Yakiv Bystrov
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University
ybystrov@ukr.net

LINGUOSTYLISTIC ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF A FICTIONAL TEXT

LECTURE 1
Theoretical preliminaries to literary text interpretation

1. Approaches to interpretation of a literary text.
2. Poetic structure of a literary text.
3. The theory of foregrounding. Foregrounding and automatization.

1. Literary Text Interpretation is primarily engaged in the analysis, evaluation, and text production. Where there are texts − there are rules governing text production and interpretation. These sets of rules, which variously described as codes, genres, discourses, and styles are **the object of Text Interpretation**.

There are two main approaches to the analysis and interpretation of literature:

a) from the standpoint of the author and

b) from the standpoint of the reader.

The first approach is concerned with the study of the factors that have influenced the writer and affected his work of art. Among these factors are: the historical and political situation at the time of creation, the author's philosophical and aesthetic views, the historical situation of the period his work represents, etc. The approach can be traced in the course of History of Literature.

The second approach attaches importance to the study of the text itself and its impact on the reader. It involves the analysis of the elements of the text which evoke definite emotional response and affect the general impression. It is the second approach that we attempt to follow while interpreting literature. In each reader, a literary work evokes some personal associations, images and thoughts.

There exist other schools of literary criticism which tend to privilege one of the elements of the reading process (the author or the reader of the text).

At present we have both **author-oriented and reader-oriented criticism**. By author-oriented criticism we mean interpretation that privileges the role of the author

in the text processing and seeks to recover the authorial intention as the key to a text's meaning.

At the other extreme we have a critical school that emphasizes the reader and privileges the reader's response to the text. The reader is free to make any meaning he wants and the possibility of misreading is ignored.

American New Criticism or a literary approach criticism emphasizes the text itself postulating both the relevance of the author's intention to the interpretation of a text and the reader's freedom to make any kind of interpretative gesture. This critical school serves the reader from passivity by assuming that virtually every text has "areas of blindness" that are crucial to its interpretation. Text is treated as open, incomplete, insufficient. Text as a piece of writing is understood as a product of a person, at a given point of human history, in a given form of discourse, taking its meaning from the interpretative skills of individual readers using the grammatical, semantic and cultural codes. The major task is to acquire the interpretative skills of a definite culture and also to see different texts as codes, so that they can be properly read and appreciated.

A semiotic approach, which was developed by the Chicago school of rhetorical critics and popularized by R.Jacobson, treats texts as cultural and historical codes distinguishing the following elements in the process of communication (reading):

1. the sender of a message (the author);

2. the message (text);

3. the coding appliance (words);

4. the channel of communication;

5. the signal;

6. the decoding appliance;

7. the receiver of information (the reader).

The sender of a message is any object which is able to receive, preserve and use information (a man, a computer). The message – is thoughts and feelings the sender of a message conveys to the receiver of information. To make it possible for the receiver to understand it one should materialize a message, i.e. to express it in the

form of a word, a statement, a gesture, a mime, a picture, a work of art. The coding appliance is defined as a means of realization a message and transforming it into a signal, into an object or into an action which can be perceived by a man. The human language is the most widely spread code on the basis of which semiotic systems of the second level are formed: the language of fiction, the l-ge of poetry, the l-ge of music. Under the channel of communication we mean the human voice, writing or the environment in which the signal functions: social, historical, cultural.

Though the material of literature is l-ge, language items in the context of fiction acquire additional overtones, thus developing a great suggestive power. It mainly depends on the writer's skill and his style. D. Lodge in his book "Language of fiction" (1966) wrote: "Style is the means by which the writer … ensures that his message is decoded in such a way that the reader not only understands the information conveyed, but shares the writer's attitude towards it".

2. The impact of a literary work, as it has already been stated, depends on all the elements constituting it. While reading a literary text one gradually moves from the first word of it to the last. The words one reads combine into phrases, phrases into sentences, sentences into paragraphs, paragraphs making up larger passages: chapters, sections, parts. All these consist of lexical means, syntactical means (repetition, inversion, the length and structures of sentences, etc.) and phono-graphical (alliteration, assonance, sound symbolism, rhythm etc.) characteristics of the text. They represent the verbal (or formal) layer of a literary work.

At the same time when one reads a literary text one cannot but see another layer gradually emerging out these verbal sequences, which represent a series of events, conflicts and circumstances in which characters of the literary work happen to find themselves.

One also see that all these verbal sequences make a composition, a plot, a genre, a style, that they all go to create an image of reality and through this image the author conveys his message, his vision of the world.

Plot, theme, composition, genre, style, and imagery make up the superverbal (poetic) layer. These two layers of the text are inseparable from each other. The

verbal and poetic layers form a unity. Therefore, all the events in the plot, its structure, the characters and scenes, every dialogue and detail, the choice of words, the literary and language devices are related to the inseparable whole. Each of the elements in particular, and all of them in unison contribute to the impact of the whole.

The cohesion of the two layers, i.e. of the verbal and superverbal constitutes what is known as the poetic structure of the literary text. There is nothing in the literary work that is not expressed in its poetic structure. It is the whole of the poetic structure that conveys the author's message. The basic unit of the poetic structure is the word. All the various layers of the structure (the syntactic, semantic rhythmical, compositional, stylistic) are expressed in words.

3. What literature is, how it works, and why it is there at all, are some of the main questions that the theory of foregrounding tries to provide answers to. According to the theory of foregrounding, literature – by employing usual forms of language – breaks up the reader's routine behaviour: commonplace views and perspectives are replaced by new and surprising insights and sensations.

The term 'foregrounding' may be used in a purely linguistic sense. It then refers to new information, in contrast to elements in the sentence which form the background against which the new elements are to be understood by the listener/reader. In what follows, this term can be used in the areas of stylistics, text linguistics, and literary studies.

The term 'foregrounding' which was borrowed from the visual arts, the ability of a verbal element to obtain extra significance, to say more in a definite context, was introduced by Prague Structuralists (especially Jan Mukarovsky), who introduced it as a translation of the Czech *aktualisace* and employed it in the sense of the English 'actualization'. This suggests a temporal category: to make smth actual (rather than virtual). It refers to how unusual linguistic features are thought to place emphasis on the form of the text, prompting a fresh perspective on the meaning of the text.

The English term 'foregrounding' has come to mean several meanings at once and covers a wide area of meaning.

First of all it is used to indicate the (psycholinguistic) process by which – during the reading act – something may be given special prominence.

Second, it may be used as a category in order to evaluate literary texts, or situate them historically, or to explain their importance and cultural significance.

Finally, in stylistics the notion of foregrounding may refer to specific devices (as produced by the author) located in the text itself with the emphasis being on textual devices and, in consequence, their effect on readers. It is also employed to indicate the specific poetic effect on the reader. Indeed, when a word (affix, sentence), automatized by the long use in speech, through context developments, obtains some new, additional feature, the act resembles a background phenomenon moving into the front line – foregrounding.

Both literary texts and popular fiction can make use of stylistic devices which appear to be used by writers with the intention of capturing the attention of readers at crucial points in stories. E.g. Roald Dahl in his short story «Lamb to the slaughter" combines initial description of the leg of lamb (i.e. the initial use of pronouns in order to build up interest) with the use of a short sentence fragment (a noun phrase punctuated as if it were a full sentence) and a mini-paragraph (a single item alone in a paragraph) when the leg of lamb is first mentioned in full. This is the point at which the character sees the object which is to become the murder weapon in the story, so it is heavily plot significant:

Everything was automatic now--down the stairs to the cellar, the light switch, the deep freeze, the hand inside the cabinet taking hold of the first object it met. She lifted it out, and looked at it. It was wrapped in paper, so she took off the paper and looked at it again.

A leg of lamb.

All right then, they would have lamb for supper.

Outside literature, so the assumption goes, l-ge tends to be automatized; its structure and meanings are used routinely. Within literature, however, this is opposed by devices which thwart (hinder, interfere with) the automatism with which l-ge is read, processed, or understood.

So a very important notion is the distinction btw 'automatization' and 'foregrounding' in l-ge.

Automatization refers to the common use of linguistic devices which do not attract particular attention by l-ge decoder, e.g. the use of discourse markers (e.g. *well, you know, sort of, kind of*) in spontaneous spoken conversations. Thus automatization correlates with the usual background pattern, or the norm in l-ge use – it encompasses those forms and structures that competent l-ge users expect to be used in a given context of situation.

Foregrounded *('brought forward')* linguistic devices, on the other hand, are usually not expected to be used in a specific context and are thus considered conspicuous – they catch the language decoder's attention (e.g. the use of old-fashioned and/or very formal words such as *epicure, improvident, and whither* in spontaneous spoken conversations). Foregrounding thus captures deviations from the norm. It is obvious that what is considered as automatized and foregrounded l-ge use, depends on the communicative situation at hand. In technical fields of discourse, for instance, specialized vocabulary items tend to be automatized (e.g. *lambda marker* in molecular biology), but in everyday communication become foregrounded devices.

The result is some degree of surprise in the reader, and his/her attention is thereby drawn to the form of the text itself (rather than to its content). Cases of neologism, live metaphors, or ungrammatical sentences, as well as archaisms, paradox and oxymoron (the traditional tropes) are clear examples of deviation.

Foregrounded and automatized segments of the text contribute to different types of information, including emotionality of the text and message of it. Discourse can be foregrounded or automatized at different language levels. Therefore, the arrangement in the text is hierarchical. Graphically the relationship between the message of the text and literary and linguistic devices can be represented in the form of the pyramid. At the base of the pyramid there are more basic and logically oriented linguistic devices and forms of the language (foregrounded, automatized forms). On their way toward the apex of the pyramid they form more complex formations and ultimately merge into the message of the text, which is represented by the apex.

LECTURE 2
Main elements of a literary text

1. The short story genre. The theme.
2. The message.
3. The tonal system of a literary work.

1. A short story is traditionally understood as a short story narrative in prose. Its literary classical definition presents a short story as a relatively brief prose narrative, usually characterized by uniformity of tone and dramatic intensity, and having as plot a single action. A popular form of a story is one that tells events with a definite beginning, middle and end. But others may have very little plot and may never have moved to a completed action.

A short story usually contains one event focusing on a single aspect of life. The number of characters is limited but they are rather revealed and developed. The story may belong to a particular type: social, psychological, historical, adventure, detective, science-fiction, documentary or be the mixture of a number of the types.

Note. Why story? We deal with the short prose form of fiction, the short story, because of two reasons:

a) in the short story the linguistic and literary devices are expressively more loaded than in the long form of writing, the novel;

b) because of its length the short story abounds in implicit information.

A literary work is an artistic whole which is created by the interaction of all its elements: the characters, setting, plot, plot structure, language, literary techniques, etc.

The basic problem represented in the story is **the theme**. The theme is the main area of interest treated in the story. It is the represented aspect of life which the story illustrates.

As literary works commonly have human characters for their subject of depiction the theme may be understood as an interaction of human characters under certain circumstances (the theme of love or love for one's Motherland; the theme of family relations, war and peace; a clash of cultures; discrimination of any kind, etc.)

Within a single narrative the basic theme may alternate with rival themes and their relationship may be complex. All the themes are linked together to represent a unity, the essential characteristic of a literary creation.

Thus the theme of the story implies the problem which the writer raises. His view and attitude to this problem is revealed in the way he develops the theme of the story.

2. The most important idea that the author expresses in the process of developing the theme is **the message of the story**. The theme is therefore organically connected with the author's message.

The message is generally expressed **implicitly**, i.e. indirectly, and has a complex analytical character. It is created by the interaction of numerous implications which the different elements of the literary work have.

Implication is the suggestion that is not expressed directly but understood.

Implication may be conveyed by different techniques, such as

a) parallelism may be deeply suggestive (e.g. parallel actions of the dream and reality). The events that begin and end the story are parallel.

b) contrast (e.g. the antithetical thematic planes of the vocabulary; this implication can also be suggested by the antithesis in the title *Arrangement in Black and White*),

c) recurrence of events or situations. Among the repeated linguistic elements there may be stylistic devices, emotionally coloured words, neutral words, but when repeated the latter may acquire special semantic relevance and become a key-word important for the understanding of the message of the story.

d) artistic details which stimulate the reader's imagination and serve to add something new about a character, or place, or event. E.g. feet and hands with "fingers worked to the bone" in J. Priestley's *Angel Pavement* create the image of a woman exhausted by a life full of hardships).

e) symbols. When the artistic detail is repeated several times and associated with a broader concept than the original, it develops into a symbol. It is a metaphoric expression of the concept it stands for. Inasmuch as the symbols a writer uses may mean different things to different people and the problem of understanding symbols

still exists. Symbols may be traditional and personal. An example of a traditional symbol is a rose. The rose is a traditional symbol of beauty. Personal symbols are established by means of repetition, repeated association with a broader concept. E.g. in *Rain* by S. Maugham the rain symbolizes the powers of nature before which Mr. Davidson is powerless and all his efforts are useless and hopeless. D.H. Lawrence defines symbols as "organic units of consciousness with a life of their own, you can never explain them away, because their value is dynamic and emotional".

The message depends on the writer's outlook, and the reader may either share the writer's views or not. On account of this, L. Timofeyev (literary art critic) distinguishes the following types of messages:

a) messages that suggest definite solutions (ідея-відповідь),

b) messages that raise a problem (ідея-запитання),

c) messages in which the solution of the problem is not adequate (ідея-помилка).

When analyzing the message one must also take into consideration **the title of the story**. The title is the first element to catch our eye, but its meaning and function may be determined retrospectively. The title may have the following functions:

1. It may serve as a means of conveying the author's message.

2. It may serve as a means of cohesion – it may unite the components of a story to form a whole.

3. The title may serve as a means of focusing the reader's attention on the most relevant characters and details.

4. It may characterize the protagonist.

5. It orients/disorients the reader towards the story.

On revealing the author's message, the reader generally analyses his own rational and emotional response to the story, he/she draws his own conclusions. These conclusions may not necessarily coincide with the author's message. M.Khrapchenko and L.Timofeyev distinguish between the so-called objective message and the author's message.

The objective message is the final conclusion that the reader draws from the analysis of his own response to the story and from the author's message, contained in

the story. The objective message may be broader than the author's message, because it is based on more profound historical experience.

3. In every literary work the writer's feelings and emotions are reflected in **the tone, attitude and atmosphere.**

Atmosphere is the general mood of a literary work. It is affected by such components of a literary work as the plot, setting, characters, details, symbols and l-ge and literary means.

The author's attitude is his/her view (judgement) of the characters and actions. It reflects his judgement of them. It establishes the moral standards according to which the reader is to make his judgements about the problems raised in the story.

The attitude of the writer to his/her subject matter determines **the tone of the story.** The tone is the light in which the characters and events are depicted. The tone, therefore, is closely related to atmosphere and attitude.

In fiction tone expresses the relationship between: 1. the author (or narrator) and the subject matter. Hence the tone may be sympathetic or impassive, cheerful or serious, vigorous or matter-of-fact, humorous or melancholy and so on. 2. On the other hand, tone expresses the relationship between the author (or narrator) and the reader. The tone may be familiar or official The narrator may establish an intimate, personal, formal relationship with the reader. He may assume a familiar tone, or he may retain a relative distance and narrate in an official tone.

The narrator as mentioned above may establish an intimate, personal, or formal relationship with the reader. Hence he may discourse at ease and assume a familiar tone, or he may retain a relative distance and narrate in an official tone. The indices of this aspect of tone are also linguistic.

The official tone is set up by words and idioms that have an official ring, e.g. "relevant" (for "important"), "up to the present time" (for "up to now"), etc. It may be set up by carefully organized syntax and carefully expressed ideas admitting no deviations from the standard.

The familiar tone is established by features of the spoken language, the conversational style in particular. To these features belong colloquial words, idioms,

jargonisms, and slang. Delaying devices (e.g. sort of, well, shall I say), colloquial parenthetic phrases (e.g. you know what I mean) – all contribute to the establishment of a personal relationship between the narrator and the reader, and the same time they set up a familiar tone.

M. Khrapchenko noted that one should distinguish between the prevailing tone of a literary work and emotional overtones, which may accompany particular scenes in the story. They all form a "tonal system" which reflects the changes of the narrator's attitude to his subject matter. The emotional overtones generally form a "tonal unity" which means a consistency of attitude towards the events and characters. This consistency of attitude is reflected in **the consistent use of language** appropriate to the events and characters. So the "tonal unity" forms the prevailing tone of the story, which plays the dominant role and determines to a great extent the message of the literary work.

Thus, a story's style and voice contribute to its tone. Tone refers to the attitude that the story creates toward its subject matter. For example, a story may convey an earnest and sincere tone toward its characters and events, signalling to the reader that the material is to be taken in a serious, dramatic way. On the other hand, an attitude of humour or sarcasm may be created through subtle language and content manipulation.

LECTURE 3
Plot and the system of images

1. The plot and its structure.
2. System of images. The means of characterization.

1. The theme can be understood from **the plot** – the plan of a literary composition comprising a series of incidents (events) which are gradually unfolded and each of the incidents comes out of the preceding one and increases in intensity until the highest point is reached. In other words, the plot is a series of interlinked events in which the characters of the story participate.

Every plot is a series of meaningful events. The author selects the events which are meaningful to the message contained in the story, and to characterization, i.e. he/she chooses those that serve to reveal certain features of the characters, their motives and morals. Therefore, each event in the story is always logically related to the message, the theme, the conflict, and is psychologically related to the development of the characters within the story.

The interrelation between different components of the plot is called **composition**. Events recounted in the story are made up of episodes; episodes in their turn, of smaller action details. **The plot accordingly consists of exposition, complications (plot development), climax and denouement.**

Exposition introduces the theme, the characters and establishes the setting. In **the exposition** the necessary preliminaries to the events of the plot, casts light on the circumstances influencing the development of the action and characters. This component supplies some information on either all or some of the following questions: Who? What? Where? When?

The events of the plot are generally localized, i.e. they are set in a particular place and time. The place and time of the actions of a story (or novel) form **the setting.** The setting is generally established at the beginning of the story, in the exposition, which is the first component of plot structure. For the setting the writer selects the relevant details which would suggest the whole scene. While setting includes simple attributes such as climate or domestic interiors, it can also include complex dimensions such as the historical period the story occupies or its **social**

context, the significant cultural issues affecting a story's setting. In some stories the setting is scarcely noticeable, in others – it plays a very important role. The functions of the setting may vary.

1. The setting, especially description of nature, helps to evoke the necessary atmosphere (or mood) which corresponds to the general intention of the story.

2. The setting may reinforce characterization by either paralleling or contrasting the actions.

3. The setting may be a reflection of the inner state of a character.

4. The setting may place the character in a recognizable realistic environment including geographical names and allusions to historical events. All this creates the credibility of the plot.

5. In fiction the setting, especially domestic interiors (materials), may serve to reveal certain features of the character.

The setting in a story may perform either one or several functions simultaneously. It should be noted that characters, actions, conflicts and setting work together to accomplish the author's purpose.

The second structural component which follows the exposition is **complications (story, body of the story).** Complications generally involve actions and the collision (the opposition of forces or characters), though they might involve thoughts and feelings as well.

Plot of any story is connected not only with actions and events but also with conflicts. **Conflict** in fiction is the opposition between forces or characters. There are external and internal conflicts.

When the main character is fighting against someone or something outside himself we term this variety of conflict external. When the opposition of forces takes place inside minds of characters this type of conflict is internal. **External conflicts** fall into:

1. man against man (or between two or more people);
2. man against nature (the sea, the desert, wild beasts);
3. man against society or the established order in the society (a conflict with poverty, racial hostility, injustice etc.);

4. between one set of values against another set of values.

Internal conflict represents "man against himself" and it takes place within one character. It is rendered through his thoughts, feelings, intellectual processes.

The third structural component is **the climax.** The climax is the key event, the plot's most dramatic and revealing moment, usually the turning point of the story. It is often referred to as the moment of illumination for the whole story, as it is the moment when the relationship among the events becomes clear, when their role in the development of characters is clarified, and when the story is seen to have a structure.

The denouement is the fourth structural component of the plot. The denouement is the unwinding of the actions; it includes the event, or events, immediately following the climax and bringing the actions to an end. It is the point at which the fate of the main character is clarified. The denouement suggests to the reader certain conclusions.

A story may have no denouement. By leaving it out, the author achieves a certain effect – he invites the reader to reflect on all the circumstances that accompanied the character of the story and to imagine the outcome of all the events himself.

The closing of the story is **the ending.** When it takes an unexpected turn it is called an unexpected or surprise ending.

Novels may have two more components of plot structure: the prologue and the epilogue. The prologue contains facts from beyond the past of the story, the epilogue contains additional facts about the future of the characters if it is not made clear enough in the denouement.

2. **An image** is a subjective reflection of reality. It is affected by the author's power of imagination. While reading fiction the images arouse the reader's response. Any change of a word affects the reader's response, as words may evoke sense impressions.

Compare:

He was a stout man.   "His features were sunk into fatness …
                              His neck was buried in rolls of fat. He sat in
                              The chair … his great belly thrust forward …"
                              (S. Maugham. *Red*)

The images created by figures of speech in S. Maugham's description call up a visual picture of a concrete fat man and evoke in the reader definite feelings, including those of antipathy and even aversion. Whereas *"He was a stout man"* does not arouse negative feelings.

It must be noted that the images of a literary work form a system, which comprises a hierarchy of images, beginning with micro-images (formed by a word or a combination of words, the so-called artistic details) and ending with synthetic images, "extended images" (formed by the whole literary work).

In literature attention is centered on man, his character and behaviour. That explains why the character-image is generally considered to be the main element of a literary work; the images of things and landscape are subordinated to the character-image. Thus, landscape-images are generally introduced to describe the setting, to create a definite mood or atmosphere. Yet even a landscape-image, as well as an animal-image, may become the central character of the story. E.g., Nature is the main antagonist of the major character in *The Old Man and the Sea* by E.Hemingway; or again animal-characters are the central characters in *The Jungle Book* by R.Kipling.

According to their importance in a literary text characters can be divided into major and minor. The main character is most relevant in a literary work, since it is through his fate that the message is conveyed. The minor characters are subordinate, they are generally introduced to reveal some aspects of the main character.

In most stories one character is clearly central and dominates the story from the beginning up to the end. Such a character is generally called the main, central, or major character, or **the protagonist. The antagonist** is the personage opposing the protagonist or hero.

Characters may be simple (flat) or complex (well-rounded) depending on their level of development and the extent to which they change. Simple characters are constructed round a single trait. Complex characters undergo change and growth, reveal various sides of their personalities. Hamlet is a complex character, as he is brave and hesitant, sensitive and unyielding. The terms "flat" and "well-rounded" were proposed by E.M.Foster (1927): "The test of round character is whether it is

capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises it is flat. If it does not convince, it is flat pretending to be round".

The characters may be described from different aspects: physical, emotional, moral, spiritual, social. The process by which the author presents and develops a fictional character is known as characterization. There are **two main types of characterization: direct and indirect.**

Direct method of characterization means that the character is evaluated by the writer himself or by another character in the story. The author uses indirect method of characterization when he/she depicts the character through his/her actions, manners, behaviour, speech, and the attitude to other characters.

There are various means of characterization:

Presentation of the character through action. People are generally judged by their deeds. Actions may reveal the character from different aspects. Actions include small gestures, thoughts and whole events.

Speech characteristics which include:

1. Style markers, such as

a) markers of official style (*"I presume", "I beg your pardon"*, etc.);

b) markers of informal conversational style: contracted forms, colloquialisms, elliptical sentences, tag constructions (as *"you know"*), initiating signals (as *"Well", "Oh"*), hesitation pauses, false starts – all of which are normally occur in spontaneous colloquial speech. In fictional conversation they may acquire a certain function as may indicate some features of the speaker's character, his state of mind and his attitude to others;

2. Markers of emotional state of the character: emphatic inversion, the use of emotionally coloured words, the use of breaks-in-the-narrative that stand for silence (e.g. *"and I asked her if she'd rather I ... didn't get married", "and there I stayed in the middle of the road ...staring"* – the pause lays emphasis on the words that follow the pause). They indicate nervous state, irresoluteness, deep emotions or doubt.

3. Attitudinal markers: words denoting attitudes (as *"despise", "hate", "adore"* etc.), intensifiers (as *"very", "absolutely"* etc.);

4. Markers of the character's educational level: bookish words, rough words, slang, vulgarisms, deviations from the standard;

5. Markers of regional and dialectal speech which define the speaker as to his origin, nationality and social standing: foreign words, local words, graphons.

Graphon is violation of the graphical shape of the word. It contains information about the speaker's origin, social and educational background, physical and emotional condition. E.g. when the famous Sinclair Lewis's character Mr.Babbit uses *"pee-rading"* (parading), *"Eytalians"* (Italians), *"peepul"* (people), the reader obtains not only the vivid image and the social, cultural, educational characteristics of the personage, but also the author's sarcastic attitude to him.

6. Markers of the character's occupation: terms, jargonisms:

7. Markers of the speaker's individual speech peculiarities (idiolect) which serve as a means of individualization.

Psychological portrayal of the character, description of his mental processes and some psychological changes that motivate his actions. It is generally revealed by means of inner represented speech in the form of either free indirect speech or free direct speech.

Description of the world of things that surround the character. Domestic interiors of the setting are sometimes treated a metaphoric/metonymic expressions of the character. ("These houses express their owners").

The use of an antagonist which accentuates the opposed features of the character he is contrasted to.

The naming of characters. The name may be deliberately chosen to fit a certain character. (Mrs. Murdstone = murder + stone, Mr.Butler = a servant).

All the means of characterization the writer resorts to, enable the reader to visualize and understand the characters, to think, feel and worry with them as they face their problems, to trace the changes and growth in their personalities.

LECTURE 4
Narrative method

1. Types of narrators.
2. Narration: its types and forms of presentation.

The narrative method involves such aspects as

a) who narrates the story and

b) the way the narrator stands in relation to the events and to the other characters of the story.

The author can vary the narrative method depending on what he wants his readers to concentrate on. He can tell the story from the point of view of a character in the story, or from without – as an onlooker.

The author may choose four types of narrators:

1) the main character;

2) a miner character;

3) the omniscient author;

4) the observer-author.

1. When the main character tells his story, the events of the story are presented to the reader through his perception. The author in this case places himself in the position of the main character and tells of things that only the main character saw and felt.

2. When a minor character, who participates in the actions, narrates the story, the events are described through the perception of his character. The author places himself in the position of a minor character and gives this character's version of the events and personages.

3. The author may narrate his story anonymously, analyzing and interpreting the character's motives and feelings. The reader sees what is going on in the minds of all the characters. This type of narration is told by the omniscient (or analytic) author. The omniscient author reproduces the character's thoughts and comments on their actions.

4. The story may be told in such a way that we are given the impression of witnessing the events as they happen – we see the actions and hear the conversations, but we never enter directly into the minds of any of the characters. In this case the reader is guided by the observer-author. The observer-author merely records the speech and actions of the characters without analyzing them.

2. In every story events are presented from somebody's point of view. Hence, **there are two types of narration – 1st person and 3rd person narration.** When told by a character in the story, the story is the first-person narrative. When told by the author, it is the third-person narrative.

If the story is a 1st-person narrative, it is told from the narrator's point of view and the reader gets a biased understanding of the events and the other characters, because he sees them through the perception of the character who narrates. At the same time any story always reveals the author's point of view even if it is implied. The character's and the author's viewpoints may or may not coincide.

When the author shifts the responsibility of telling the story to the 1st-person narrator, he actually provides his reader with two versions of one and the same story:
1) the explicitly expressed subjective version (the narrator's version) and
2) the implied objective version, which the skilled reader is expected to derive.

The advantage of the first person point of view is that it helps to create special kind of intimacy and there are no significant limitations to it (but the narrator cannot see into the mind of others). The story told by the 1st-person narrator is more confiding. The narrator often uses the informal tone, addresses the reader directly and establishes a personal relationship with him confiding his personal expressions and thoughts.

However, the possibilities of the 1st-person narrator are limited because the narrator is a person, and he can see and hear only what would be possible for a person to see and hear in his situation. He cannot know what other characters do or say.

Sometimes such a narrator misinterprets the events which he cannot fully understand. He relates them and meditates on them from his subjective point of view.

Thus, the first person narrator necessarily assumes a participant role within the fictional context and so adopts a subjective perspective on events.

On the other hand the 3rd person narrator takes up the non-participant role of observer and so adopts an objective point of view. If the story is told by the omniscient author there are no limitations. He is all-seeing and all-knowing. He may get inside his character's minds, add his own analysis of their motives and actions.

The narrative method conditions the language of the story. Thus if the story is told by an omniscient author, the language is always literary. When the story is told by a character, the language becomes a means of characterization (as direct speech always characterizes the speaker). It reflects the narrator's education, occupation, emotional state and his attitude. The social standing of the character is marked by the use of either standard or non-standard lexical units and syntactic structures.

One has to keep in mind that the language of the 1st-person narrative requires careful attention not only because it characterizes the narrator, but also because it is a means of representing the world through the eyes of that character. It therefore reflects his outlook, his pattern of cognition, his psychology. That is why most stories related by the main character are deeply psychological.

2. The narrative method may affect the sequencing (or the choice) of literary representational forms.

There are the following forms of presentation and literary techniques of the narrative:

1) **narration proper**, the presentation of an account of events in their development. It is the most dynamic compositional form of the text. Narration organizes the story into the beginning, the middle and the end. The beginning is to introduce the body of narration and to catch the reader's interest, to puzzle him, thus stimulating to go on reading. The beginning only introduces the subject, but doesn't develop it.

The middle of narration gives the development of events which are selected and arranged on the basis of many reasons according to the problems raised, thus forming its plot.

The closing has one essential function – to signal the end of narration. The turn to the beginning is an effective way of ending.

2) **interior monologue**, a rather lengthy piece of the text (half a page and over) dealing with one major topic of the character's thinking, offering reasons for his past, present or future actions, which allows the author (and the readers) to peep into the inner world of the character, to observe his ideas and views in the making. This form of narrative exercises the so-called **stream-of-consciousness technique** which is based on the conception of the prevalence of the subconscious over the conscious; hence the recording of unperceived by senses or intellect emotions. It is especially popular with representatives of modernism and brought into contemporary literature a deeper insight into human psychology. Through SCT the narrator creates the illusion that without his or her interference, readers have direct access to the mental processes of the characters. As a result, the reader sees the fictional world through the "mental window" of the observing consciousness of the characters.

3) **dialogue** where personages express their minds in the form of uttered speech. In their exchange of remarks the participants of the dialogue, while discussing other people and their actions, expose themselves too.

4) **represented (reported) speech** which serves to show either the mental reproduction of a once uttered remark, or the character's thinking. The first case is known as *represented uttered speech*, the second one as *represented inner speech*. The latter is close to the personage's interior speech in essence, but differs from it in form: it is rendered in the third person singular and may have the author's remarks, i.e. it reflects the presence of the author's viewpoint alongside that of the character, while interior speech belongs to the personage completely, formally too, which is materialized through the first-person pronouns.

5) **description** supplies the presentation of the atmosphere, the scenery, the details of the appearance of people and other things of the literary work. Its basic types are **objective and subjective**. The objective description is a factual account. It

is usually detailed. The subjective description gives only striking details. It focuses on the mood created in the story communicated to the reader.

6) **retardation**, the withholding of information until the appropriate time and the deliberate sustaining of anticipation by means of suspense.

7) **the author's digression** is an insertion which has no immediate relation to the theme. The author wanders away from the subject of the narrative to state his personal view or to make a general statement.

8) **flashback** is a scene of the past inserted into the narrative. Flashbacks present the background information, appear in non-chronological order and may be related to various characters. Many stories are told with flashback techniques in which plot events from earlier times interrupt the story's "current" events.

9) **foreshadowing** is a look towards the future, a remark or hint that prepares the reader for what is to follow.

Scheme of a literary text interpretation

1. Genre: What genre does the text belong to? Which generic conventions does the text follow? Which conventions does it break? Does it borrow elements from other genres? If so, how?

2. Context: What is the ideological, cultural, or historical situation in which the text was produced or reproduced?

What is the text's worldview, i.e. how does it represent the world we live in? How is this worldview different from the world we live in? What things does it distort, change, or ignore? What assumptions, beliefs, or values about the world does it make, especially those on class, race, or gender?

What culture does the text come from? How does this culture or subculture influence the text?

What historical period does the text come from? How does this historical period influence the text?

3. Title: Interpret the title of the story. What is the significance of the title, epigraphs, etc.?

4. Theme: What concerns or issues does the text raise?

5. Message: What is the message of the story? What techniques is it conveyed?

6. Tone: What is the author's attitude toward the audience? The text itself, its plot and the characters? What effect does the text have on you the reader? Readers from the author's time period? Readers other than yourself? Does it gratify the reader? Irritate the reader? Insult?

7. Composition: Where does the action take place? How is it described? What are the functions of the setting?

What is the plot? Point out the composition parts of the story.

8. Conflicts: What are the main conflicts in the plot? How did they arise?

9. Characters: Who are the main characters? Supporting characters? The protagonist? His or her antagonists? What are their backgrounds? Their characteristics? Their motives? What is the relationship between them? How are they developed? Through action? Dialogue?

What is the author's method of presenting characters? Does the author resort to direct characterization? What are the other ways of portraying characters (through their actions and speech, other characters' perception)? Are the characters represented statically or dynamically? What direction do they change in? What stages in the development of their personalities can be singled out? What character is the most picturesque and vivid? How does the author achieve the vividness of portraits? Does

the main character happen to be in conflict with himself (with other characters, circumstances of life)? Can we feel the author's attitude towards his characters?

10. Structure: How is the story put together? Divide it into logically complete parts and suggest titles to each.

11. Style: What techniques are used to tell the story? What sort of language (in terms of both syntax and semantics) is used to tell the story?

Parts of Speech: What types of nouns does the author use? Concrete? Abstract? What types of verbs? Active? Passive? What types of adjectives? Adverbs? How often and when does he or she use adjectives and adverbs?

Diction: What types of words does the author use? What layer words are mainly used in the passage/story: formal, bookish, colloquial? Does the author resort to stylistically coloured vocabulary: terms, archaisms, neologisms, barbarisms, foreign loans, slangy words, jargonisms, professional and dialectal words, vulgarisms? What is their function?

Figurative Language: What types of figurative language – variation from the literal meaning of words or standard use of language – does the author use? What does each instance of figurative language mean? How often and when does he/she use figurative language? What episodes abound in various tropes? What is their effect?

Sentence Length, and Structure: What is the general length of the author's sentences, and how varied are his or her sentence lengths? What types of sentence structure does he or she use? Simple? Compound? Complex? Where do short and simple structures prevail? What effect do these syntactical structures create?

12. Narrative Method: From what point of view is the text written? First-person? Third-person? From an omniscient or limited point of view?

Narrator: Who narrates the text? The author or a narrator? If there is a narrator, who is it?

Narrative: How is the text narrated? Chronologically or non-chronologically? Episodically? Through flashbacks? In reverse? What is the prevailing narrative form?

13. Conclusions. What makes the author's style individual?

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