultaneous occupation of space, the plot line or story line of a work of literature, how it carries us from the beginning to the end.

Space: Actual or illusory space, romantic or classical space, the attempt to focus on one part of a painting or piece of music, to thrust certain details of a narrative into the background or foreground of the work of literature.

Color: Hue or color quality, value or intensity, or (metaphorically) the prevailing *mood* of works of music, literature or the plastic arts.

Texture or structure: Coarse to fine gradient, the way in which the work of art or literature is organized.

Integrity or wholeness: The way in which the parts of the work of art or literature fit together to form a coherent whole.

Unity: The triumphant expression of realized integrity.

Rhythm: Regular patterns in a work of art, changes in the level of intensity with which it is presented, the alternation of patterns in literature.

b. The Four Common "Modes" of Contents

For organizational purposes, the emotional reaction of the interpretant or audience to both the contents and the formal elements of the work or art can be classified according to the four modes, as suggested in Aristotle's *Poetics* and developed by Northrup Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism* and Mikhail Bakhtin in *The Dialogic Imagination*: the heroic, the lyric, the pastoral/elegiac, and the satiric/parodic.

The Heroic Mode. This mode deals with aspects of courage or elevated concepts of honor, decency, or even superhuman behavior, our attempts as human beings to escape from our limitations and do something great or spectacular. It is marked by grandeur, massiveness, formality, universality, and powerfully articulated themes. The ultimate heroic act is to risk one's life for the greater good of humanity. Homer's heroes differ from the gods in that they are *mortal.* Since heroes are larger than life and sometimes die in the process of achieving their objectives, the heroic mode also has a place in the development of *tragedy*, defined by Aristotle as the fall of a great man through some tragic flaw.

The pastoral or elegiac mode. Historically, this mode refers to a lost world of simple shepherds leading simple lives, feeling the emotions that we feel, but unfettered by the complexities or corruption of modern civilization. But it has evolved to refer to our sense of loss or lament for a simpler and better time: specifically, the golden age of the ancient Greeks or the Garden of Eden in the Old Testament. Any type of nostalgic lament for a past time or friendship or culture is intrinsically pastoral in sentiment. It is found, for example, in Roman sculpture, which memorializes and celebrates ancient Greek sculpture. Although it originally dealt with an idealized form of shepherd life, it now encompasses any celebration of (idealized) rural life, as well as the pastoral symbolism of the Christian Church (Christ as the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep). The pastoral ideal is also subject to satirical treatment; for example, the dubious joys of a shepherd's life are satirized in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, and Walter Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd" functions as response to the idealization of the pastoral in Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love."

The Lyric Mode. This mode celebrates the *subjectivity* of the individual, the primacy of human emotion (joy, grief, laughter, horror, and the evolution of the psyche through experience). It is marked by intensity and (often) by brevity of means: a short poem, a scene in a painting, a rhythmic brush stroke, the portrayal of intimate, closed spaces in painting and architecture. It is traditionally associated with song or poetry that can be put to music but it has evolved to encompass any heartfelt expression of emotion in any artistic medium. It focuses on the personal, inner life of emotion rather than the public, external life of action celebrated in the heroic mode.

The satiric or parodic mode. This mode presents an *inverted, ironic* look at the world, a mockery of conventions and practices (as well as human weaknesses) that fail to take into account the natural order of things, or the nature of humanity itself. It ridicules human pretensions and often parodies the other modes, e.g., mocking the distraught lover, the lugubrious mourner, the strutting hero, the fabled joys of rural life. It is basically a reaction to another form of thought or experience. It is marked by mockery, ridicule, invective, irreverence, levity, crudity, and the creator's profound dissatisfaction with some aspect of the human condition. It is basically parasitic, often drawing its inspiration from another work of art or mode of thought. It also responds to the human resentment directed at those who take themselves too seriously or who refuse to acknowledge the flawed nature of humanity, including their own. Since it invites laughter, satire also has a place in the development of comedy.

Modes can be discussed from the perspective of the author/creator, the audience, or the theme imbedded in the artifact itself. For example, a serious piece of architecture can also be viewed satirically, even though the architect did not intend to evoke that type of sentiment, and its satiric nature is not obvious from the artifact itself. For example, only in retrospect do the hideous shopping malls and industrial complexes of the 70's evoke satiric mirth, and only now can we take satisfaction in the deliberate destruction of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis, a classic example of failed space and bureaucratic arrogance. Conversely, Jonathan Swift's satirical intent in *Gulliver's Travels* has been frustrated by some librarians who have classified the book as children's literature! Again, the heroic intent of Nazi-inspired sculpture and architecture has been forever obliterated by the raw horror of the Holocaust. There can also be works of art that employ a mixture of modes (e.g. the pastoral and the heroic in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, or the satiric and the lyric in Dante's *Divine Comedy*).

Examples

Thus a heroic film like *High Noon* can be compared with a heroic painting like Jacques-Louis David's *Napoleon Crossing the Alps at St. Bernard.* Or a parodic tale like Joyce's *Ulysses* can be compared with an architectural work, the parodic treatment of classical columns and fountains in George Moore's *Piazza d'ltalia* or a parodic piece of music like Carla Bley's "Reactionary Tango." Again, one could compare the lyric poems of Wordsworth with Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody" or the intimate portraits by the Victorian painter Edward Burne-Jones. A sense of pastoral nostalgia exudes from Thomas Cole's series of paintings *Course of Empire* and the jazz musician Pat Meheny's "Last Train Home"; cf. a nostalgic sense of loss for Russia's heroic past in Anton Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard*. However, Chekov's play also evokes the tragic sense of life and the comic aspects of existence.

Chapter 2. The Nature of Literature and Drama

Literature

The basic problem in discussing literature is one of definition—what is it? Basically, literature is *imaginative* prose and verse identified by its *aesthetic* qualities: harmony, rhythm, striking imagery, structural integrity, thematic wholeness, original phrasing, dramatic immediacy, linguistic variety, consonance, dissonance, originality in both language and thought, separate from but consistent with the spoken or written everyday language. Above all, language conveys *meaning;* there can be no *abstract* literature. This is both the upside and the downside of literature. It appeals to our minds as well as our hearts, but to the extent that meaning is stressed as the primary focus of literature, to that extent it loses its distinctiveness from ordinary discourse.

The problem comes with the attempt to *privilege* literature as a serious mode of discourse essentially different from ordinary or day-to-day discourse. Essentially *literature* or *belles lettres* ("beautiful compositions") is *parasitic* upon ordinary discourse and is often indistinguishable from it. Good writing, even if it does not announce itself as *literature,* is still good writing. But if we focus on the *aesthetic* nature of the discourse, i.e. its sense of beauty, we can appreciate not only what constitutes literature, but also the *literary* qualities of our daily discourse. Language that is significantly remote from everyday discourse, which is not true to the idiom of the language in which it is written or spoken, will ultimately fail as literature.

In another sense, literature is whatever a particular age says it is. Thus personal letters were considered literature in eighteenth-century England, but are now regarded essentially as data for reconstructing the artists' aesthetic development. The New Journalists of the mid-twentieth century (Tom Wolfe, Norman Mailer, Jimmy Breslin) applied the techniques of fiction to reportage and created a new genre of literature. Literature can be accessed in *oral* or *written* form, in *prose* or *verse.*

Literary Prose and Verse. Ideally, all literature would be read aloud to a live audience, thereby capturing the rhythms and cadences of prose, or the metrics of verse. Literature presupposes the existence of certain conventions. For example, we know that we are reading a *novel* if we have in our hands *a fictional prose narrative of considerable length.* Conversely, we know that we are reading a *lyric poem* if we have in our hands *a brief composition in verse that celebrates or focuses on one or more of the emotions.* If someone read the poem to us, instead of providing us with a copy of it, we could still identify it as a lyric poem through its subject matter and the sound of its metrical arrangement. If someone

read a portion of the novel to us, identifying the portion as only an excerpt from a larger work, the more irregular rhythms of the prose and the fictive nature of the narrative voice would identify it as a novel.

The distinctions between literary verse and prose are best illustrated by example. In the first example, from Shakespeare's *Troylus and Cressida,* Shakespeare employs dialogue, and extended metaphor of Time, and the poetic and dramatic flexibility of the blank verse line. In the second example, a complete story from Boccaccio's *Decameron,* Boccaccio provides us with a satiric example of prose narrative, rooted in the context of fifteenth-century Florence. First the Shakespeare passage:

W. Shakespeare, *Troylus and Cressida*

(A conversation between Ulysses and Achilles)

Ulysses
To see these Grecian Lords; why, euen already, They clap the lubber *Aiax* on the shoulder, As if his foote were on braue *Hectors* brest, And great *Troy* shrinking.

Achilles
I doe beleeue it:
For they past by me, as mysers doe by beggars,
Neither gaue to me good word, nor looke:
What are my deedes forgit?

Ulysses
Time hath (my Lord) a wallet at his backe,
Wherein he puts almes for oblivion
A great siz'd monster of ingratitudes:
Those scraps are good deedes past,
Which are deuour'd as fast as they are made,
Forgot as soone as done: perseuerance, deere my Lord,
Keepes honor bright, to haue done, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rustie male,
In monumental mockrie: take the instant way,
For honour travels in a straight so narrow,
Where one goes but a breast, keepe then the path:
For emulation hath a thousand Sonnes,
That one by one pursue; if you giue way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forth right;
Like to an entered Tyde, they all rush by,
And leave you hindmost:

Or like a gallant Horse falne in first ranke,
Lye there for pauement to the abiect, neere
Ore-run and trampled on: then what they doe in present,
Though lesse then yours in past, must ore-top yours.
For time is like a fashionable Hoste,
That slightely shakes his parting Guest by the hand;
And with his armes out-stretcht, as he would flye,
Graspes in the comer: the welcome euer smiles,
And farewells goes out sighing: O let not virtue seeke
Remuneration for the thing it was: for beautie, wit,
High birth, vigor of bone, desert in seruice,
Loue, friendship, charity, are subiects all
To enuious and calumniating time
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin:
That all with one consent praise new borne gaudes [toys, trifles],
Though they are made and moulded of things past,
And goe to dust, that is a little guilt [gold],
More laude [praise] then guilt oredusted [gold covered with dust].
The present eye praises the present obiect:
Then maruell not thou great and compleat man,
That all the Greekes begin to worship *Aiax;*
Since things in motion begin to catch the eye,
Then what not stirs: the cry went out on thee,
And still it might, and yet it may againe,
If thou would'st not entombe thy selfe aliue,
And case thy reputation in thy Tente;
Whose glorious deedes, but in these fields of late,
Made emulous missions 'mongst the gods themselues,
And draue great *Mars* to faction. *(The First Folio*—1623)

Shakespeare assumes that the reader of this passage is familiar with the traditional roles of Achilles (the fierce warrior), Ajax (the dumb thug), and Ulysses (the man of many wiles and wit) as they appear in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey.* This would be the *context* of the scene. The scene deals with a familiar *theme,* the evanescent nature of reputation and glory. It also deals with a very human situation: a man of worth feels that he has been physically snubbed by those who once hung on his every word (passed over *like* [simile—see below] a beggar by a miser, who is too cheap to throw him a coin). The scene contains multiple *personifications:* Time has a wallet or bag on his back full of alms (gratuities) for Oblivion or Forgetful-ness, who eats ups those treats or good deeds of the past. Honor, also personified, goes on a straight or narrow path, constantly moving forwards. If you stop doing honorable deeds and rest on your laurels on what you *have already done,* you will be pushed aside by the many

sons of the personified Emulation or Imitation. Thus those who imitate Achilles in deeds that he has already achieved will overwhelm his original heroism.

The series of personifications is followed by a series of *similes* (metaphors introduced by *like* or *as)* which graphically describe the image of the passed-over has been, living on the basis of past glory. The glory-seekers literally run over the hapless Achilles. *Like* an overflowing tide, they engulf him. Achilles himself is *like* the head horse in a parade who stumbles and then is trampled upon by the beasts who follow him. Time itself is *like* a fickle host who is quick to say goodbye to the loyal guest ("Here's your hat, what's your hurry?"), offering him a perfunctory farewell even as he grasps firmly the hand of the newly arrived guest (or candidate for honor). Time is now personified as "envious" and "calumniating," for as Achilles moves through time his deeds arouse envy and backbiting in other contestants for fame and glory. In a final, *antithetical* image, the unmoving, entombed Achilles who is doing nothing, is contrasted with the moving, dynamic Ajax. Movement catches the eye and the attention; to be still is to remove oneself from the attention of the social world. And since Aristotle defined time as the measure of motion, time comes to a stop for us when we cease to move; that is, we die. Society thus demands, in the popular phrase, "What have you done for me lately?" Human beings are fickle. However, resting on one's past laurels is presumptuous at best, and Ulysses also has some *satirical* fun at the expense of the solipsistic Achilles. The scene is really a dialogue (like the Platonic dialogues) between Achilles and Ulysses. Blank verse, because it is unrhymed, can give the playgoing audience the illusion that they are hearing real rather than poetic speech, including alliteration ("made and moulded of things past"), parallel structure (birth, bone, service; love, friendship, charity), aphorisms ("One touch of nature makes the whole world kin"), puns ("hedge aside" as in "move aside like a hedge that is on the side of the path," "case thy reputation in thy tent" [case as body, or as box stored in the tent, tent as place of refuge from battle, an enclosed space far from the action]), irony ("thou great and compleat man"), caesura ("Where one goes but abreast // keepe then the path), hyperbole ("to worship Ajax"), run-on lines "perseverance, dear my lord, / keeps honor bright"), variation in length of line and stress pattern ("Like to an entered Tyde, they all rush by / And leave you hindemost").

Boccaccio, *Decameron.* First Day, Second Story
(Translated by John Mulryan)

Gracious ladies, here's my story. There was once a wealthy merchant from Paris, who was also a good man. He was called Jehannot de Chevigny—a very loyal man who ran a huge drapery business. He had a close friendship with a very rich Jew named Abraham. He was also a merchant and a very loyal man. And every time Jehannot ran into him, he began to weep mightily because the

soul of such a wise, brave, and good man would be condemned because the man did not have faith. Then, in a very friendly way, he started to pray that Abraham would renounce the errors of his Jewish faith. Then he would be able to see how holy and good the Christian faith was, always prospering and improving, and he would also be able to figure out that his own faith, in contrast, kept losing ground and came to nothing.

The Jew responded that he believed there was nothing good or holy outside of Judaism. Moreover he was born in that faith, and he had chosen to live and die a Jew. Nor could there be anything that would cause him to change his mind. Still, Jehannot kept after him day after day, with one speech or another, saying, in a very direct, businesslike way, that Christianity was better than Judaism. Then, perhaps because the Jew was a great teacher of the Jewish religion, or else because his great friendship with Jehannot moved him deeply, or perhaps because the language of the Holy Spirit, so much superior to the language of mere man, moved him, the Jew began to take some pleasure in the arguments of Jehannot. But he still held firm and unshaken in his own beliefs.
Equaling Abraham in firmness, Jehannot never stopped nagging him about the issue, so much so that the Jew, defeated by Jehannot's constant persistence, said the following.
"Ok, Jehannot, you want me to become a Christian, and I'm willing to do so. But first I need to go to Rome, and to see the alleged Vicar of God on earth, and to study his ways and customs, and those of his brother cardinals as well. Thus through your words and their behavior, I'll be able to figure out if your faith, which you have taught me and talked about so often, is better than mine, Then I'll become a Christian. If not, I'll remain a Jew just like I am now."

When Jehannot heard that, he was really upset, saying the following quietly to himself: "The faith he has is lost, the faith that I tried so hard to give to him, believing myself to have converted him. For if he goes into the court of Rome and sees the filthy, ugly lives of the clergy, he won't become a Christian instead of a Jew, but he'll reject Christianity and resume being a Jew, even if he had been the best of all Christians!" And so he made this reply to Abraham:

"So my friend, why do you want to work so hard, and be so hopeful that you want to go from here to Rome? Why should *a* man as rich as you are have to go from land to sea, and take so much pain and danger on yourself? Don't you believe that you can be baptized into your god right here? And if perhaps you have some doubts about the faith I have taught you, where can you find better and wiser teachers of the faith than right here? They can answer any questions you wish, or any doubts you want to make known. It seems to me that this is an outrageous thing that you want to do. Take note that the prelates in Rome are no different than the ones here, except that they are closer to the chief Shepherd. As for this fatiguing journey, put it off for a while and do it later, when I perchance, might be able to go with you."

Then the Jew responded as follows. "I myself believe, Jehannot, that

it's just as you say. But, to put it in as few words as possible, I am definitely (if it is your wish that I do what you have insisted I do) headed for Rome—otherwise, I won't do anything."

Jehannot, seeing his resolve, said: "Ok, then go and have a good journey." That's what he did, even though he knew that Abraham would never convert to Christianity, once he saw the court of Rome.

The Jew mounted his horse and headed quickly for the court of Rome, where he went to where the Jews lived and was honorably received by them. And he took up residence there. And without saying anything to anyone, he cautiously began to look around and to observe the behavior of the Pope, the cardinals, and the other clergy, and members of the papal court. This is what he learned from what he could see with his own wise eyes, and also what he picked up from other sources. He found that everyone, from the greatest to the least, was incredibly dishonest and sinful in lechery, and not only in the natural way, but also in sodomy, without any restraint of conscience or of shame, to the point where prostitutes and fancy boys wielded a great deal of influence. In addition to that, gluttony, tippling, drunkenness, and every kind of servitude to the belly were universally practiced, almost as if these people were brute animals, in addition to lechery, which was practiced openly.

And he also got to see greed and lust for money in just about everyone, and trafficking in human blood as well. As for Christian and divine things, whichever they were, or anything related to sacrifices or benefits, they bought and sold. In fact they did more business and had more middlemen than anyone in the drapery business in Paris, or any other kind of business for that matter. They called shameless simony "intercession" and gluttony "sustenance." It was as if God could not understand the significance of their words or their heinous intentions, and could be duped, like his creatures, just by the names attached to things.

These things, along with many others about which I am going to keep quiet, were disliked intensely by the Jew, for he was a very sober and modest man. Abraham decided that he had seen enough, and that it was time to return to Paris, which he did.

When Jehannot heard that the Jew had returned from there, he knew there was no way he would have become a Christian after making such a pilgrimage. But he still went to see him and gave him a very warm greeting. And after the Jew had rested for a few days, Jehannot asked him what he thought about the Holy Father and the cardinals and the other papal courtiers that he had seen.

To which the Jew immediately replied: "I think they're contemptible, and God should punish the whole pack of them! And unless I'm half blind, is seems that there's no holiness, devotion, or good works or good example in life or anything like charity to be found in any of the clergy there. Instead there is lust, greed, gluttony, deceit, envy, pride, and some things that are even worse (if it's possible to do anything worse than all these things); in fact people reveled so

much in their perfidy that the place was more like a veritable furnace of devilish works, than a site of holiness.

"Therefore it seems to me that, instead of acting as the foundation and constant support of Christianity, your Shepherd and his whole crew are doing all they can and exercising every talent and every bit of wit and art they have, to reduce to nothing and to chase the Christian religion out of this world.

"Yet, because I can see that your religion is not rejected but continually grows and becomes more bright and shining, it's clear that to me that it's being guided and supported by the Holy Spirit, because it's more true and holy than any other religion, Therefore I, who was formerly hard-hearted and unyielding to your pleas that I become a Christian, now say frankly that nothing can stop me from becoming one. Let's go then to the church, and there, according to the required ritual of your holy faith, have me baptized."

Jehannot, who had expected the exact opposite to happen, was more content than he had ever been when he heard his friend say such things. So they both went together to the church of Our Lady of Paris, and requested the clergy to baptize Abraham.

When the clergy heard the request from Abraham's own lips, they immediately agreed to do so. Jehannot raised up Abraham from the sacred fount and christened him Giovanni. And at a later time some men noted for such knowledge gave him a complete course in our faith, which he picked up perfectly. He then became a man who commanded great respect, and was known for his pious way of living.

The *Decameron* is a frame story, like Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales,* Juan Ruiz's *The Book of Good Love,* and *The Thousand and One Nights*. A frame story is a series of tales or short stories with one or more narrators triggered by a specific event. Chaucer's pilgrims pass the time to Canterbury by telling tales; Ruiz's archpriest spins tales of good and bad love after experiencing a crisis of faith and deciding to save his own soul by warning other men of love's poison baits. Scheherezade tells a thousand tales to the Persian monarch Shahriyar to stave off her own and her sister's execution, and also teach the monarch about male as well as female treachery. Boccaccio's handsome young men and women while away the time telling tales of love while they wait out the plague in Florence at a nearby villa. Many of these tales are anticlerical in nature, and also mock the hypocrisy of medieval society, particularly religious types who invoke the letter rather than the spirit of Christianity. Thus this particular story has a highly complex cultural component and is a marvel of the narrative art. This tale is told on the first day by Nefile, the blushing and charming girl who is probably the mistress of Pamfilo, who tells the first story. She modestly addresses her audience as "gracious ladies," and allows the men to listen in while she addresses those of her own sex. The story itself is a gloss on the passage in the New Testament "unless a man is born of water and the spirit, he shall not enter

the kingdom of heaven." Ironic reversals produce the biting satire of the story. If a Jew wanted to become a Christian, it would only be logical to go to the heart of Christianity, the city of Rome, to examine its credentials as the true faith. Of course from Boccaccio's point of view, Rome is a sewer of hypocrisy— filled with clergy who practice all the sins that they condemn in others. In a final irony, the tale takes an interesting twist: for Abraham the Jew embraces Christianity, reasoning any religion that could survive so much human abuse, must be divinely inspired! The tale is a model of verbal economy: two men are united by friendship but divided by religion; one seeks to heal that division by converting his friend to his own religion; paradoxically, Abraham seems to be embracing a religion inferior to his own. The last remark of the tale, "He then became a man who commanded great respect, and was known for his pious way of living," achieves closure, but is decidedly ambiguous. A pious man from whose point of view? The corrupt church? The naive narrator Nefile? The naive audience she addresses? The tale also balances the personal and public life, the power of the church vs. the bonds of friendship. The good intentions of Jehannot reinforce the sentiments of Boccaccio's own audience, for he is a merchant of drapes and Boccaccio was known as the poet of the merchants. Thus Boccaccio assumes a benevolent male persona as the narrator of the entire *Decameron,* and a naive feminine persona for this particular tale. The context of church corruption in the fourteenth century gives the tale immediate relevance to its audience, the bond of friendship between natural antagonists, Christian and Jew, a more universal theme for the ages. The theme of the spirit vs. the letter is clear: the story hinges on a misguided gloss of a biblical passage that is not part of the Hebrew bible. In effect, Boccaccio's own story is a gloss on the text and a text in its own right that demands interpretation. The characters are simple, but clearly delineated (not by appearance but by persuasion); the plot develops from Jehannot's concern for his friend's fate after death: against the background of imminent death from the Plague, which is the overriding context of the *Decameron,* this meditation on the afterlife is certainly appropriate. The context of ecclesiastical corruption moves us from the Florentine villa to the everyday world of Boccaccio himself. Abraham the Jew loses both his name and his identity, to please a society and, indeed, a friend, who can admire only those who are identical with them. The tale is entertaining and insightful, simultaneously amusing and informing us about our human strengths and limitations. Thus like all literature, *meaning* is at its center, but meaning dispensed with grace, eloquence, and wit.

Drama

Drama is a three-dimensional form in which living persons, performing on a stage, present, through words and actions, a story or tale that involves *conflict*. It

is meant to be seen and heard by a live audience. It resembles literature in its use of an underlying plot or narrative, and it can be combined with music, song, the dance, film, and (through the use of props) painting, sculpture, and even architecture. Like the dance it lives only through *performance*; a videotaped record of a play is a poor substitute for the theatrical experience. The playwright's vision is also limited and conditioned by the participation of the actors, as well as the vision of the play's director. Since audiences vary and actors perform differently on different occasions (and also interact with each other differently) no two performances of a play are exactly alike. At the same time, the literary nature of drama allows certain dramatic pieces to function as a kind of literature, and certain playrights even wrote plays primarily to be read, not performed.

Catharsis. Aristotle's theory that the death of the tragic figure arouses the emotions of pity and fear in the audience: pity for the plight of the protagonist and fear that we may end up like him. The development of the two conflicting emotions through the sequence of conflicts and resolutions is supposed to bring about a purifying effect, or relief: to cleanse the audience of their negative emotions and reactions to uncertainties brought on by the horror of the tragedy.

Closet Drama. A drama that was written, but was never supposed to be performed. Robert Browning's *Pippa Passes* and John Milton's *Samson Agonistes* are two examples.

Closure. The sense of the audience that all the complications of the play have been resolved in the conclusion.

Conflict. The essence of drama. Basically a play describes a conflict, which is then resolved, either tragically or comically.

Foreshadowing. When some language or action in the play looks forward to something that will happen later. For example, Shakespeare's Macbeth ironically foretells the ambiguous prophecies of the Weird Sisters when he remarks: "So foul and fair a day I have not yet seen."

Freytag's Pyramid. The theory that the action of the play reaches a crisis point (the apex of the triangle) somewhere in the third act, and is followed by a denouement or descent as the play comes to a close.

Medium. The *medium* of the drama is the spoken language delivered in performance. Drama is a *performance* art, meant to be seen, heard, and experienced by a live audience.

Plot. The *selection* and *arrangement* of events within the play that carry it forward, in a linear fashion, from the introduction of the theme-shaping conflict to its resolution.

Props. Physical objects like walking sticks or telephones or chairs that are used to further the action of the play and to more fully define the characters in the play.

Setting. The physical and/or historical setting of the play. Where is the action supposed to be taking place and when? For example, *Macbeth* is supposed to take place in Scotland, perhaps suggested by an artificial tree or some paper grass. Of course the setting is imaginary and has to be compressed into the size of the stage.

Subplot. Often a drama will have a subplot that underlies the main plot. For example, in *King Lear* the plot concerns a king who has three daughters, two bad and one good. The two bad daughters destroy his mind. The subplot is the story of Gloucester who has two sons, one good and the other bad. As a result of his bad son's bad conduct, Gloucester's eyes are put out on the stage. Besides having both good and bad children, the other link between the two characters is that Lear does not "see" the true nature of his daughters, until he goes mad, and Gloucester does not "perceive" the nature of his sons until he has his eyes put out.

Chapter 3. Formal Patterns in Literature: Poetry

The main difference between literature and other simple (or basic) art media (such as the visual medium or sound) is that literature uses language, i.e., meaningful statements. This means that meaning in literature is of greatest importance. But is it only meaning that is important?

Literature starts as oral, i.e., memorized and orally recited, and becomes written only at a later stage. In order to memorize lengthy literary pieces, they had to be organized according to a certain order. Thus, the first kind of literature was poetry.

Poetic foot and poetic meter. Using some natural qualities of language, such as stressed and unstressed syllables, poets rearrange language—our means of communication—according to certain laws (order) and make it into artworks. Thus, formal elements in literature (e.g., such as meter) are important as well. Contemporary poetic meter is a repeating pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables (such as one stressed, one unstressed, etc.). Poetic foot is the repeating portion of this pattern.

a. The Use of Rhythmic Patterns in Literature and the Arts

Rhythm: **Neurobiological Data**

Hierarchical Nature of Information Processing

The importance of rhythm in almost all art forms is undeniable. The explanation of why rhythm is so important lies in the way our brain processes information. First, information processing is hierarchical: it has a hierarchy or a "chain of command." The brain starts with the simplest data (lowest step of the hierarchy) and gradually climbs higher and higher to the more complex levels of information processing (higher steps of the hierarchy). At the higher levels it deals with whole ideas and concepts (such as: composition, structure), as opposed to simple information, such as whether this object is green or read, square or round.

All this diverse information is processed in different areas of the brain. In order to bring it all together the work of neurons in the brain becomes synchronized, i.e., the brain creates a neural *pulse* or *rhythm* that synchronizes its work: just like at a big factory you need a precise schedule of operation, timetables, or the

orchestra needs a conductor.

Hemispheric Specialization

Second, our brain has two parts: lobes or hemispheres. These two lobes act independently and have different functions in processing information: our brain is "hemispherically specialized." For example, the left lobe is responsible for logical reason, language, and images, and the right lobe is responsible for creative capacities, sequences and durations (and therefore music). When our brain functions, the two hemispheres constantly exchange information with each other. Now in order to synchronize this process of exchanging information and avoid chaos, the brain also creates neural *pulse* or *rhythm*.

These internal rhythms of the brain can be reinforced by the rhythms that exist in artworks, such as music or poetry. For this reason rhythmically organized artworks are perceived as more pleasant. Rhythmical organization is to be expected both in temporal arts, such as music and poetry, and in visual (spatial) arts: because the processing of visual information is also a temporal process. Although it seems to us that we perceive images simultaneously, in fact the process happens in stages and sequences (first lines, then contrast, then color), and therefore takes time.

Rhythm in visual arts (architecture, painting)

If we understand rhythm as the basic division of space or time into repeating sections of particular duration or length, or a pattern of such sections, then the term rhythm is applicable to visual arts.

In architecture, rhythm can be created by rows of columns (*The Parthenon*) or flying buttresses and spires (Gothic cathedrals: Reims, Milano).

In painting, rhythm can be created by depicting a regular procession of people (Burne-Jones, *The Wedding of Psyche*, *Saint George and the Dragon*). Rhythms in painting do not have to be steady and one-directional. You can have a convergent rhythmical movement (Giotto, *The Confirmation of the Rule*), a wavy rhythmical pattern (Botticelli, *Spring*), or an ascending rhythmical movement (Tintoretto, *Ascent to the Calvary*).

Rhythm in literature

The most basic example of rhythm in literature is the use of poetic meter (such as dactyl, iamb, etc.). However, rhythm can exists even at the more general level

of organization of the text, as in examples from the *Iliad*: e.g., the "rhythm of battle" (pages 129-130; 190; 201-202; 205-206).

b. Color Quality in the Arts and Literature

Color is important in visual arts to create a certain mood, depending on the selected color palette. Certain schools of painting, such as *impressionism* and *pointilism*, choose not to use lines or black and white contrast at all, and create paintings by using pure colors or colored dots: cf. Claude Monet's "Garden of Giverny" or "Sketch of a Human Figure," or Paul Signac's "Pine Tree" or "Sandy Beach." Using pure colors creates an impression of spontaneity and freshness. Main qualities of colors: hue and saturation. Colors can be contrasting or not.

Tone color / timbre in music can be compared to the use of colors and shading in painting. Tone color is based on the capacity of different instruments to produce, in addition to the primary tone, different additional tones or partials (e.g., fifth, octave, etc.). The intensity of these partials is different, and it determines the differences in the tone color of the instrument, depending on the type of instrument played: brass, wind, string, percussion.

In poetry something like tone color can be reproduced by selecting words with certain sounds in them, which immediately create certain moods (alliteration, assonance), or which sound like certain objects (onomatopoeia).

c. Examples of Poetic Texts

W.B. Yeats
The Falling of the Leaves

Autumn is over the long leaves that love us,
And over the mice in the barley sheaves;
Yellow the leaves of the rowan above us,
And yellow the wet wild-strawberry leaves.

The hour of the waning of love has beset us,
And weary and worn are our sad souls now;
Let us part, ere the season of passion forget us,
With a kiss and a tear on thy drooping brow.

E.B. Browning
A Sea-Side Meditation (excerpt)

Go, travel 'mid the hills ! The summer's hand
Hath shaken pleasant freshness o'er them all.
Go, travel 'mid the hills! There, tuneful streams
Are touching myriad stops, invisible;
And winds, and leaves, and birds, and your own thoughts,
(Not the least glad) in wordless chorus, crowd
Around the thymele of Nature. Go,
And travel onward. Soon shall leaf and bird,
Wind, stream, no longer sound. Thou shalt behold
Only the pathless sky, and houseless sward;
O'er which anon are spied innumerous sails
Of fisher vessels like the wings o' the hill,
And white as gulls above them, and as fast.—
But sink they—sink they out of sight. And now
The wind is springing upward in your face;
And, with its fresh-toned gushings, you may hear
Continuous sound which is not of the wind,
Nor of the thunder, nor o' the cataract's
Deep passion, nor o' the earthquake's wilder pulse;
But which rolls on in stern tranquillity,
As memories of evil o'er the soul;
Boweth the bare broad Heaven.—What view you ? sea—
and sea! The sea—the glorious sea! from side to side,
Swinging the grandeur of his foamy strength,
And undersweeping the horizon,—on—
On—with his life and voice inscrutable.
<...>

G.M. Hopkins

God's Grandeur

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; Bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright
wings.

As Kingfishers Catch Fire

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies dráw fláme;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell's
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves--goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,
Crying Whát I do is me: for that I came.
Í say móre: the just man justices;
Kéeps gráce: thát keeps all his goings graces;
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is--
Chríst--for Christ plays in ten thousand places,
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

Chapter 4. Formal Patterns in Literature: Plots

The task of the course is to find some common features between different art forms. Form or formal elements (elements of art and music, and elements of design) can be a good basis for comparing different art forms. Comparing formal elements in arts helps one to avoid the problem arising from the fact that different arts use different media, such as sound, visual medium, speech, etc., and thus seem to be beyond comparison. One of the most common and general principles of form is composition, or overall design of an artwork.

a. Composition in painting

terms: scale, proportion, position, balance, symmetry, deviation (off-balance), dynamism

Definition: in the most general sense, "composition" is the arrangement and order of elements, their position in relation to one another and to the whole artwork.

Note! composition in this sense must be distinguished from "composition" as the process of creating music (i.e., what composers do) or the process of writing.

Scale determines the respective size of elements / objects in the painting, as well as the size of these elements compared to the size of the painting itself (canvas). Scale can influence our perception of the image and create various moods. *Proportion* determines the size of particular parts of a given object / element. *Position* of elements within a painting is also important.

Balance, symmetry, and the sense of order

The need for a good composition comes from the general preference of human sense perception, especially vision, for order and a balanced arrangement of elements. This quality of human perception was noticed long ago, for example by the 6th-century BC Greek philosopher Pythagoras, a great mathematician and the author of musical theory, and the 5th-century BC philosopher and scientist Aristotle (cf. his *Poetics*).

The majority of classical compositions are based on one of the two conflicting principles, or on the combination of both. The first principle is the balanced position of elements, the second — the unbalanced. The balanced position of

elements creates a pleasing, secure, and calming feeling. On the other hand, it tends to be boring, and therefore often the opposite tendency towards difference, deviation, dynamism, and off-balance is present. Just as in the case of the principle of "unity and variety" or "repetition and contrast" in music, deviation from the principle of balance in painting creates tension, excitement, and interest in the work. What is pleasing in this case is not the absence of balance and symmetry, but the contrast: the perception of difference against the regular background and the expectation of a return to regularity.

Balanced type of composition

The easiest way to create balance, symmetry, and order in the image is to arrange the elements in a painting according to the classic "perfect" geometrical figures: triangle, square, or circle. Such forms are, indeed observed in artistic styles that attempt to produce a calming, serene, and majestic impression: classical Greco-Roman architecture and Renaissance art, including painting. Especially popular during the Renaissance is triangular composition, as most balanced and calm (cf. Leonardo da Vinci, *The Virgin of the Rocks*; Raffael, *Madonna in Green*), but also circular composition (Raffael, *The Alba Madonna*).

Unbalanced / dynamic composition

The easiest way to achieve a dynamic effect and create tension (imitating emotional states) is to make the elements of the image appear off-balance, distorted, curved. Such dynamic and tense patterns are frequent in the styles in painting and architecture that attempted to produce the state of unrest, tension, emotion, such as the Baroque, cf.: El Greco, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*; Rembrandt, *The Sacrifice of Abraham*.

b. Composition in music: "musical structure" or "musical form"

terms: theme and variations, thematic development, repetition and contrast, tonic, dominant, sonata form (sonata allegro), exposition (statement), recapitulation (restatement); rondo, concerto, sonata, symphony

Principle #1: sequential arrangement of parts

Music is predominantly a temporal or sequential art: its effect is based on the way the elements of music are arranged in time, one after another. Therefore the most important principle of building a musical structure is sequential.

The building blocks of musical form are theme, which can be restated or repeated, and variation or development of a theme (thematic development). The aesthetic effect of a sequence of themes and variations is based on the departure from a familiar pattern (theme), which creates tension. When the piece returns to the initial theme relief of tension follows. Thus, deviation (departure) from the main theme and return to it provides expectation, tension, and excitement. We can call it the principle of repetition and contrast, or variety against the regular repeating background.

There are several major combinations of themes and variations used in classical music. The simplest pattern is one main theme and several variations — A A1 A2 A3 etc.— such as in Bach's *Menuett*.

Another popular pattern is circular composition, when the main theme opens and closes the piece, which creates the sense of unity and completeness. The simplest form is called minuet or trio — ABA — such as in Bach, *Gavotte*.

A more complex variation of this is the rondo where the main theme (or refrain) keeps repeating, and variations (episodes) are inserted in between — ABABA, ABACA, etc. — e.g., in Couperin, *Mysterious Barricades*, and Bach, *Rondeau*.

Principle #2: movement from the tonic to the dominant and return to the tonic

The tonic is the first tone (first degree) of the scale. The dominant is the fifth tone of the scale (such as tonic C and dominant G, etc.; the subdominant is the fourth tone of the scale). You can also have chords based on the tonic (the main tone of this chord will be the first tone of the scale) or the dominant (the main tone of this chord will be the fifth tone of the scale). The tonic is the most stable sound (or chord) in a piece. The dominant is less stable and creates tension. Most of musical forms or structures are based on a simple principle: starting with the chords based on the tonic, departing or deviating from the tonic to the dominant (and sometimes other chords as well), and then returning back to the tonic. Starting with the stable tone or chord creates the feeling of stability. This feeling is then destroyed through the deviation to the dominant, which creates tension and expectation. The feeling of stability is then restored by returning to the tonic.

The main musical form that is based on this principle is the *sonata form* (or sonata allegro) which is a more elaborate form of the simple ABA pattern. The structure of the sonata form is as follows:

A. *Exposition*. The main theme is stated in the tonic. It is then restated in the dominant. The main theme stated in the dominant closes the piece and leaves us with the sense of something unfinished: tension, an urge to complete.

B. *Development*. A number of variations of the main theme is played in a variety of keys. The main theme is developed. The tension and expectation mount.

C. *Recapitulation* (restatement). The main theme is repeated (restated) in the tonic, which leaves us with the sense of completion and relieves the tension.

The aesthetic effect of the sonata form is based on two principles:

1. Balance and symmetry: three parts; the piece returns to the tonic and to the same theme.

2. Contrast and tension: the theme played in the dominant, as well as part two as a whole, are very different from parts one and three and create tension, expectation, and excitement.

Sonata form is used in a popular musical form *concerto*: a form of three parts (movements), where the first movement (allegro) is in a form of a sonata: see Vivaldi, *Concerto for Guitar and String Orchestra*.

A larger musical form called simply *sonata* consists of four parts (movements), where the first part is in the sonata form. *Symphony* is the fullest version of sonata played by a large (symphonic) orchestra. It also has four parts (movements) where the first (and often last) movement is in a sonata form (sonata allegro).

c. Composition in literature: plots

Literature is an artistic or aesthetic use of text (poetry, drama, fiction). One of the most common types of "composition" or "structure" in a literary work is a literary "plot."

It is crucial to understand the difference between the actual sequence of events in real life (the story) and the way the artist arranges these events in a literary work: the plot. E.g., in a story events may unfold as ABCD, and in a plot they can follow in a different order: DABC, etc. The main difference between literature and visual arts or music is the possibility of making meaningful

statements in literature. Such statements can link different parts of the plot and point the audience or reader in the right direction. Thus, while in music or painting one can hardly change the arrangement of parts freely, literature allows for more freedom in the way its parts are arranged.

Due to the fact that literature has meaning, perceiving and appreciating a literary work is a more complex process than in the case, of, e.g., paintings or music. For this reason purely scientific methods cannot contribute as much to the analysis of literary plots. We must use the expertise of literary critics and psychologists, such as Aristotle or Vygotsky.

Aristotle, *Poetics*
(pp. numbers are given for further reference according to the Dover edition)

Aristotle's theory of imitation

pp. 6-7, imitation is natural to us, and every type of art imitates nature or persons in its own way. pp. 1-2, imitation uses different media: rhythm, harmony, language, etc. p. 6, the great difference between imitation (art) and real things: what is disgusting in nature can delight us in art (i.e., when imitated).

Aristotle's definition of the tragedy as imitation of action

p. 10, Tragedy is an "imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude"; through pity and fear it achieves purification of these emotions. Aristotle stresses that the plot of the tragedy is imitation of action. He further stresses that it is the structure of the work (the plot) that achieves the psychological and aesthetic goals of a literary work: some sort of release of tension.

Definition of the plot; plot is most important

p. 11, "by the plot I here mean the arrangement of the incidents," i.e., events. pp. 11-12, despite other important elements of the tragedy, such as characters, Aristotle thinks that "most important of all is the structure of the incidents" of the story, i.e., the plot, or "imitation of action." Characters are subsidiary to the plot, not the reverse. The plot is the "end" of tragedy. This means that in literary works with a plot, the main task is not to build a realistic or consistent character, but to create an exciting plot or sequence of actions. Character creation is subordinate to this task.

Plots and the fictitious nature of literature

p. 17, a very important point in Aristotle is that "it is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen...," i.e., literature is not a realistic description of events but fiction. A poet should not be viewed as a realist depicting real persons, but an artist creating a good plot.

Main requirement: wholeness of the plot

p. 14, according to Aristotle, a literary work (tragedy) must imitate an action that is complete in itself, and is something whole: "that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end." A well constructed plot cannot begin or end arbitrarily: it must present a coherent whole, so that it is impossible to withdraw or add anything.

Requirement 2: certain length

p. 15, A literary plot must be of a certain length: not too long, and not too short. It should be "easily embraced by the memory." The better story is the longer one —which allows the hero to pass through a series of stages from misfortune to happiness, or from happiness to misfortune—provided that the whole can be comprehended.

Requirement 3: unity

p. 16, another requirement is unity, which does not necessarily mean "about one person" or "about one event" (example: Homer).

What should / should not happen in a good plot

pp. 22-23, The hero should be neither very bad, nor very good; his misfortune is brought about not by malice but by some error of judgment: only this can arouse fear and pity (strong emotions).

The aesthetic / psychological impact of the structure of the plot

pp. 24-25, fear and pity (strong emotions) can be aroused by the mere visualization of brutal scenes of killing, etc. However, "they may also result from the inner structure of the piece, which is the better way and indicates a superior poet" — i.e., emotions can be produced as a result of a purely artistic and aesthetic effect of the piece, which is the way it should be.

Construction of the plot: complication and denouement

p. 34, the structure of the plot includes "complication" (conflict) and "denouement" [day-noo-men] (unraveling of the story, resolution, outcome). After the conflict is resolved, emotional tension is released.

Construction of the plot: the episodes

pp. 33-34, the episodes are scenes and descriptions that are used to "fill" the plot. The ability to manipulate the plot by means of inserting episodes is an important skill. Inserting episodes allows the poet to lengthen the piece, to delay the main action; to create the feeling of expectation and suspense, etc.

Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Story (or fable): the natural course or sequence of events as they occur in real life. A description of the natural course of events will produce a true (historical) account of events (such as found in newspapers).

Plot: the way the author arranges these events in his / her work: e.g., a play or a film. Note: the arrangement of events in the plot is not always the same as in the story! Arranging events into a plot produces a work of art, not a true account of events.

Vygotsky
(pp. according to full text: http://web.sbu.edu/theology/bychkov/vygotsky.pdf)

The problem: Hamlet's behavior in the play is rather unusual (enigmatic). His task is clear: to avenge his father by killing the present king (Claudius). However, he keeps delaying his task (procrastinating) for most of the play. There are several opportunities to kill the king during the play, and Hamlet fails to use them. Moreover, he understands his procrastination and complains about it in his monologues. Nevertheless, he still fails to act and kill the king. Why

does he not do it right away?

Possible answers:

1) Hamlet's character is the problem. He is too weak-willed to complete the task.
Objection: Hamlet sometimes shows considerable strength of character: he opposes the king's plans, boards a pirate ship, fights against Laertes, the best fencer in France, etc.

2) Hamlet faces real obstacles: he is prevented from reaching the king by the courtiers, guards, etc.
Objection: there are many opportunities to kill the king, e.g., during the prayer.

Vygotsky's suggestion (Vygotsky, pp. 180-181; see website):

1) Hamlet's character is extremely contradictory: he appears as both weak and strong, it is not possible to explain Hamlet's behavior from the point of view of a real-life person.

2) For this reason, one should not look for explanations of Hamlet's delay and procrastination in his character (cf. Aristotle: character is not as important).

3) The contradictory nature of Hamlet's character (both weak and strong) and the emphasis on his delay and procrastination are so obvious that Shakespeare must have done this deliberately.

4) Thus one must find the answer to the question *why Shakespeare* makes Hamlet delay. In this way we will explain the artistic effect of the play.

Hamlet

Vygotsky suggests to look at the *plot* of *Hamlet* and compare it to the original *story*.

1) The original story (legend) is very simple: Hamlet realizes that he must avenge his father by killing his uncle. He devises a number of tricks and plans in order to achieve this task. He finally achieves his task without hesitation or delay.

2) The plot of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is very complex: Hamlet delays (procrastinates), has frequent doubts, and expresses his doubts in long

monologues that interrupt the main course of events.

Why does Shakespeare make him delay?

Some important points in the plot of Hamlet
(page ## according to the book assigned for the course)

Act 1, Scene 5 (pp. 23-24) Hamlet promises a "swift revenge" after a conversation with the ghost: it seems that the events will develop fast.

Act 2, Scene 2 (pp. 49-50), Hamlet meets the actors and for the first time blames himself for inaction and procrastination in a monologue. He understands that he is delaying his revenge but does not know why.

Hamlet (p. 50) decides to test the king by staging a play.

Act 3, Scene 1 (p. 53), Hamlet's famous monologue "To be or not to be"; again, Hamlet is in doubt as to what he should do.

pp. 54-56, Hamlet is being "tested" by Ophelia (king's plan #1). The king designs two more plans against Hamlet: instructs Polonius to hide and listen to his conversation with his mother, and plans to send Hamlet to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Act 3, Scene 2 (pp. 64-65), Hamlet sets up his "mousetrap"—the play—to test the king and finds him guilty of murdering his father: we expect immediate action / revenge. On p. 68 Hamlet again reminds himself of his task in a monologue.

Act 3, Scene 3 (pp. 70-71), Hamlet sees the king at prayer and has an opportunity to kill him. However, he decides not to do it! The audience is left frustrated.

Act 3, Scene 4 (pp. 72-73), Hamlet talks to the queen, notices somebody behind the curtain and, thinking it is the king, kills him. It happens to be Polonius, i.e., Hamlet again fails to kill the king! However, it appears that Hamlet now is ready to kill the king when he gets another opportunity.

p. 75, the ghost comes to remind Hamlet of his task to avenge his father

Act 4, Scene 3 (p. 84), the king reveals his plan to get Hamlet killed in England by sending appropriate letters.

Act 4, Scene 4, contrary to all expectations, Hamlet actually does go to England instead of fulfilling his plan of revenge!

p. 85-86, Hamlet meets Fortinbras' army on the way and blames

himself for his delay and procrastination in another monologue. He is himself completely puzzled as to why he is still unable to do this. In the end he makes another resolution to carry out his revenge ("my thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!"). It appears that Hamlet will start to act immediately.

Act 4, Scene 7 (pp. 95-96), from Hamlet's letters it becomes clear that the king's plan to get him killed in England fails.

p. 96ff, However, the king has a new plan: he joins forces with Laertes (who wants to avenge Polonius) against Hamlet. p. 99, Hamlet is to be killed with a poisoned sword or, if that fails, with a poisoned cup. Hamlet now faces a real opposition from the king. I.e., instead of the original story (Hamlet avenges his father) we have a very different story: the king plots against Hamlet, and Hamlet defends himself!

Act 5, Scene 1 (p. 108), Laertes and Hamlet fight in the grave, but the audience's expectations are thwarted again: nothing happens.

Act. 5, Scene 2 (p. 112, 115), the king designs a wager where Laertes will challenge Hamlet to a fight and get him killed. Hamlet agrees.

pp. 118-120, the results of the fight are tragic: the queen is poisoned by the cup designed for Hamlet; Hamlet is poisoned and killed by Laertes' sword; Laertes is killed by Hamlet by the same sword; the king is killed by the poisoned sword and also drinks of the poisoned cup.

In fact, everyone's plans go wrong and fail: Hamlet kills the king but dies himself; the king kills Hamlet but also dies, etc. Moreover, all deaths occur accidentally and not as a result of a plan (e.g., Hamlet's plan to avenge his father): Hamlet kills the king mostly in self-defense and to avenge his mother and Laertes.

Two things are observed after reading / watching Hamlet:

1) The course of the play (the *plot*) keeps *deviating* (going away) from the original *story* (Hamlet's plan to avenge his father).

2) The outcome of the play is unexpected and also fails to follow the original story of Hamlet's revenge. It is rather a result of a misunderstanding and "plans gone wrong."

Vygotsky's comments (pp. 185-190)

Why does Shakespeare create all these delays and an unusual outcome, instead

of following the original story?

According to Vygotsky, for *artistic* or *aesthetic* purposes.

Shakespeare does two contradictory things:

1) Makes the audience aware of the proposed course of events: Hamlet must avenge his father and kill the king. The audience is reminded of this task frequently in Hamlet's monologues and is constantly aware of what he is supposed to do.

2) Creates delays and procrastination that take the audience's attention away from the main course of events: the story of revenge. Hamlet constantly fails to kill the king and complains about this in his monologues. The audience becomes frustrated, and tension and suspense mount.

Finally the *plot* of the play *deviates* (goes away) from the main *story*. The play that started as the story of Hamlet's revenge becomes the story of a confrontation between Hamlet and the king. In the end, however, the *plot* returns to the main story: the king is finally killed. However, even the king's death happens in a very unexpected manner: not as a result of the success of Hamlet's plan, but as a result of the failure of two plans: Hamlet's and the king's.

This technique of making the *plot deviate* (go astray) from the *story* creates tension, suspense, frustrates our expectations: in other words, *teases* our emotions (Vygotsky, pp. 189-190). Thus Shakespeare's task is purely *aesthetic*: to keep the audience in suspense until the very last moment. All other things in the play—Hamlet's character, descriptions, monologues, etc.—are subservient to this main task. Thus the explanation of Hamlet's "mysterious" procrastination is aesthetic: it is needed to create suspense and tension in the story.

Chapter 5. Formal Elements (plots) and Contents (modes) in Literature

Heroic Mode

History of the term "heroic."

The term "hero" (*heros*) in Greek means "semi-divine," a person, one of whose parents is a god. Later it starts to mean any powerful person.

In literature the term "heroic" is applied to a particular type of poetry: Heroic poetry that is sometimes called Epic poetry. Heroic poetry is narrative verse that is elevated in mood and uses a dignified, dramatic, and formal style to describe the deeds of aristocratic warriors and rulers. Most heroic poetry looks back to a vaguely defined "heroic age" when a generation of superior beings performed extraordinary feats of skill and courage.

Contemporary understanding

Heroic character is superior to ourselves, almost superhuman. A hero has exceptional will power, courage, a strong sense of duty and honor. He / she puts common good over private, and values his / her task over his / her own person.

A classic hero is subject to fate. However, heroes, unlike ordinary people, are aware of their fate: they understand that they are doomed but still follow their destiny and often face death. This is why great heroes are often tragic (cf. Achilles).

A classic hero is usually alienated and isolated from the society that is afraid of him, hates him, etc. This makes heroes even more tragic.

Heroic mode in literature

Literary works in a heroic mode are usually of a large size: long poems or novels. They feature elevated, dignified, and formal style. They portray characters that are better / greater / more powerful than us, according to the classification proposed by Aristotle and N. Frye. They describe actions that befit heroes.

In terms of emotional mood (cf. musical modes) we can expect strong, energetic, powerful patterns of emotions.

Homer's *Iliad*
(page ## according to the book assigned for the course)

The characters

The Greeks
Achilles (Greek protagonist; son of sea goddess Thetis)
Agamemnon (leader of the Greek armies)
Patroclus (friend of Achilles)
Diomedes, Ajax (powerful Greek warriors)

The Trojans
Hector (main threat to the Greeks, son of Priam, the ruler or Troy)

The main sequence of events (the plot) in the sections designated for study

Book 1. The conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon. Achilles refuses to fight for the Greeks. Achilles asks Thetis to arrange the defeat of the Greeks. Zeus agrees to the plan.

Book 5. Diomedes and the Greek army almost defeats the Trojans.

Book 8. The Trojans defeat the Greeks.

Book 9. Agamemnon seeks reconciliation with Achilles and sends an embassy. Achilles rejects Agamemnon's offer.

Book 15. The Greeks are in a desperate situation. The Trojans attack the camp and the ships.

Book 16. Patroclus begs Achilles to come out and help the Greeks. Achilles refuses to help and sends Patroclus instead. Patroclus drives off the Trojans but is killed by Hector.

Book 18. Achilles learns about the death of Patroclus, is furious and ready to fight the Trojans.

Book 19. Reconciliation between Agamemnon and Achilles.

Book 21. Achilles struggles with the river and is almost defeated.

Book 22. Achilles finally kills Hector: event compared to the fall of Troy.
According ot the original legend, Achilles is expected to be a great hero. Is this always so in the *Iliad*?

Non-Heroic Traits in Achilles

Surprisingly, in the first part of the *Iliad* Achilles appears to be very un-heroic. In fact, some characters of secondary importance, such as Diomedes or Ajax, appear to be much more heroic: cf. Book 5, pp. 135-136; Book 8, pp. 186-187; Book 9, p. 199, Book 15, p. 322-323, 324, etc.

Book 1
(p. 62ff) The scene of the quarrel. Achilles is insulted by Agamemnon. He is so proud that he refuses to fight for the Greeks even against his desire (p. 72).

Book 9
Agamemnon tries to apologize and make peace with Achilles. However, Achilles is still angry and seems to be greedy and concerned with spoils, booty, and other material things (p. 206-207).

Achilles refuses to make peace with Agamemnon under any condition, despite the desperate position of the Greeks (p. 208). His personal considerations prevail over the common task.

Achilles chooses to flee and advises the Greeks to do the same (p. 209). His anger at Agamemnon makes him neglect his moral duty.

Book 16

The Greeks are in a desperate situation. Patroclus begs Achilles to join the battle and accuses him of non-heroic behavior (p. 330-331).

Achilles still refuses to fight, sends Patroclus into battle instead (p. 332-333) and wishes the death of all Trojans and even Greeks! He warns Patroclus not to accomplish too much and leave all glory to Achilles.

Heroic Traits in Achilles

Achilles shares some typical heroic traits that "carry over" from the original legend. For example, Achilles has a tragic fate which is a common feature of

classic heroism. His death is often predicted: Book 1 (p. 72); Book 21 (p. 421); Book 22 (p. 444). He has a double fate that depends on his personal choice: to win glory and die, or to live and be forgotten (Book 9, p. 209). Just as in the legend, Achilles finally chooses a heroic path: to die.

However, in the actual plot of the *Iliad* Achilles becomes heroic only in the second part of the poem, and almost towards the end.

Book 18

Achilles learns of the death of Patroclus. He is extremely perturbed emotionally and finally decides to choose a heroic path: to die in order to avenge Patroclus' death. He will now consciously and knowingly follow his tragic fate (p. 377-378).

Achilles suddenly starts to show highly moral qualities that befit a hero: compassion, the sense of duty, etc., and almost becomes a different person. He regrets what he had done out of anger (p. 377-378).

Book 19

Achilles renounces his wrath and is ready to cooperate with the Greeks. Reconciliation with Agamemnon follows. Again, he regrets his earlier behavior and shows noble character traits, the sense of duty, and no respect for material goods (p. 393-394, 396).

3. Why is Achilles both heroic and not?

At the beginning of the poem Achilles is selfish, angry, arrogant, with no sense of duty and no compassion. He almost choses to flee and lose his glory.

In the end of the poem Achilles acts nobly, shows a great sense of duty, compassion, and other heroic traits.

Book 1, The conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon. Achilles refuses to fight for the Greeks. Achilles asks Thetis to arrange the defeat of the Greeks. Zeus agrees to the plan.

Achilles is non-heroic (pp. 61-64, 72)

Book 5, Diomedes and the Greek army almost defeats the Trojans.

Diomedes is more heroic than Achilles (pp. 135-136)

Book 8, The Trojans defeat the Greeks.

Diomedes is more heroic than Achilles (pp. 186-187)

Book 9, Agamemnon seeks reconciliation with Achilles and sends an embassy. Achilles rejects Agamemnon's offer.

Achilles is non-heroic (pp. 206-209, 214-215)
Diomedes is more heroic than Achilles (pp. 199)

Book 15, The Greeks are in a desperate situation. The Trojans attack the camp and the ships.

Ajax is more heroic than Achilles (pp. 322-323)

Book 16, Patroclus begs Achilles to come out and help the Greeks. Achilles refuses to help and sends Patroclus instead. Patroclus drives off the Trojans but is killed by Hector.

Achilles non-heroic (pp. 330-331, 332-333)

Book 18, Achilles learns about the death of Patroclus, is furious and ready to fight the Trojans.

Achilles is heroic (p. 377-378)

Book 19, Reconciliation between Agamemnon and Achilles.

Achilles is heroic (pp. 393-393, 396)

Book 21, Achilles struggles with the river and is almost defeated.

Achilles acts heroically

Book 22, Achilles finally kills Hector. This event is compared to the fall of Troy.

Achilles acts heroically

In other words, Achilles starts being heroic only towards the end of the poem: i.e., precisely where his heroic actions are needed to complete the plot (kill

Hector)!

The most reasonable explanation is that Homer distorts the original heroic features in Achilles for the purpose of the plot (cf. *Hamlet*).

Homer first makes Achilles non-heroic to achieve the psychological effect of delaying the outcome of the plot. Homer later "adjusts" his character to his plot, and makes him heroic only when it becomes necessary. This again proves both Aristotle's and Vygotsky's point that it is not the character that is important in literary works with plots, but action and the development of the plot.

Heroic Mode in Painting and Music

Painting

A painting can be made heroic by means of representing characters who are above the humans: mythic heroes, great leaders, warriors, etc. These can be identified, first of all, through representational means: certain objects (such as weapons, scepters, etc.), clothes, architecture (palace, temple), attendants, etc.

The greatness and exceptional qualities of heroic characters can also be identified by purely pictorial means: by manipulating some elements of art or design, such as *composition* or *color and contrast*.

Through *composition* this is done by using a large-scale image of a hero (one or more figures dominating the painting), the character's position within the painting (central, elevated, or somehow exceptional), and dynamic and elevated postures or gestures (indicating heroic character traits and heroic actions). The composition itself is rather dynamic than static and balanced. The size of the painting itself also matters: "heroic" paintings are usually of a considerable size.

Through *color and contrast* this is done by making the hero's image lighter or brighter than the rest of the painting (a sharp contrast between the figure of the hero and a darker background that allows the hero to stand out), or by using bright and "dramatic" colors (such as red, gold, etc.)

Examples: Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*...; *The Oath of the Horatii*; *Leonidas at the Thermopylae*; *Intervention of the Sabine Women*.

Music

Since music is by definition non-representational and has no fixed meaning, one can only speak of creating a "heroic mood" or "heroic emotion" in music. The sound patterns are expected to create an emotion that is similar to the one

created when we read or hear about heroic behavior. Several things are at the disposal of a composer.

The *size / length* of the work (e.g., not a nocturne or sonata, but a symphony) can indicate heroic greatness (cf. Beethoven's 3rd Symphony).

The *volume* of sound: sharp contrasts between loud or soft sound (forte / piano) can imitate heroic actions (struggle, etc.); cf. Beethoven's *Egmont* or 3rd Symphony.

Tone color / timbre: the use of "powerful," loud, and "bright" instruments such as brass can create a "heroic" feeling; contrasting brass with other instruments contributes to dynamism.

Melody: deviating from the tonic in the melody can strain the piece and create tension (the impression of heroic struggle).

Harmony: the use of stable intervals (e.g., the fourth, as in the end of Beethoven's *Egmont*) can create affirmative, majestic, or triumphant mood; stable intervals can be contrasted with unstable (or dissonant) intervals, creating dynamism; sharp contrasts between major or minor keys create a tragic or dramatic impression.

Rhythm (contrasts between steady or broken rhythm) or *tempo* (contrasts between slow and fast) can create an alarming mood or an impression of a dynamic action.

Composition (musical form): deviation from stable themes, or from the tonic to the dominant and other keys, can create tension and dynamism. Notice that Beethoven's 3rd (*Heroic*) Symphony never returns to the same theme, nor repeats patterns (unlike Bach, Mozart, Vivaldi), thus destroying balance and constantly building tension (impression of development, motion, energy).

Chapter 6

Principles of music

Terms to remember: pitch, tone, interval, consonance, dissonance

Music utilizes sound: waves or vibrations in the air. The human ear is capable of recognizing precise pitches — sounds of particular high or low frequencies.

Musical tone is a pure sound of a fixed frequency: musical tones are usually represented as notes in musical notation (score).

Scale: a particular sequence of musical sounds (tones) of different pitches is called musical scale. The human ear is naturally predisposed to organize different pitches in sequences / scales. This ability is used in composing music (see section *melody*). Particular tones in a scale are called degrees of the scale (first, second, etc.).

Intervals: simultaneous sounding / hearing of two tones — a musical interval — is perceived by the human ear as either pleasant (consonance) or unpleasant (dissonance). Both types of intervals can be used in music (see section *harmony*).

Just as visual perception, sound and human hearing are also about harmony and order. Music gives us an insight into the nature of sound and allows us to perceive directly the laws of hearing.

Melody (melodic line)

Terms for melody: curve, phrase, flow (conjunct / disjunct), range (narrow-wide)

Melody in music is a sequence of musical tones that fit together into a recognizable pattern. Melody in music is akin to line / contour in visual arts (both refer to linear movement) and can be described in similar terms. For example, melody can have a curve (wave-like, descending, ascending) and can be represented graphically. Very often a melody starts and ends with the base tone or tonic (i.e., goes up and then down: listen to Bach, *Toccata in C major* on the website).

An important element of melody is "phrase" (cf. literature) based on the "stop-and-go" quality of many melodies, i.e., their natural tendency to have breaks and repeat. A melodic phrase is a section of melody from its beginning until the next "stop" (listen to Brahms' *Symphony No. 3* on the website).

Tone Color / Timbre

Tone color / timbre in music can be compared to the use of colors and shading in painting. Tone color is based on the capacity of different instruments to produce, in addition to the primary tone, different additional tones or partials (e.g., fifth, octave, etc.). The intensity of these partials is different, and it determines the differences in the tone color of the instrument.

Types of instruments:

Woodwind: flute, reed pipes (clarinet, oboe, bassoon). Both groups were traditionally made of wood. The sound / vibration is produced by the reed or the edge of the pipe.

Brass wind: trumpet, trombone, French horn, tuba. These instruments are usually of brass or other metal. The sound / vibration is produced by the vibration of the player's lips against a cup- or funnel-shaped mouthpiece.

String: violin, viola, cello, double-bass. **Percussion:** kettle-drum, cymbals, etc.

Harmony

Harmony is the phenomenon of simultaneous perception of several sounds (musical intervals). Harmony lends a sense of depth (vertical dimension) to music, as perspective does to painting (cf. melody — the linear or horizontal dimension of music — and line in painting).

The main element of harmony is the musical interval which can be either consonant or dissonant. Consonant intervals were first described by the 6th c. BC Greek philosopher Pythagoras. Until recently, only consonant intervals were used to produce "pleasing" music. In modern and contemporary music, dissonant intervals are more widely used than before. Dissonant intervals create a sharp contrast with the rest of the music, just like darker colors in painting create a contrast with brighter colors. Thus the use of dissonant intervals makes music more dynamic and emotional.

Three or more tones at specific intervals from each other (usually first, third, and fifth degrees) form more complex harmonic structures: chords. Chords, like musical scales, could be based on particular base tones (tonic) and form keys (or tonalities). The position of the third degree (from the tonic) in a chord determines whether it is major (bright, triumphant) or minor (sad, moody).

Types of texture in music

I. Monody (monophonic)
Single-voiced texture — all music up to about a thousand years ago was

monophonic.

Example: *Gradual* (Christmas Mass, 11th century)

II. Polyphony (polyphonic)

Two or more melodic lines are combined, many-voiced texture.

1. Organon bass (Greek: ison; a simple case of counterpoint**)**

The simplest attempt to add harmony to a melodic line: bass voices hold a sustained tone or sing a very basic melody, while higher voices chant a more elaborate melodic line.

Example: *Gradual* (Master Leoninus, Mass for the Nativity of the Virgin, 13th century)

2. Counterpoint

A more complex pattern of two or more voices that can intersect, go up or down, etc. It is often difficult to catch individual voices in such music for an untrained ear.

Example: *Kyrie* (Josquin Desprez [15-16th c.], Mass *Pange Lingua*)

III. Homophony (homophonic)

A single voice takes over the musical piece; accompanying voices become blocks of harmony, the chords that support the main voice, resulting in a single melody with chords.

Example: *Andante non troppo* (W.A. Mozart, *String Quartet* No. 4)

Theme in music

Theme is one of the simplest formal elements (of design). Theme is a common and easily recognizable group of elements or pattern in any art work. Theme can either repeat entirely in its original form or have variations.

Musical theme is one of the main "building blocks" of musical form: it is, so to say, an "idea" used to construct a musical work. Musical theme is a repeating and easily recognizable pattern of melodic or harmonic elements (such as sequences of tones or chords).

The main principle at work when using a musical theme is repetition and contrast (or unity and variety). The theme is first stated (statement of the theme) and could be repeated several times. Then it is developed (development of the theme or thematic development) in its variations. We can speak of a variation of the theme when the musical material is altered but is still recognizable. Using repeating variations produces an exciting and unexpected effect on the listener.

Guide to the understanding of the main theme ("Fate") in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony

Movement 1. The main theme ("Fate") is stated, then reintroduced several times in a slightly different form (variations). The changes in theme during repetition create foiled expectations and the feeling of tension during repetition. The vigorous main theme is contrasted with a softer second theme. The main theme keeps repeating in variations until the end.

Movement 3: The main theme (played by French horns) appears in contrast to other material, but in a very transformed state: its variation. It is still quite strong.

Movement 4: While Movement 1 and the Symphony as a whole are in C minor, Movement 4 is in C major which creates a joyful and triumphant mood. Against

this background (and in contrast to it) the main theme reappears briefly in its variation (played on woodwinds), but sounds faint and far away. In the end, the theme of "Fate" is "defeated" by the triumphant chords: the "human person" triumphs over "fate."

Rhythm in music

Terms: beat (strong / accented or weak), tempo, meter, measure, rhythm

Beat is the basic unit of musical time, which is organized in a regular pulsation of strong and weak beats. Tempo — fast or slow — determines how many such beats are to be played per second.

Musical meter is the basic unit of length in music, or a fixed time pattern for musical pieces. Some beats are stronger than others: accented or strong beats. Groups of beats with one strong (first) and the following one, two, or three weak beats are called measures. Meter determines how many strong and weak beats are in one measure (cf. meter in poetry).

Rhythm comes from the Greek word for "flow" and refers to the general flow of the piece. It is a controlled movement of music in time. Rhythm functions within the framework of a specific meter that provides the basic "grid." Within this grid, rhythm determines the time it takes to play a given note (its duration), and the time when to play it. Simply put, rhythm in music is a particular pattern of musical tones and rests of different durations.

Contrary to the usual assumption, rhythm does not have to be steady (as it is in Couperin, *The Mysterious Barricades*) but could be interrupted by pauses and be rather asymmetrical (as in Mozart, *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*) or free and changing all the time (as in Stravinsky, *Rites of Spring*).

Meaning and modes in music

a. Does music have meaning? How do we represent / imitate in music?

Music, especially purely instrumental, does not seem to have any meaning or contents (subject matter) at all. Are there modes in music?

Some composers came up with the idea of "musical language." Music can imitate actual objects or characters directly by imitating the *sounds* they usually produce:

— small fast moving objects emit high-pitched, short, abrupt notes: you can use high notes and fast tempo to imitate them;

— heavy slow things emit long, low-pitched sounds: you can use low notes and slow tempo to imitate them.

Modest Mussorgsky is particularly famous for this technique (see website): cf. examples from *Pictures at an Exhibition* ("Ballet of unhatched chickens"; "Bydlo" [Cart pulled by the oxen]).

b. The role of musical intervals

If we understand "mode" as "mood" — creating a particular emotional state, a feeling, rather then ideas and concepts — music can certainly create such moods.

Robert Browning, *A Toccata of Galuppi's*

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminished, sigh on sigh,
Told them something? Those suspensions, those solutions — "Must we die?"
Those commiserating sevenths — "Life might last! we can but try!"

"Were you happy?" — "Yes." — "And are you still as happy?" — "Yes. And you?"
— "Then, more kisses!" — "Did I stop them, when a million seemed so few?"
Hark, the dominant's persistence till it must be answered to!
So, an octave* struck the answer. Oh they praised you, I dare say!
"Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at grave and gay!"

* i.e., the tonic one octave above

The idea behind the emotional impact of the intervals is their stability / instability, and the varied amount of tension that they create: leading either to the tonic (base tone) or away from it**.**

c. Major / minor key

Certain modes or moods (emotional states) are created in music by other formal means. Some of such means are using major or minor keys (types of scales), and slow or fast tempo, as in:

Beethoven: *Symphony* No. 3 in E flat Major, Op. 55 "Eroica" (Allegro con brio; Marcia funebre, Adagio)

d. Musical modes proper

The idea of major or minor keys goes back to the so-called "musical modes" developed in ancient Greece. The Greek musical mode is simply a type of a seven-note scale — or a sequence of notes — that contains five whole tones and two half-tones (semitones). The position of half-tones is different in each mode.

The Greeks thought that different modes (variations of scales) represented different emotional moods and even characters: virile, ecstatic, soft and lascivious, etc.

In contemporary music, Ionian and Aeolean modes correspond to natural major (C major scale) and natural minor (A minor scale) keys. Major and minor scales are used universally. Other ancient modes are used in folk music, jazz, and some classical works.

Chapter 7. Philosophical issues in contemporary art

I. Art as knowing

Looking at many examples of contemporary art one might wonder: where are the classic principles of art, such as beauty, harmony, proportion, structure? Are those pieces even "art" or they just pretend to be art, in fact being sensational and shocking objects that are aimed primarily at attracting attention and subsequently well-paying customers? In order to asnwer this question we need to look at the origins of the arts.

Ancient and medieval art

The earliest examples of art, for example religious and ritualistic art, in fact, are often not beautiful or harmonious either. Their primary function seems to be recording and conveying some knowledge about sacred objects, not so much pleasing the senses. (Examples: Australian art, tribal art, Egyptian art, Eastern Christian icons)

In this sense, an object of art is not designed to please the senses, but to reveal something about a certain object or part of reality. If one looks at modern and contemporary art this way, one realizes that it can still be art: in its cognitive and revelatory function, as revealing something about our reality and its objects. (Some examples from Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City)

The evolution of visual art in Western Europe

If one looks at the history of the visual arts in Western Europe (following, e.g., Ortega y Gasset's study), one realizes that there were constant fluctuations between art depicting "what we know" about reality, "what we see" in reality, and "how we see" reality. In the twentieth century many artists return to painting "what we know" about reality, which explains the lack of standard principles of beauty and proportion. Of course, at almost any stage some visual artists pursue only the goal "to please the senses," i.e., making art attractive is their only aim.

Stage 1: "depict what I know." This stage includes religious paintings from the Middle Ages up to the late 13th/early 14th c. Western religious paintings of that period resemble Eastern icons. Almost no laws of visual perception are taken into consideration ("flat" paintings). Examples: Eastern Christian icons.

Stage 2: "depict what I see." At this stage the painters take into consideration

the laws of visual perception, such as linear perspective, source of light, shading, three-dimensional space, distortion of bodies through linear perspective, etc. The focus is on the individual point of view: how an individual sees a particular scene/object. Such painting basically creates an illusion of seeing a three-dimensional object/space.

This stage starts during the early Renaissance painting and continues as a major trend through the Baroque and well into the 19th c. (many painters still use this approach). Examples: Renaissance and realistic art.

Stage 3: "depict *how* I see." With impressionism, an attempt was made to "take apart" the unified "realistic" image created by the previous tradition in painting. Rather than trying to create an illusion of the object, the painters were trying to create a fleeting "impression" of the object, or focus on particular elements of the image, such as its color or geometric shape. From the "illusionistic" stage of the three-dimensional space and the individual perspective, painting passes to the "flat" stage again, where the task is no longer to re-create the illusion of "being there" but to explore how the process of seeing happens at the level of perception. Each school in painting or each painter concentrates on a limited number of traits and emphasizes them.

This stage starts with the French impressionism (Monet) and continues until 1950's, after which it stops being predominant but is still widely practiced. Other schools include Cezanne and his followers, cubism (Picasso), and abstract art (Kandinsky, Malevich). The interesting thing about this third stage is that the visual arts pass from depicting the outward appearance of things (surface) to depicting certain abstract or non-representational realities, e.g., laws of perception, individual emotions and feelings (similar to music), and even concepts. This trend was widely interpreted as the "spiritual" stage in painting that abandons the illusionistic representation of material things and switches to the presentation of "inner" or "unseen" reality.

Stage 4: cognitive/revelatory art. Finally, many visual artists return to the stage where art is aimed at revealing (or getting to know) some aspects of reality. This type of art is a bit more sophisticated than the ancient and medieval sacred art, where certain concepts were expressed in a more or less obvious way (e.g., "large" meaning "more important" etc.). Contemporary art is more cryptic and it allows the audience to make their own interpretation of art and derive their own knowledge and feelings from it.

II. Comic and satiric mode. Irony and Parody

The basis of this mode is the comic effect (humor).

Humor/comic effect is a type of stimulation that causes the laughter reflex. *Satire* is an intentional use of the comic effect for the purposes of improving the morals.

For a/v examples see website: http://web.sbu.edu/theology/bychkov/satiric.html

Humor and the comic effect.

The laughter reflex is an activity without any utilitarian value. It has no apparent biological purpose. Its only function seems to be to provide relief from tension. Two main factors are important for the comic effect: intellectual and emotional.

1. The intellectual basis of the comic effect (the "logic of laughter")

The essence of the comic effect is perceiving a certain situation in two similar but mutually incompatible frames of reference ("parallel frames of reference") or associative contexts. These two parallel frames of reference or contexts must share at least one common element that allows us to compare them. Everything else should be mutually exclusive or incompatible. Perceiving, on the one hand, the similarity, but, on the other hand, incongruity or contradiction produces a comic effect and laughter.

Two most common examples of such similarity and incompatibilty:

a. When the characters or readers think that the situation is such and such, but in reality it is completely different (misunderstanding of events). The real situation has something in common with the imaginary situation, and one is mistaken for another.

b. When the characters or readers understand certain words or a phrase in one way, but the intended meaning is quite different (misunderstanding of speech). The phrase can be used in two different meanings/contexts, and is interpreted in one way, but should be understood in another (as in jokes and puns).

Examples of fly jokes:

Patron (in a Chinese restaurant): "Waiter! There is a fly in my soup!" (intended meaning: "but there shouldn't be"; frame of reference is "fly/no fly")

Waiter: "What did you expect for this kind of price, and eagle?" (understood meaning: "a fly is not enough for me"; frame of reference is "fly/eagle")

Patron: "Waiter! There is a dead fly in my soup!" (intended meaning: "but there shouldn't be"; frame of reference is "dead fly/no fly")

Waiter: "Yeah, heat kills them, doesn't it?" (understood meaning: "why is this

fly dead?" frame of reference: "dead fly/living fly")

The answers are both unexpected and perfectly logical: but of a logic not usually applied to this type of situation. The reactions would have been expected to be governed by a different logic. It is the sudden clash between these two mutually exclusive associative contexts that produces the comic effect. It compels the listener to perceive the situation in two similar but incompatible frames of reference at the same time. This creative type of mental activity seems to be innately delightful to human beings.

2. The emotional basis (laughter and emotion: aggression and tension)

a. Humor must contain an impulse of aggression or even malice. This aggressive impulse can be linked to one of the main characteristics of the comic/satirical mode: the mode that represents characters "inferior to us" (Aristotle, Frye). The passion of laughter is a positive emotion of superiority arising from a sudden conception of some eminence in ourselves by comparison with the infirmity of others. We enjoy our superiority compared to the discomfort of the rivals, delight in their suffering and humiliation.

b. At the same time, humor serves to relieve this tension resulting from aggressive emotions and discharge these emotions in a socially acceptable manner. Laughter serves as a safety valve for the overflow of redundant tensions.

When a comedian tells a story, he/she deliberately creates a certain tension in his listeners, which mounts as the narrative progresses. But it never reaches its expected climax as in a suspense plot. The punch line or point cuts across the logical development of the story and deceives the audience's dramatic expectations. The tension that was felt becomes suddenly redundant and is exploded in laughter.

Comedy as a literary form

The comic effects are contrived by making a situation participate simultaneously in two independent associative contexts. Either the situation is misinterpreted by the characters, or the author suggests two mutually exclusive interpretations that are based on some common element.

Satire

Satire is the intentional use of the comic effect for a purpose other than simply making people laugh: usually improving the character by drawing attention to its

flaws. Satire is a mockery and ridicule of conventions and practices, human weaknesses, and the flawed nature of humanity. It expresses the author's profound dissatisfaction with some aspect of the human condition.

Satire as a literary form

Satire is an artistic form, in which human or individual vices or shortcomings are held up to censure by means of ridicule, irony, or other methods, sometimes with an intent to bring about improvement.

The satire is a verbal caricature that shows a deliberately distorted image of a person, institution, or society. The result is a juxtaposition, in the reader's mind, of his habitual image of the world in which he moves and its absurd reflection in the satirist's distorting mirror. He is made to recognize familiar features in the absurd and absurdity in the familiar.

W.H. Auden, excerpt regarding Bruegel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*.

...In Bruegel's *Icarus*, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

M. Glinka, *Ruslan and Lyudmila*

Farlaf's *Rondeau* (Act 2); translation from Russian

The hour of my triumph is close,
The hateful rival will go far from us.
O knight, you seek and wait in vain,
The power of the sorceress will not let you have her [Lyudmila].

Lyudmila, you weep and moan in vain,
And in vain you wait for your beloved.
Neither cries, nor tears, nothing will help,
And the princess will give up to the power of Naina [the sorceress].

Ruslan, forget about Lyudmila,
Lyudmila, forget about your betrothed!

The thought of possessing the princess
Makes my heart rejoice
And taste the sweetness
Of both revenge and love beforehand.

Not far off is the desired day:
The day of love and bliss!

In cares, anxiety, frustration, and sadness
Wander around the world, my brave rival.
Fight with enemies, climb strongholds:
I will reach my goal without trouble or effort,
Waiting for Naina's instructions in my ancestral castle.

Irony and Parody

Introduction

The predominant intellectual current of our times, postmodernism or deconstruction, is devoted to exposing systematically the flaws and problems in classical philosophical, historical, social etc. views. This includes the classical theory of the arts and aesthetic theories of taste. For example, the taste for the "high arts" can be presented as a reflection of the bourgeois or upper-class ideology, not as some universal pattern that is valid for all of humanity, as has been claimed earlier by traditional aestheticians. Therefore much of the contemporary (20th c. onward) artistic (including musical and literary) production is based on contrasting it with the "classic" examples of art, artistic form, and artistic standards. In order for an appreciation of such art to take effect, naturally, one must be aware of the classic standards first of all. It means that such art has much to do with knowledge, general erudition, intellect and so forth. That is, it fits naturally in the discussion of art as a type of knowledge or a type of intellectual activity.

It also means that two genres, parody and irony, become extremely important for the understanding of contemporary art.

Irony

Originally this Greek term referred to dissembling: pretending to have an opinion, or a degree of apprehension, that does not correspond to the real position or depth of understanding by the speaker. Ironic words are not what

they seem to be. Thus Socrates, the first recorded ironist, pretending to be naive and ignorant, subtly undermined and refuted acknowledged experts. In general, irony would mean assuming a serious tone and position that would be perceived as such to the addressee of a speech, but not so to the intended audience who are expected to see through the position of the ironist. The addressee of an ironic speech will thus be mocked as the audience is amuzed at his/her lack of understanding of the real situation (in this sense irony shares similar principles with humor). Thus this literary or artistic form presupposes some understanding of the background and the real situation by the audience.

The more common understanding of irony, as in "ironic fate" etc., can be derived from the above concept of it: i.e., a person, without knowing it, finds him/herself in the situation that he/she actually condemns, ridicules or tries to avoid.

Much of contemporary art and literature are ironic due to the transitional nature of the period: from classical standards, theories, and ideologies to rejection and critique of all classical standards, theories, and ideologies. Thus the effect of such art and literature is based on a stark contrast between what the audience perceives as classic and the way it is presented in such art, resulting in mockery of classic standards and theories.

Parody

Parody is a genre parasitic on other genres, such as heroic, lyric, or tragic. It appears almost immediately with the appearance of early (heroic) literature, e.g., that of Homer. Parody can be aimed at subverting and making light of the actual classic example itself, putting in perspective its inflated status. However, parody also can be used in a way that reaffirms the classic (simply because this is what is selected for parody, i.e., something expected to be well known and esteemed), but attacks something else (e.g., views of contemporary society etc.). This is where parody shares common elements with satire. It is obvious that, just like in the case of irony and much that is humorous, some knowledge of the background is expected on the part of the audience, i.e., it is largely an intellectual enterprize.

The reason why parody has become prominent in the recent times (20th c. and onwards) is the same as in the case of irony. The era that sees itself as transitional from classical standards, theories and views undermines them, e.g., by parodying classical examples of art. As a result of parodying a classical work of "high" art, e.g., by trivializing it, one can expose either the very idea that classical standards do not exist anymore, or that the general public is ignorant to the point of not being aware of them, and so forth.

Again, parody is clearly an example of art as intellectual activity. First, it presupposes the knowledge of the background. Second, as a result of parody, we arrive at a better understanding of something: either of some classical

standards themselves (e.g., how absurd they are, or how reality is different from its representation in classical art), or of our society (e.g., its standards, views, and so forth).