

The Study of Literary Texts

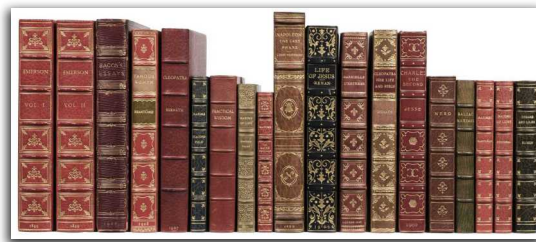
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Unit 02: The Method of Literary Analysis



1. Specific Objectives

The main objectives of this lecture aim to:

- Explain the method of literary analysis.
- Identify the different steps of this method.
- Apply this method to different literary texts.
- Breakdown literary texts into their narrative elements.
- Produce a critical essay.

2. What is Literary Analysis?

Its Scope



Fondamental

Literary analysis as the information provided below suggests is the **main** method used in literary studies and criticism. Therefore, it is **crucial** to grasp its meaning and processing from the beginning. This is to help students analyze literary works from different time periods.

Its Meaning



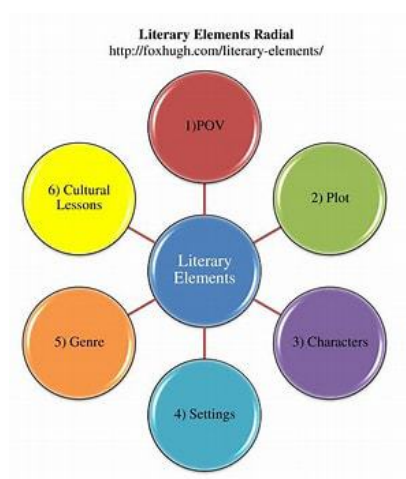
Définition

Literary Analysis is **the method** used in literary studies to identify the narrative elements of a work of literature to prepare for interpretation and criticism. It pays attention to both **Form** and **Content** to extract the meaning of texts. The text has a **structure** and **style** as well as **meaning**. The importance of the structure directly influences the meaning as a literary style shapes affects and intentions.

Its Functions



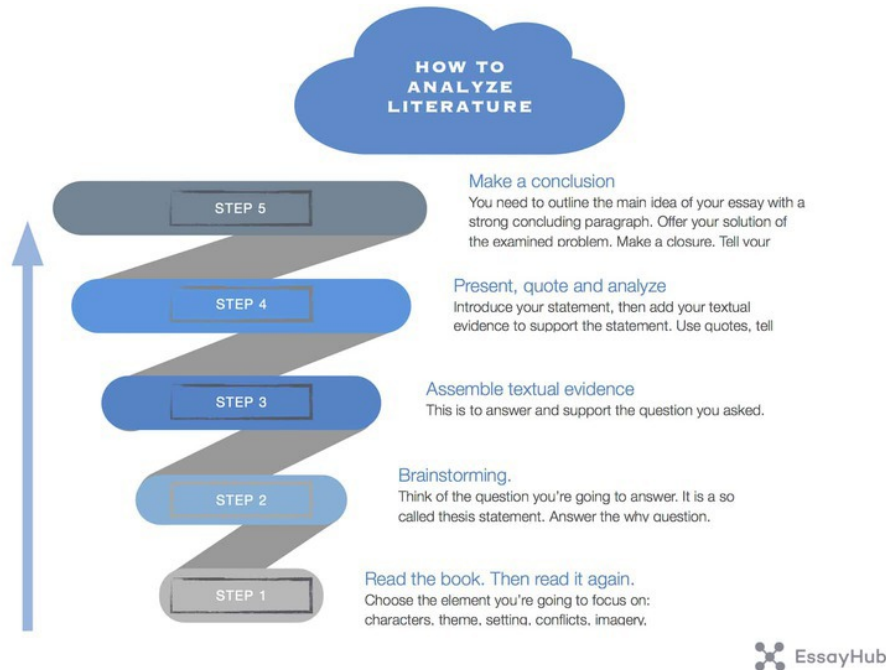
Méthode



The Process of Separation

In a *literary analysis*, all the aspects of the text that participate in shaping meaning, interpretation, and perspective are **highlighted** (or underlined), **separated**, and **analyzed** as the following slides suggest.

3. The Process of Literary Analysis



Main Steps of Literary Analysis

To analyze literary works, it is necessary to understand the **narrative elements** that constitute them. These elements include some **superficial** information that can be extracted from the work without profound reading such as its title, author's name, and date of publication. Nevertheless, its other elements require attention to identifying them. These other narrative components answer different questions about the work such as:

- "What is the story about?" (plot)
- "Who contributes to the story events"? (characterization)
- "Who presents the story to readers?" (narrator's Point of View)
- "Where does the story take place?" (setting)
- "What is the general mood of the events?" (atmosphere)
- "What feeling(s) do readers get from the story?" (tone)
- "What topics or messages does the story refer to?" (themes)
- "What kind of literary devices are used?" (examples of figurative language)

These elements constitute all types of narratives. Therefore, it is crucial for students to understand them. The following steps become easier as the student is required to identify them and comments on their meaning as the attached video below further shows.

[cf. Tips for Literary Analysis]

literary Devices?



They are also known as figures of speech, rhetorical devices, or aesthetic devices. They are used to give the text the aspect of literariness. The figures of speech are alternatives used in language to give it a certain style and impact that is made intentionally by the author. Each of them has its own function as the table inserted indicates.

Literary Device	Definition
Simile	it is a direct comparison that includes the tool of comparison "as" or "like". For example: He was violent as thunder.
Metaphor	a comparison that is not indicated (no tool of comparison). For example: He is a fierce lion.
Personification	a comparison wherein a human attribute is given to an animal or object. It is the act of personifying. For example: The anger of the waves.
Irony	to say something opposite to the intended meaning, irony includes laughter and satire, the goal of which is criticism. Example: It is a truth universally acknowledged that a man with a large fortune must be in want of a wife.
Hyperbole	an exaggeration in speech. For example: I walked a million miles to reach home.
Apostrophe	to address someone who is not in front of the speaker. For example: although you are gone, my lad, I will always be your loyal friend.
Pun	two meanings in one expression, the first is literal and the second is metaphorical. For example: the town was cold and dark. The first meaning is that the town was literally cold and dark, but it also signifies sadness and hopelessness.
Litotes	an understatement wherein something positive is expressed using the negative. The litotes is considered an ironic statement, example: I've met her after the funeral and she was not a little sad.
Allusion	to refer to a historical event or famous place to emphasize a quality that belongs to it. Example: this freezer's brand is Alaska, it has to be cold!
Paradox	an opposition of two situations, example: yesterday I was ill and tired, today I am healthy and dynamic.
Analogy	an opposition of two words, example: she was dressed in black and white

Literary Devices



It is useful to consider your literary analysis in the structure of an **essay** as that is the form you will be asked to submit your analysis into, whether for the exam or other assignments.

What is an Essay?



An Essay, according to the Encyclopedia of Britannica, is an **analytic, interpretative, or critical** literary composition usually much shorter and less systematic and formal than a dissertation or thesis and usually dealing with its subject from a limited and often personal point of view. An essay, as the attached document indicates, follows a structure that is organized into **three** important parts which are:

- An **Introduction** should include the **Bibliographic Information** of the text to be analyzed. Information such as the title of the story, its author's name, the date of publication, its genre and literary movement, and a general idea about its content.

- A **body** should discuss the rest of **narrative elements** such as plot and setting, characters and point of view, tone and atmosphere, in addition to themes and some literary devices.
- A **conclusion** is where the student have to reformulate the analysis done above with some room to **interpret the meaning** of the work or comment on its **message**.

[cf. Further reading]

4. Exercice : Check the correct answer(s)

The function of literary analysis is

- ☐ Identification of a text's narrative elements
- ☐ The interpretation of a narrative's message
- ☐ Understanding the main events of a story

5. Exercice : Time to Assess.

What is the purpose of literary analysis?

- ☐ To read literary works profoundly.
- ☐ To interpret the message(s) of literary works
- ☐ To understand the plot-lines of stories