

هذا الملخص غير محلل للنشر أو النسخ أو إعادة الصياغة حفاظاً على الأمانة العلمية

**E121**

***Literary Appreciation and Critique***

**Literary Terms:**

**Short story, Drama  
and Poetry**

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*"Books and doors are the same thing. You open them, and you go through into another world."*

## Literary Terms

- **Genre:** According to *Oxford English Dictionary*, genre is “A particular style or category of works of art; esp. a type of literary work characterized by a particular form, style, or purpose.” The term genre usually refers to one of the three literary forms of fiction, drama, or poetry. The major literary genres are fiction, poetry, drama and non-fiction-fiction prose.
- **Poetry:** is a brief form of text written in lines and sometimes divided into stanzas (paragraphs). The language is more artistic and indirect in which the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensity by the use of distinctive style and rhythm. Famous example of a poem: **In an Artist's Studio** by **Christina Rossetti**.
- **Drama:** It is a form of text that is designed to be performed in front of an audience, it contains dialogues and stage directions. Drama has further categories like comedy and tragedy. An instance from this course’s materials is “The Doll’s House by **Henrik Ibsen**”.
- **Setting:** refers to time and place of the events of the story, it includes social conditions (rural, urban, bourgeois, rich, poor, war...etc. ), weather conditions, (rainy, sunny, stormy, etc.), atmosphere and mood (bright, cheerful, sad, gloomy, gothic, scary, romantic...etc.). The setting is created to shed light on the theme of the story. It can sometimes be the centre of the story. For example, in “**A Handful of Dates**” by **Tayeb Saleh**, the events take

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place in the fictional setting of the village of Wad Hamid, which is in Central Sudan, close to the Nile.

- **Plot:** refers to the arrangement of the events in the story. What happens in a story and in what order. It is planned and logical and it has a beginning, middle, and end. The traditional story follows a pattern that has : **1. Exposition:** details of setting and characters is revealed. **2. Rising actions:** the build-up of events (complexities). **3. Climax:** is the highest point of the story. **4. Falling actions:** events that happen after the climax where problems start to be solved. **5. Resolution:** the end and outcome of the story. All plots must have a conflict, either external (with another human being, nature or society) or internal (conflict within the self).
- **Conflict:** is the basic issue that leads to all other complications. There are basically two sorts of conflict: External conflict (Man versus man, Man Versus nature, Man versus society); or Internal conflict (Man versus himself). For example, in Achebe's "Dead Men's Path", there is an external conflict between Mr. Obi and the villagers, and an internal conflict between Obi's dreams and the truth.
- **Characters:** a character is the main person in the story. Most of the time, our main attention is drawn to the main character (**protagonist**) and the other character that is in clash with the protagonist is called (**antagonist**). In "Dead Men's Path", the protagonist is Mr. Obi, and the antagonist is Ani the priest.
- **Round (dynamic) characters** which means characters who are able to change and can be developed gradually throughout the story. For instance, in "A

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Handful of Dates” the boy is a round character because he was able to change at the end of the story.

- **Flat** (static) characters which means characters who are not able to change or develop throughout the story.
- **Point of View** is the angle from which a story is told:
  - **First person** point of view: the story is told by **one** of the characters in the story. It allows readers to see the events through the eyes of one character. This narration style is told through the use of *I* or *We*. For example, the narrator in “A Handful of Dates” is a first-person point of view.
  - **Omniscient narrator**: the narrator knows everything about all the characters. He has unlimited access to the characters’ minds and thoughts.
  - **Limited third person**: knows only what the audience can see and hear. This view grants a writer **more freedom** than first person, but less than third person omniscient. For example, in *Dead Men’s Path*, the limited third-person point of view allows the reader to gain insight into Michael Obi's perspective, beliefs, and motivations, but it doesn't provide a comprehensive understanding of all the characters and their inner thoughts. The narrator's knowledge is restricted to what can be inferred from Michael Obi's actions, words, and thoughts.
- **Theme**: is the main idea or the moral of the story. The theme reveals the meaning of the story. For example: The theme of family, death, education,

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etc. In *Dead Men's Path*, the major theme was the conflict between traditional Nigerian culture and beliefs and the modern westernized ideology established by European colonialism.

- **Style:** refers to the author's choices of words (diction), their sentence structure (syntax) and their use of figurative language (symbolism, imagery and metaphor). It also denotes the use of descriptive language, monologues, dialogues, etc.
- **Dilemma:** it is a conflict, problem, or situation with two possible solutions. When a dilemma occurs, a person has to make the difficult choice between two desirable options, or, contrastingly, two undesirable options.
- **Comedy:** is a genre of dramatic performance having a light or humorous tone that depicts amusing incidents and in which the characters ultimately triumph over adversity. For ancient Greeks and Romans, a comedy was a stage-play with a happy ending.
- **Flashback:** is when writing a work of fiction, an author can take the reader out of the present story and jump into an earlier time period in a character's life. Flashbacks give a story more depth by revealing details that help readers understand character motives. Flashbacks also add tension and help advance the plot. The writer in *Handful of Dates* recalled in many occasions events from his childhood.
- **Foreshadow:** is a literary device that writers use as a means to indicate or hint to readers something that is to follow or appear later in a story. In "*Dead Men's Path*," the protagonist Michael Obi's initial intentions to modernize the school and surrounding grounds including blocking the path that passes

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through the school's compound, foreshadow the conflict between him and the villagers. Also, in the play “The Doll’s House”, Nora secretly eating macaroons against Torvald's wishes foreshadows her rebellion against his control. This small act of defiance symbolizes her suppressed independence and hints at the larger break from societal norms she will make by the end of the play.

- **Humour:** is a literary tool that makes audiences laugh, or that intends to induce amusement or laughter. Its purpose is to break the monotony and boredom.
- **Identification:** it refers to the audience identifying with a fictional character; however, it can also be employed as a narrative device whereby one character identifies with another character within the text itself. For example, in *Dead Men’s Path*, some readers may identify with Michael Obi, the young headmaster who is eager to modernize the school and improve its standing. They may relate to his desire for progress and his initial lack of understanding of the cultural traditions of the community. While others may identify with the villagers who deeply value their cultural traditions and beliefs. They may understand the villagers' frustration and resistance to the changes imposed by Michael Obi.
- **Irony:** is a literary device in which contradictory statements or situations reveal a reality that is different from what appears to be true. For instance, in “*Dead Men’s Path*”, the tragic conclusion of the story is ironic. Michael Obi's intent was to bring progress to the school and community, but his

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actions result in a tragic event, highlighting the unexpected and negative consequences of his modernization efforts.

- **Sarcasm:** is a literary device that uses irony to mock someone or something or convey contempt. Sarcasm can also be defined as the use of words that mean the opposite of what the speaker or writer intends, especially to insult or show irritation with someone, or to amuse others. Nora occasionally uses sarcasm to mask her frustrations with Torvald's condescension. For instance, when Torvald criticizes her spending or patronizes her intelligence, she sometimes responds with playful yet biting remarks that hint at her dissatisfaction. **Example:** When Torvald lectures her about being careful with money, Nora sarcastically agrees, saying something like, "*Yes, Torvald, everything you say is exactly right. As always.*" The tone suggests she's playing along while mocking his superiority.
- **Suspense:** is an uneasy feeling that a reader gets when they don't know what is going to happen next. A writer creates suspense through a controlled release of information to readers that raises key questions and makes readers eager, but terrified, to find out what happens. **For example:** The central source of suspense is Nora's forgery of her father's signature to secure a loan. The audience knows her secret will have severe consequences if revealed, creating an underlying tension throughout the play. Every interaction related to money or honesty heightens the suspense as the audience wonders when and how the truth will come out.

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- **Short story:** refers to a brief fictional prose narrative shorter than a novel usually dealing with a few characters and aiming at unity of effect.
- **Tragedy:** refers to a branch of drama that treats in a serious and dignified style the sorrowful or terrible events encountered or caused by a heroic individual. By extension the term may be applied to other literary works, such as the novel. Although the word *tragedy* is often used loosely to describe any sort of disaster or misfortune.
- **Turning point:** in the structure of a play, the climax, or crisis. It is the decisive moment, or turning point, at which the rising action of the play is reversed to falling action. It may or may not coincide with the highest point of interest in the drama.
- **Alliteration:** Repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of close words. For example, in “In an Artist’s Studio”, alliteration is used in the sound /s/, in the words “selfsame” and “sits”.
- **Figurative language:** the use of figurative language features makes the message of the poem clearer, and they can express the poem more. They are:
  - **Metaphor:** is a figure of speech that describes an object or action in a way that isn’t literally true, but helps explain an idea or make a comparison. For example:
    - A **metaphor** states that one thing is another thing.
    - It equates those two things not because they actually are the same, but for the sake of comparison or symbolism

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- If you take a **metaphor** literally, it will probably sound very strange (are there actually any sheep, black or otherwise, in your family?)
- **Metaphors** are used in poetry, literature, and anytime someone wants to add some color to their language.
- **Simile**: is a figure of speech that compares two different things using the words **as** or **like**. For example, In **Harlem**, “Does it dry up like raisin in the sun.”
- **Personification**: is a literary technique writers use to add human qualities to non-human things. It helps the reader relate to and create a picture in their mind when for example we say “**stars dance**”.
- **Stanza**: is a unit of poetry composed of lines that relate to a similar thought or topic, it is used to describe the main building block of a poem. It is like a paragraph in prose or a verse in a song.
- **Rhyme**: is a repetition of similar sounds in two or more words.
- **Rhythm**: a flow of rising and falling sounds in language that is produced in verse by a regular repeating of stressed and unstressed syllables
- **Rhyming Scheme**: refers to the pattern of rhymes used in a poem. It is represented by assigning a specific letter to each rhyme at the end of lines. For example, an AABB rhyming scheme indicates that the first two lines rhyme with each other, and the next two lines rhyme with each other as well. Common rhyming schemes include AABB, ABAB, and AAAA, among others.
- **Repetition**: repeating the same word in different lines in the poem.

- **Refrain:** is a regularly recurring phrase or verse especially at the end of each stanza or division of a poem. It is a repetition of the whole line or stanza in the poem.

The terms "**image**" and "**imagery**" are related concepts in literature, particularly in poetry, but they have distinct meanings:

### 1. Image:

- An image in poetry refers to a specific instance of vivid and descriptive language that creates a mental picture or evokes a sensory experience.
- It can be a single word or a set of words that appeals to the senses, such as sight, sound, touch, taste, or smell.
- **For example**, "In an Artist's Studio" has many instances where the poet uses imagery.

### 2. Imagery:

- Imagery, on the other hand, refers to the collective use of images in a literary work.
  - It involves the use of vivid and descriptive language that appeals to the senses, creating a rich and sensory experience for the reader.
  - It contributes to the overall atmosphere, mood, and emotional impact of the work. A poem with vivid descriptions of landscapes, sounds, and emotions is said to have strong imagery. **For example**, "In an Artist's Studio" has many instances where the poet uses **visual, reflective, and emotional** imagery.
- **Speaker:** it refers to the voice of the poem, the character who speaks. The speaker reveals his thoughts in the poem and helps to create the mood of

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the poem. In “In an Artist’s Studio”, the speaker is someone who has insight into the artist’s work and the woman who inspired it.

- **Dialogue:** It is a literary technique in which a conversation between two or more characters occurs, or a speech that is written down as part of a piece of narrative text. **For example**, in Henrik Ibsen “The Doll’s House”, the readers get the information from the dialogues between the characters.
- **Epiphany:** refers to a moment of sudden and great revelation or realization. It's a crucial, unexpected turning point in someone's life. It is the character's awareness that helps in his development. **For instance**, the young boy in "A Handful of Dates" had an epiphany after realizing that his grandfather is the abuser.
- **Symbolism:** it is a literary device that uses symbols especially by investing things with a symbolic meaning or by expressing the invisible or intangible by means of visible representations. **For example**, in Letter from Gaza by Ghassan Kanafni, the severed leg of the narrator's niece, Nadia, symbolizes the physical and emotional cost of the Palestinian struggle. It reflects the deep scars left by war, not just on individuals but on the collective spirit of a people. **Significance:** Despite losing her leg, Nadia still smiles, symbolizing resilience and hope amidst suffering. Her injury becomes a turning point for the narrator, who chooses to stay in Gaza instead of leaving for a better life, emphasizing the pull of homeland over personal aspirations.

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- **Tone:** it refers to the overall mood or attitude of a piece of writing, speech, or other forms of expression. It conveys the author's feelings or the atmosphere of the work, whether it's serious, humorous, formal, or informal.
- **Mood:** refers to the emotional atmosphere or feeling that a piece of literature creates for the reader or audience. It's the emotion you experience while reading or watching the story unfold. The mood can shift throughout a work, depending on the events, the tone of the writing, and the emotions of the characters. **For example:** "In *A Doll's House*", the mood evolves from light and playful to tense and dramatic, ultimately becoming solemn and reflective.
- **Atmosphere:** refers to the **overall feeling or mood** created by the setting, the environment, and the characters' actions in a story. It is closely related to mood but often refers more specifically to how the physical surroundings and tone contribute to the emotional experience of the reader or audience.

#### **Difference between Mood and Atmosphere:**

- **Mood** is the emotion felt by the audience (e.g., happy, sad, anxious), while **atmosphere** is the environment or setting that helps create that mood (e.g., dark and stormy night, sunny and cheerful room).

### Extra terms:

- **Enjambment** (or enjambement): A line having no end punctuation but running over to the next line. It is defined as a thought or clause that does not come to an end at a line break rather moves over the next line.
- **Meter** is the regular pattern of stresses found in many lines of poetry. A regular **beat or pulse** runs through the lines, which can be tapped out as though it were the beat in a piece of music.
- **Couplets** are the Lines rhyming in pairs.
- **Autobiography**: An autobiography is a literary genre that is a self-written account of a person's life. It is often written by people who are well recognized or well-renowned in an attempt to inform the reader of their thoughts and experiences
- **Feminism**: feminism is about all genders having equal rights and opportunities. It's about respecting diverse women's experiences, identities, knowledge and strengths, and striving to empower all women to realize their full rights.
- **Realism**: is a literary movement that represents reality by portraying mundane, everyday experiences as they are in real life. It depicts familiar people, places, and stories, primarily about the middle and lower classes of society.
- **Gender**: refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors and roles associated

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with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other.

- **Intentional fallacy:** term used in 20th-century literary criticism to describe the problem essential in trying to judge a work of art by assuming the intent or purpose of the artist who created it.
- **Couplets** are the Lines rhyming in pairs.
- **Dramatic narrator:** when the narrator reports the events of a scene without getting inside characters' private thoughts or feelings.
- **Free Verse:** is a form of poetry that does not adhere to a regular meter or rhyme scheme. Unlike traditional poetic forms that have specific patterns of rhythm and rhyme, free verse allows poets greater flexibility and freedom in terms of line length, rhythm, and structure. In free verse, poets rely on natural speech patterns and the flow of thoughts and emotions, emphasizing creativity and expression without the constraints of predetermined rules.
- **Tragic hero:** is a central character who:
  - Has a **fatal flaw** (a weakness or mistake) that leads to their downfall. Nora's fatal flaw could be her naivety and unquestioning belief in the traditional roles of marriage. She sacrifices her own happiness and freedom for her husband, believing that he will protect her in return. Her decision to secretly forge her father's signature to save Torvald is another example of her flawed, desperate attempt to fulfill her role as a dutiful wife.

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- Experiences a **moment of realization** about their flaw or situation. Nora's tragic realization comes when she sees that Torvald cares more about his reputation than her sacrifices or their love. She says: *"You have never loved me. You have only thought it pleasant to be in love with me."* This moment leads to her decision to leave her husband and children, marking her ultimate transformation.
- Inspires pity and fear in the audience because their downfall feels inevitable yet avoidable.

**Catharsis:** is the feeling of **emotional release or relief** that the audience experiences after watching something intense, like a tragedy. It happens when the story makes you feel strong emotions, such as sadness or fear, and then you feel cleansed or lighter afterward because those emotions have been expressed. For example: *"In A Doll's House"*, the audience might feel catharsis at the end when Nora decides to leave her husband and children. It's a sad moment, but also a powerful one because she chooses freedom and self-discovery. The audience feels pity for her struggles and relief that she's taking control of her life. This mix of emotions helps the audience process their own feelings about societal roles and personal freedom.

**Good Luck.**