

**Course Pack**  
**English 233D-01: *Narratives of Exile***  
**Fall 2006, St. John Fisher College**  
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## Some Remarks on the Condition of Exile

Seeing "the entire world as a foreign land" makes possible originality of vision. Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that - to borrow a phrase from music - is contrapuntal.

- Mary Lynn Broe

The question that he frames in all but words  
Is what to make of a diminished thing.

- Robert Frost

By the waters of Babylon  
We lay down and wept to Thee, Zion.  
The wicked carried us away to captivity  
And required from us a song.  
How shall we sing the Lord's song  
In a strange land?  
Let the words of our mouths  
And the meditations of our hearts  
Be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord.

- Traditional song

Regard experiences as if they were about to disappear. What is it that anchors them in reality? What would you save of them? What would you give up? Only someone who has achieved independence and detachment, someone whose homeland is "sweet" but whose circumstances make it impossible to recapture that sweetness, can answer those questions. (Such as person would also find it impossible to derive satisfaction from substitutes furnished by illusion or dogma.)

- Edward Saïd

For an exile, habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment invariably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally. There is a unique pleasure in this sort of apprehension, especially if the exile is conscious of other contrapuntal juxtapositions that diminish orthodox judgment and elevate appreciative sympathy. There is also a particular sense of achievement in acting as if one were at home wherever one happens to be.

- Edward Saïd

To the exile, sanity is a tenuous matter - something that must be defined laboriously each day. Strangeness decenters the mind and the body, enforcing new awareness and inducing exhaustion. The exile alone knows that sanity is no constant standard, but an arbitrary matter of definition.

- Nadezhda Mandelstam

It is not a measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.

- Jiddu Krishnamurti

## Answers to Commonly Asked Questions: English 233

### What will happen in class?

Class will begin with 20-30 minutes of large-group discussion led by Dr. Jadwin. Students will then break out into smaller groups to workshop presentation papers. If time allows, groups can discuss other questions from the study topics. Usually the class will reassemble as a whole for 15-20 minutes at the end of class to talk about issues raised in small-group discussion.

### What will we do in small groups?

First each group will designate a leader for that day's discussion. The leader's job is to keep discussion on track. Then the presenter will distribute copies of their paper and/or read the paper aloud to the group. While they are reading/listening, group members will write down feedback about the paper. The group will then comment on the presentation's strengths and weaknesses, making suggestions for revision. When the group is finished discussing the presentation, members will hand their written feedback to the presenter, who will use that feedback to revise the paper. The group can then use any remaining time to discuss other ideas they have about the text.

### What is a "presentation"? How will it be graded?

A presentation is a paper read aloud to a sub-group of the class. Each class-member will present two analytical papers to fulfill course requirements. A good presentation, like a good paper, contains a thesis backed up by textual examples. A good presentation is coherent and stimulating enough to start a discussion. During your presentations you may want to introduce ideas and questions you feel unsure about, since you at this time you will be getting feedback from your classmates about your ideas and organization. Presentations are graded on a pass/fail basis: if you show up with a completed paper of 4-6 pages to present, you will pass, and if you are absent or show up without a completed paper, you will fail. You may choose to photocopy your paper for your classmates, read it aloud to them, or both. They will give you written feedback on your presentation. On most class days, multiple presentations will be taking place simultaneously and you will make your presentation to a group composed of roughly a third of the class. Because I can listen to only one presentation at a time, I may make audiotape recordings of presentations I can't attend, and after listening to these audiotapes may give you informal feedback about your presentation and discussion-leading.

### Where do I find a paper/presentation topic?

Study questions for each text are provided in this packet. Choose a topic appropriate to the section of the text we are reading on the day you are scheduled to give a presentation. DO NOT focus your paper on a section of the text that is not designated for discussion that day. (Example: if you've signed up for day when we plan to discuss a novel's closing chapters, don't focus your paper on its opening paragraph.) **The success of class discussion depends on your paper.** Papers that fail to fulfill the assignment will be penalized.

### When will my presentation be due?

Your presentation is due in class on the date you signed up for. Each student signs up for two paper-presentation dates, which are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. You can choose which texts you'd like to write about, but DO NOT write about the same text twice OR sign up to give two papers within less than two weeks of one another. Between classes, the presentation signup sheet will be posted on my office door; you may sign up for empty spots at any time.

### When do I hand in my completed paper?

Your completed paper is due at the beginning of class exactly one week AFTER your presentation. Use the extra week to revise. Notes taken by your audience, collected at discussion's end, will help you decide what to change. Revising is an important part of this assignment; take other students' comments seriously. Papers that have undergone little or no revision generally receive low grades.

### How will my paper be graded?

Papers will be graded on a 100-point scale according to two major criteria: (1) mechanics/formatting and (2) your ability to advance an argument based on textual evidence. My first reading focuses on mechanics and formatting. **You are permitted three mechanics or formatting errors per paper; for every error over that, I subtract several points.** My second reading of your paper focuses on its substance: does it fulfill the assignment? Does it have a coherent argument that is well supported by examples from the text? Have you used lively, clear language to express your ideas? Have you used the feedback from your presentation to revise your paper effectively? The number of points your paper accrues determines its final grade.

Because revision is already built into the process, you will not be able to revise your paper for a higher grade once you have handed it in, so be sure that it is the best it can be when you give it to me!

### **What about the films?**

Many of the texts in English 233 have been made into feature-length films. The film versions of *1984*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, and *My Beautiful Laundrette* are particularly good. I encourage you to check out or rent and watch these films as a supplement to the readings. Some study questions invite you to compare the film versions with the original texts.

In previous years classmembers have sometimes organized an English 233 "film festival" featuring a series of showings of films from the course. If you'd like to organize such an event, please see me.

A word of caution, however: the films are a great addition to the readings, but can't be substituted for the readings for three reasons: (1) pictures are different from words (2) the films often change elements of the stories and (3) films generally leave out large portions of the text because of length limitations.

## Notes on The Process of Interpretation

Literary study differs from more quantitative disciplines like science and math in that there are seldom any "right" or "wrong" interpretations of literature. Instead we speak of "strong" or "weak" interpretations. The process of interpretation always begins with the interpreter's personal interest in a textual problem or issue. (The interpreter asks himself or herself, "What do I find interesting/puzzling/irritating about this work?") Working from this personal interest, the interpreter gathers examples and uses textual examples (scenes, words, motifs and images, and "problems" that the author fails to resolve) to support his or her generalizations about the text.

The purpose of this literature course is not teach you how to memorize my interpretations, but how to generate your own. Therefore, the class is much less about imparting information than about modeling the process of interpretation. Course journal-writings, papers, and exams will therefore test not your recall of class discussion, but your ability to apply the methods of interpretation to a question about one or more works we read this term.

Below is an outline of how the interpretive process works. I have provided examples, taken from a small-group discussion, of how members of the group worked systematically through the process to arrive at an interpretation backed up by evidence. I suggest you keep this process in mind when you are working on your journals, your papers, and as you prepare throughout the course to take the final exam. None of these assignments is "cumulative" - that is, none requires you to regurgitate what has been said in class lecture or discussion. (It is important, however, that you remember and learn to use the terms and basic concepts which are discussed in class.) Rather, the papers, journal entries, and examination require you to create a coherent interpretation based on textual evidence.

### The interpretive process has four basic steps:

1. **Learning and applying literary (and historical) terminology; becoming aware of literary forms and traditions. What traditions and terms does this novel invoke? How does it alter or expand them? What words (and ideas) do I need to know to be able to talk about this work?**

Example: The professor provides most of the information about tradition and terminology. Some of the terms introduced before small-group discussion took place were "plot," "denouement," "rising action," "point of view," "climax," "zero-sum game," "totalitarianism," "fascism," etc. Having learned these terms and others, the discussants were able to use them to describe elements of the text if necessary.

2. **Generating ideas. How can I figure out what interests me about this text? How are the themes of the course (such as "exile") pictured in this text, and why?**

Example: The group was given a set of ideas in the form of study questions. (As you become more experienced interpreters, you will more actively choose your own topics.) They chose to examine a topic asking why Winston knows only Julia's first name. (Members of the group brainstorm different answers:) "Well, women are often referred to by their first names. I don't think it's a big deal." "The novel is told from Winston's point of view, so her last name is not all that important." "Maybe he just doesn't care." "Maybe it means that she's not a very important character in the novel." "It shows that Winston doesn't know much about her, because if you really know a person, you usually know their last name."

3. **Learning what to look for in a text. What elements are important or repeated in this text? It is important for you to remember that authors are extremely careful about what they put in a text: virtually everything, even the most trivial details, has some**

**greater meaning.**

Example: (The group proceeded to uncover a pattern of events linked with the idea that Winston didn't know Julia very well:) "She picks him out of the crowd - **she** pursues **him**." "She always knows exactly where to go and plans their arrivals and departures." "She's not very interested in politics." "She falls asleep when Winston is reading the Goldstein book." "She presents one image to the Party and another to Winston; she may be a chronic liar. Why should he trust her?" "Julia is beginning to look more and more suspicious to me."

**4. Linking individual ideas into general statements about a book. What do these emphases and patterns mean?**

Example: (The group saw that this evidence pointed in a certain direction:) "Maybe this means that Julia was in league with the Party, and that, like O'Brien, she was part of a plot to capture Winston." "What does that mean about the book as a whole?" "That everybody is part of a conspiracy?" "I didn't even think about this while I was reading the book. It gives me the creeps to think that I was taken in by thinking their relationship was real." "How are you supposed to know who to trust?" "This is just typical of the totalitarian state where everyone is out to get you."

Many members of the group were surprised to find that such an unimportant detail as a missing last name had led them towards an interpretation that made them reconsider the relationship between Winston and Julia in an entirely new light. Their interpretation had come a long way from the original question, "Why doesn't Winston know Julia's last name?"

If you have questions about your own interpretations, problems with mastering the interpretive process, or other concerns about course work, I strongly encourage you to see me privately. Help on written work is also available from the Writing Center, where tutors will help you with every stage of the process, from generating a topic to brainstorming to revising to proofreading. My office hours are listed on the syllabus; I am available for one hour after every class meeting and also by appointment.

## Guidelines and Grading Criteria for Analytical Papers

The two papers you write for this course are intended to help you think analytically about course readings and to practice using the ideas and terms we are learning about. The papers allow you to show that you are completing the readings and learning to construct interpretations of your own. They also prepare you to lead small-group discussion on each day you give a paper/presentation.

<b>Deadlines</b>	<p>You must present your paper on the date you signed up for; your revised, polished paper is due exactly one week later at the beginning of class.</p> <p>Your revised, polished paper is due exactly one week after your presentation. Staple feedback sheets to your paper so that I can see how you have used them.</p> <p>Papers can be placed in the "in" box on my office door (B-121), slipped under my office door, or given to the Faculty Secretaries to be placed in my mailbox (the most secure option). Please do not e-mail papers.</p> <p>Late papers will be penalized at the rate of one grade increment per every day or fraction of a day that they are late. Late presentations will not be permitted.</p>
<b>Formatting &amp; Style</b>	<p>Type your paper using a 10- or 12-point font and dark ink.</p> <p>Use 1-inch margins on sides, top, and bottom.</p> <p>Number the pages.</p> <p>Your paper's title should provide a summary of its argument. "Paper on 1984" is a poor title. "Winston's Fruitless Rebellion against the System" tells the reader what you plan to argue.</p> <p>Staple or paper-clip the pages together.</p> <p>Use nonsexist (inclusive) language.</p> <p>Papers that are inadequately formatted will be penalized, and may be returned with no feedback and a failing grade.</p>
<b>Mechanics</b>	<p>Your paper, like your grooming for a job interview, should be as technically perfect as possible. Proofread twice, preferably backwards. Computer spell-checkers are unreliable!</p> <p>You are permitted a <i>maximum</i> of one error of grammar, spelling, or punctuation per page.</p> <p>Papers with excessive errors will be heavily penalized, and may be returned with no feedback and a failing grade.</p>
<b>Citing Sources</b>	<p><i>All direct quotations and paraphrases of textual material must be cited. This means that if you quote or paraphrase the course text or someone who helped you with your paper, you must cite the source.</i></p> <p>Use MLA-style parenthetical source citations and a Works Cited List.</p> <p>Papers with inadequately documented sources will be heavily penalized and may cause you to fail (1) the assignment or (2) the course. You are responsible for understanding the College's academic honesty policies, which are laid out in the St. John Fisher College Student Handbook.</p>
<b>Choosing a Topic</b>	<p>Choose a topic from the study-question sheet. Make sure that your topic is appropriate for the date you will be presenting the paper - in other words, don't write about the end of a novel on the day we are slated to discuss the novel's opening chapters.</p>
<b>Thesis</b>	<p><b>A thesis sentence provides a brief description of what the paper will argue and why this argument is significant.</b> Simply describing or listing things that happen in a text is not enough. You must explain why these things and the patterns they form are important.</p> <p>The thesis statement is like a road map that tells your reader where you're going and how you plan to get there. An effective thesis statement also interests the reader in coming along for the ride.</p> <p>Your "road map" - a one- or two-sentence summary of your argument - belongs on the first page, usually in the first paragraph.</p> <p>Most writers don't discover their thesis until finishing their first draft. As they complete the first</p>

	<p>draft, the thesis generally appears in the last paragraph of their paper. Be aware of this tendency; prepare to move your thesis to the beginning of your paper and revise accordingly.</p> <p><b>Tips:</b> 1. Thesis-generation is difficult, so use a 10- or 15-minute conference with me or with another student to help bring your argument into focus. 2. Write early and often. Remember that most people "write to learn" - that is, they discover a thesis in the process of writing. 3. Don't be afraid to write several drafts and to dump false starts or unrelated digressions. Remember: you are expected to revise your paper in accordance with feedback given in class.</p>
<b>Evidence</b>	<p><b>Support the generalizations you make about the text with textual evidence.</b></p> <p>"Textual evidence" means examples from the text, whether they are direct quotations or paraphrases of scenes or events that relate to your topic. As you read, note passages and events that will help you argue about your topic. Use yellow stickies to mark relevant pages.</p> <p>A combination of direct quotations from the text and descriptions of scenes and events works well. For example, you might say "Winston reveals his unhappiness with INGSOC by buying an old-fashioned notebook, moving out of view of the telescreen, and writing "DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER" repeatedly in large letters" (19).*</p> <p>Explain what each piece of textual evidence means and why it's important. Remember that evidence can be interpreted in different ways. For example, after providing the example above, you might say, "Winston's buying of the notebook is important, because it signals the first time he is willing to rebel against Big Brother, and it sets him on a course of action that will completely change his life." OR, taking a different approach, you might point out that "The notebook shows how much life has changed in Airstrip One because words that are written in it can't easily be erased." OR you could say "This is a big switch from the kind of writing Winston does at his job, where spends his time falsifying electronic documents. It shows that he is willing to commit himself to stating a truth that can't easily be erased or hidden." If you discover textual evidence that invalidates your argument, don't ignore it or pretend that it doesn't exist. Consider changing your argument instead.</p> <p>Generalizations that are unsupported by textual evidence ("Winston is an unhappy man") will fail to persuade readers that your interpretation is correct. <b>Think of yourself as a lawyer who has to provide evidence for every assertion you make - otherwise, the jury won't be convinced.</b></p> <p>*What's that (19)? It's a parenthetical page-number citation. You must provide such a citation for each example you give, whether it's a direct quotation or a paraphrase. See the course website for information about formatting MLA-style parenthetical source citations.</p>
<b>Secondary Sources</b>	<p>Secondary sources are critical treatments of a text (such as essays and books about a particular work) or an author. While these sources are fascinating, it's best to avoid them and instead to rely on your own investigation of a topic.</p>
<b>Using Feedback</b>	<p>During your presentation, each listener should take notes about the strengths and weaknesses of your paper, and each listener should pass this sheet on to you. Review the feedback you receive and enlist it when you revise your paper. Pay special attention to comments you receive from more than one listener. Use common sense in deciding how to use feedback.</p> <p>Staple the feedback sheets to the back of your completed paper.</p>



## Glossary: English 233

The words below may be used in class, and if so, will be further defined during lecture, discussion, or in paper topics. Use these terms during discussion and in preparing presentations, papers, and study questions. Since these are only brief definitions, you may need to expand or elaborate on them. Students are responsible for learning the definitions as they arise in class; terms we use often will appear as identification questions on exams.

Other terms may come up in the process of the course. Use the extra space at the end of this list to note these words and their definitions, for if central to class discussion they may also appear on exams.

### Terms Useful for Discussing Exile

**Clairvoyant (adj), clairvoyance (noun).** Possessed of supernatural powers that enable an individual to predict the future. See PROPHET.

**Cultural capital:** a term invented by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, is best defined as "competence in valued cultural styles." Possessing cultural capital enables an individual to speak about high-status culture and to participate in powerful cultural circles. For instance, knowledge of the difference between a salad and a shrimp fork, of classical opera, and of the names of expensive single-malt scotches composes cultural capital in upper-class American social circles. An ability to pronounce French words correctly and to use correct grammar comprise cultural capital in other circles.

**Defamiliarize, defamiliarization.** Literally "to make strange." Literary language has the effect of "making strange" habituated perceptions of all kinds, including readers' habituated perceptions of language. Literary "devices" in particular draw attention to the artifice of the text. Likewise, writers DEFAMILIARIZE ordinary objects and relationships by displaying them from new or unexpected angles.

**Deconstruction.** The name of a POSTMODERN philosophical movement that concludes that meaning is slippery, uncategorizable, and constantly deferred in language, and that it is impossible (and not even particularly worthwhile) to try to determine the "real meaning" of an idea or text. Instead, deconstructionists invert established hierarchies and categories of meaning in order to discover how language and knowledge sometimes subvert the very meanings they appear to be trying to create.

**Diaspora** (dye-AS-por-a). This Greek noun meaning "dispersion, scattering" refers specifically to the historical settling of exiled colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile. It is used more generally to describe the dispersion of any people who share national origin or beliefs.

**Dystopia** (dis-TOPE-ia). The opposite of utopia: a living hell; a community in which everything has the quality of nightmare. Dystopic novels are usually created to display a nightmarish world of the future in which our worst suspicions and fears have become reality - have literally become the social structure of our lives.

**Exile:** literally, one who has rejected/been rejected from a native state and now lives in another. You need to come up with your own definition(s) of exile, since it has many meanings.

**Expatriate** (ex-PATRIOT): a non-citizen living in a foreign country; what the Immigration and Naturalization Service calls an "alien." Note that the word "expatriate" differs from "exile" in that it specifically refers to citizenship status.

**Heresy, heretic:** in religious circles, HERESY is adherence to dogma that is contrary to an established dogma of a church. More informally, HERESY means an opinion or doctrine radically contrary to generally accepted beliefs.

**Liminality:** the state of being on the threshold of change, of existing in a realm whose parameters have not been fully defined because of transition of one kind or another. In liminal periods, is often true that "no rules apply," or the usual rules seem to be suspended. Examples of liminal periods in modern life are situations of natural disaster, travel, sudden change of life such as death, love, or violence, or any other psychological state in which change, transition and the feeling of "being neither here nor there" pervade one's experience.

Liminality is an important part of religious rituals, since it is a state in which people are stripped of their old identities by being "broken down to nothing" and their identities are recreated by the leaders of the group. This process is also used, to different effect, in brainwashing. "Liminality" is often forcibly imposed on students and neophytes as a way of indoctrinating them into the military, medical school, and various other social/professional institutions. Liminal periods can often be very inspiring, as when people who would ordinarily not speak to one another join together in common cause to solve a pressing problem.

**Marginality:** the state of being on the outside of things - "on the sidelines," "a wallflower," "a fifth wheel," etc. It is usually opposed to unity - the sense of belonging to the group - which in our culture is considered extremely important. Though Americans claim to love individualism, we level heavy penalties on "square pegs" - those we consider "anti-social" and those who fail to fit in to the norms of the dominant culture.

**Postmodernism:** the philosophical stance of disbelieving in the existence of absolute truth and universality and instead believing that many aspects of life are arbitrary and many human behaviors socially conditioned rather than innate. Postmodernists tend to focus on fragmentation, dispersal, disagreement, and undecidability rather than on certainties and enduring truths.

**Prophet:** one who speaks with special knowledge, often knowledge of God; an inspired revealer, interpreter, or spokesperson. Sometimes prophets are considered CLAIRVOYANT.

**Pseudonym** (SOO-duh-nim): Greek for "fake" ("pseudo") "name" ("nym"). A false name used by a writer or artist as a mask for publishing work that they fear will be controversial for some reason.

**Scapegoat:** A person to whom sins, ill luck, or other evils are assigned (ceremonially or informally), and who symbolically bears them away by being sacrificed or exiled. A person or thing bearing blame for others.

**Signifier and signified:** Terms coined in 1916 by F. de Saussure, who believed language to be a system of signs. He divided signs into two parts: a SIGNIFIER, meaning the sound-image of the sign, or its graphic equivalent (such as a word). The second element is the SIGNIFIED, the idea of the thing being described by the SIGNIFIER. Saussure's distinction between the SIGNIFIER and the SIGNIFIED calls attention to the inherent instability of language: there is no logical relationship between a word/symbol and the thing it represents.

**Subvert (verb), subversion (noun), subversive (adjective):** the stealthy undermining or overthrow of an established authority.

**Propaganda.** Literature that offers an extremely doctrinaire solution to social, ethical, or political problems. Propaganda is seldom subtle, ambiguous, or complicated in construction; it is extremely DIDACTIC. Note, however, that texts that fail to succeed as literature can often be good propaganda.

**Utopia** (you-TOPE-ia): The opposite of DYSTOPIA; a living heaven; a community, usually set apart from the rest of the world, where everything is ideal. In the nineteenth century in America, numerous utopias flourished - communities in which people got together and tried to create and sustain an ideal society. Writers sometimes create works of literature in which they imagine a perfect society - a UTOPIA.

**Xenophobia** (ZEN-no-fo-bia). This Greek noun means fear ("phobia") of outsiders or foreigners ("xenos," those from the outside). A XENOPHOBE is afraid of (and antagonistic towards) anybody who isn't a local

and a "known quantity."

### Terms Commonly Used in Literary Analysis

**Allusion:** an indirect reference to a myth or another work that the reader is expected already to have read.

**Author:** the actual historical being who wrote something. Not to be confused with the narrator or implied author (see below). Jane Austen died the year that Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*. Daniel Defoe had a career as a spy before he started writing novels.

**Closure:** literary term encompassing all the elements that make up the "ending" of a work. CLOSURE is an emphatic position - the last word on what has happened throughout the text - and so deserves special scrutiny.

**Content:** we use this word to describe a work's ideas, themes, and argument - the abstract elements that come together in the reader's mind rather than in discrete words on a page.

**Dénouement:** the "falling action" of a plot - what happens between the CLIMAX and the CLOSURE as problems are resolved, punishments and rewards meted out, "loose strings" of the PLOT tied up.

**Diction:** a writer's choice of words. Are the author's words Latinate or Anglo-Saxon? Formal or informal? Obscene or polite? Forceful or wishy-washy? Archaic or modernistic? There are many different words to describe things. Example: does your text refer to Hell as "Hades," "the nether realm," "The Other Place," "Beelzebub's palace," or "the pit o' fire"? What are the different connotations of those words? What does the author's word choice tell you about the passage's values, expectations, and TONE?

**Didactic (dy-DAC-tic):** designed to teach a moral or practical lesson.

**Euphemism:** an indirect or "nice" word substituted for a painful or ugly one, designed to soften the impact of a difficult or unpleasant idea. When we say someone "passed away" instead of "died," we're using a EUPHEMISM.

**Form, formal:** having to do with the form (the structure and makeup) of a work of art. We talk about a work's formal elements - the tools and materials it uses to make its point. Compare to CONTENT.

**Frame story, narrative frame:** a story within a story. The extent to which the FRAME STORY becomes an actual PLOT within which other PLOTS are inserted varies greatly.

**Genre (ZHAWN-ruh):** a family or category of art. Painting, novels, poetry, sculpture, and concertos are all GENRES of art.

**Irony:** a rhetorical device in which one implies the opposite of what one actually says. IRONY must be perceived in context, since it is not signified on the page. Sarcasm is generally much broader and is usually reserved to describe spoken IRONY. IRONY is usually broad, situational and subtle compared to sarcasm, which is deliberate and obvious in its reversal of meanings.

**Metaphor:** a comparison lacking any word signifying that a comparison is being made. "Love is a rose" directly equates "love" and "rose," even though the equation is logically impossible. See simile, synecdoche, metonymy - all varieties of METAPHOR - below.

**Narratee:** a character who narrates another character's story to us. The NARRATEE does not exist in every text - the NARRATEE is a listener/character who sometimes becomes a narrator in her/his own right. Pheoby in *Their Eyes* is an example of a narratee - she serves the function of listening to Janie's story.

**Narrator:** the voice who presents a literary work to us. Narrators can be omniscient (unlimited in scope, all-knowing), limited (to one or a few points of view), and/or unreliable (the context of the novel shows us that this narrator's observations are not to be trusted). The narrator and the author are NOT the same person, even in "I" narratives.

**Parable:** a brief story whose meaning is ambiguous and deeper than its simple form suggests at first glance. PARABLES are DIDACTIC and designed to be INTERPRETED.

**Paradox:** an idea juxtaposing opposites that seems irrational or impossible but on closer examination turns out to have some unexpected and legitimate meaning. Many of the world's religions rest on PARADOXES such as the Christian notion of death giving everlasting life.

**Plot:** the events depicted in a text. Aristotle described ARCHETYPAL plots as having a triangular shape, moving from a beginning through a complication to a CLIMAX and ending with DENOUEMENT and finally CLOSURE.

**Pun:** a play on words based on the similarity of sound between two words with different meanings.

**Simile:** a comparison using "like" or "as" to connect the compared objects or ideas. Example: "My love is like a red, red rose."

**Tone:** think "TONE of voice." TONE builds out of all the other elements in the passage. Define the mood: bright, ugly, repentant, musing, romantic, desperate? How do you know? You must not only say "what it sounds like," you must show how the author gets that mood across.

**Trope:** the name for the rhetorical family of comparisons. METAPHOR, metonymy, synecdoche, and simile are all types of tropes.

## Unpacking a Metaphor

### What is a metaphor?

A metaphor is a comparison of two unlike things, such as "love is a rose." How does metaphor work? The comparison identifies implicit similarities between things that don't seem to have much in common. Logically we know that love cannot possibly *be* a rose - those two things are separate - but figuratively (imaginatively) we recognize that love (an abstraction) and a rose (a concrete object) are similar in certain ways. There are many kinds of metaphors, including *simile* (a comparison using "like" or "as"), *synecdoche* (a comparison that substitutes the part for the whole), and *metonymy* (a comparison that substitutes an associated thing for something else).

We humans love metaphors for two basic reasons: they help us see our world freshly, and they allow us to assign concrete characteristics to abstract ideas. Everyone, regardless of their level of education, uses metaphors. Proverbs are a good example of metaphors at work in ordinary life. Try it yourself - supply the familiar metaphorical proverb for each of these ideas:

- too many people working on something tends to spoil it
- if you hang out with bad people, you'll develop bad habits
- if you go too fast you'll be sorry
- saving money is like making extra money
- the work is easier when lots of people are helping out
- your outside is only as attractive as your behavior is

These proverbs "concretize" abstract ideas by comparing them to ordinary, everyday objects. What is gained by using metaphors to describe these ideas?

### When does an object attain broad metaphoric significance?

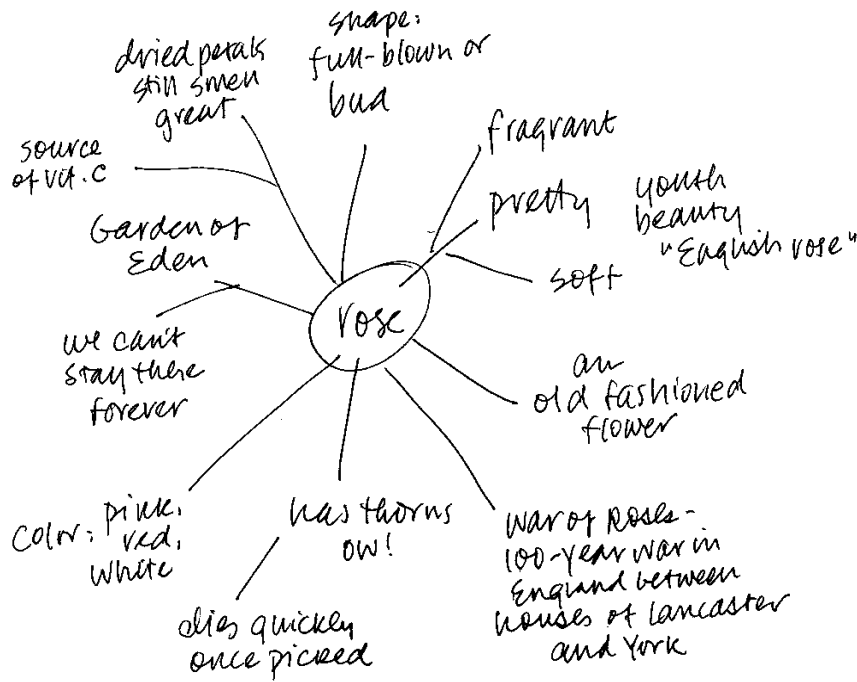
The metaphoric process of making the abstract literal also works in reverse - certain concrete objects become metaphors for a host of abstract ideas. In our language and literature, which have been around for twenty centuries or so, certain important objects have attained metaphoric - symbolic - significance over time because they've been used so often. These objects are multivalent - that is, they mean more than one thing - and when you introduce them, people tend to associate many ideas with the objects.

### What is unpacking?

Unpacking a metaphor means listing all its associations - or at least all the ones we can think of - to see how the metaphor has developed in our culture, and how the author uses it in a particular literary work.

To unpack a metaphor, we use a brainstorming technique called *clustering*. Clustering allows us to list all the associations we can think of in a non-linear format, so that we can easily build on them and create new ideas without being constrained by conventional logic. An *association* is any idea we have that comes to mind when we think of the object. Usually members of a culture have similar associations with familiar objects: that is, when faced with the word "fire," most people will come up with similar *associations* such as "red," "hot," "hell," "burn," "refine," etc.

Let's take a familiar metaphor like a rose. We cluster this concept by writing it in the middle of the page or the blackboard, and listing all our associations with the object in a circle around it, connecting the object and the ideas with spokes, like those of a wagon wheel. (That "wagon wheel" reference is a metaphor at work!) Here's an example of clustering:



If ideas seem related, group them on the same "spoke."

**What do I do with my clustering?**

When you're finished, take a look at the associations you've generated. What patterns do you see? You don't have to use all the associations you generate - some may be personal to you alone. Some, for one reason or another, may not be useful to your current enterprise (it's unlikely, for example, that Shakespeare appreciated the rose as a source of Vitamin C).

In general, however, you will notice that a major metaphor inspires a variety of different, and often conflicting, associations. The rose, for example, is both a source of pleasure (soft, fragrant, pink, youth) and a source of pain (thorns, death of flower, expulsion from Garden of Eden, wars of roses, etc.). This pattern of duality is what makes the rose so compelling to writers, since it has far more than a single unitary meaning. The many associations "packed" into the metaphor make it rich and satisfying for a variety of readers - and give it many possible meanings.