



A N G L A I S * L I T T É R A T U R E

**A HANDBOOK *of*
LITERARY TERMS**

Introduction au vocabulaire littéraire anglais

FRANÇOISE GRELLET

hachette
SUPÉRIEUR

ANGLAIS * LITTÉRATURE

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FRANÇOISE GRELLET

Professeur en classe de Première supérieure au lycée Henri-IV

hachette
SUPÉRIEUR

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Introduction

The aim of this book is to introduce students of English to the literary terms they will need to analyse and comment on literature. Whereas most existing books are in the form of dictionaries, this handbook is organized in chapters dealing with the major fields of interest that the literary critic is likely to be concerned with. Thus it is hoped that the book can be used both as an introduction to literary terms, in which students can find information and vocabulary about a given subject (e.g. narrative technique or imagery) by reading the relevant chapters, and as a more conventional dictionary, by using the index provided at the end.

Throughout the book, an attempt has been made to include both:

- *specialist terms and more general terms*: the “related words” boxed lists, in particular, often suggest other, less technical ways of expressing the notions and ideas dealt with in the section, thus offering students a wider range of expressions that can help them avoid repetition.

A chapter on the more general vocabulary of essays and commentaries has also been included at the end of the book.

- *terms belonging to traditional literary criticism and some more recent terms used in contemporary textual analysis*: here, a selection had to be made so as not to overwhelm students by a mass of specialized terms recently created by such groups and approaches as, to name only a few, the Bakhtin group, deconstruction, discourse analysis, feminist criticism or semiotics. This book is an introduction to literary terms. It is not a course in literary theory or history, and students interested in such approaches should be referred to specialized works.

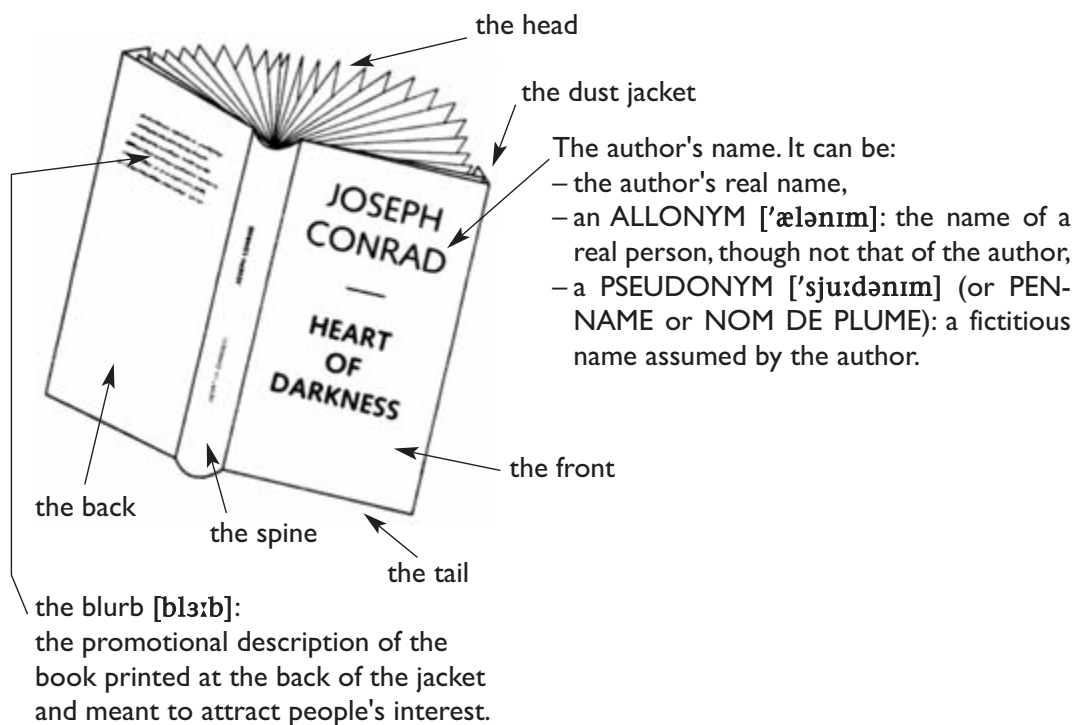
As the book will also serve as a dictionary, some less common words have also been included. Such words usually appear in smaller typeface to make it clear to students that they are more rare and should therefore be used with particular discrimination.

The quality of an essay or commentary is certainly not proportional to the number of technical or arcane words it contains. Clarity and simplicity should always be aimed at and academic snobbery avoided. But the use of the right word in the right place will often prevent long and vague descriptions and, by helping students to express their thoughts with greater clarity and subtlety, will lead them to develop their thinking and gain a better understanding of the text.

The Format of a Book

A book about words should start with a few words about books.

1. Looking at a book



A book can be a **HARDBACK** or a **PAPERBACK**.

A work in three parts is called a **TRILOGY** if each part is independent.

(e.g. John Dos Passos' trilogy *USA*, which consists of *The 42nd Parallel*, *1919* and *The Big Money*.)

A similar work in four parts is called a **TETRALOGY** (e.g. Shakespeare's Chronicle plays *Richard II*, *Henry IV Parts 1 & 2*, *Henry V*). The term **QUARTET** is also used (e.g. Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*).

Some works in five parts are called **QUINTETS**.

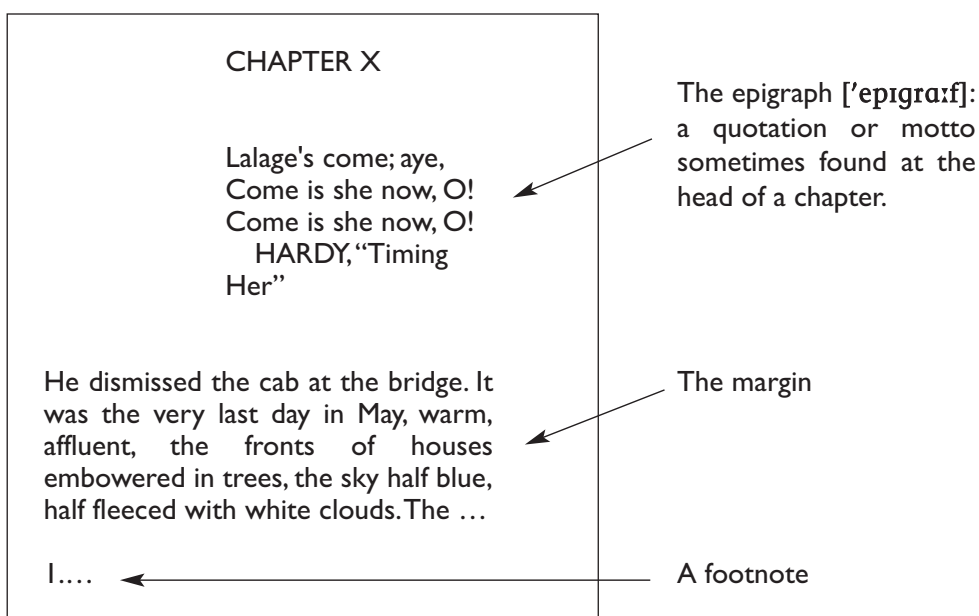
The **FORMAT** [ˈfɔːmæt] of the book is its general physical appearance: size, typeface, paper, layout, etc.

2. The parts of a book

When you open a book, you usually find:

- a FLY LEAF (a blank page) or ENDPAPER, on which people sometimes stick a BOOK-PLATE or EX-LIBRIS [eks'laɪbrɪs].
- the TITLE PAGE, which besides the title and author's name mentions the publisher and sometimes contains a DEDICATION (a mention of the person to whom the book is dedicated). It also shows the publisher's COLOPHON ['kɒləfən] (the sign or emblem of the publisher).
- a FRONTISPICE: an illustration which sometimes appears facing the title-page.
- On the back of the title page:
 - the COPYRIGHT,
 - the ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS [ək'nɒlɪdʒmənts], in which the writer expresses gratitude for the help given him or her by a number of people,
 - the Library of Congress classification details.
- the table of contents.
- the index, which appears at the end of the book.

3. Looking at a page



- TYPOGRAPHY [taɪ'pɒgrəfi]:
 - the typeface used: e.g. **New York**, **Times**, **Courier**...
 - *italics* [ɪ'tælɪks] (You say that a word is italicized.)
 - CAPITAL LETTERS (You say that a word is capitalized.)
 - **bold type** or **bold face** (You say that a word is emboldened.)
- A TAIL-PIECE (decorative motif) sometimes appears at the end of a chapter.

4. The size of books

The size of books depends on the number of times the original sheets of paper used by the printer (“foolscap” size: 17 inches by 13 1/2 inches) are folded.

If the sheets are folded once, forming sets of two leaves of four pages, the book is a FOLIO.

If the sheets are folded twice (with sets of four leaves) the book is a QUARTO.

If the sheets are folded a third time (with sets of eight leaves), the book is an OCTAVO [ɒk'teɪvə].

If the sheets are folded so as to obtain sets of twelve leaves, the book is called a DUODECIMO [ˌdjuːəʊ'desɪməʊ].

These descriptions are often shortened to 4°, 8°, 12°. 12° books are sometimes called pocket books, because they can fit into a pocket.

A very small book, or miniature edition, is called a BIBELOT ['bɪbləʊ].

These terms are mainly used for old books.

5. Citing books in a bibliography

When citing a book, mention should always be made not only of the author's name and of the title of the book, but also of some publication information (publisher and date of publication). These can be found on the title page and on its reverse. See the example below:

HEANEY Seamus, *New Selected Poems 1966-1987*, Faber and Faber, 1990.

SEAMUS HEANEY New Selected poems 1966-1987 <i>faber and faber</i> LONDON - BOSTON	First published in 1990 by Faber and Faber Limited, 3 Queen Square London WC1N 3AU. Reprinted in 1992. Photoset by Wilmaset Birkenhead Wirral. Printed in England by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc. All rights reserved. © Seamus Heaney, 1966, 1969, 1972, 1975, 1979, 1983, 1984, 1987. Seamus Heaney is hereby identified as author of this work in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. This book is subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser. A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library. ISBN 0-571-14371-7 0-571-14372-5 (Pbk) 0-571-14461-6 (Signed edn)
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The Art of Poetry

■ <i>Stress and Rhythm</i>	10
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Stress and Rhythm

English verse is **ACCENTUAL-SYLLABIC** in that it is based both on rhythm and on the number of syllables per line. Therefore it is not merely syllabic (as is often the case with French poetry) or based on the alternance of long and short syllables (as in ancient Greek and Roman poetry).

Rhythm is based on **METRE** ['mi:tə], that is to say on the pattern of **STRESSED** and **UNSTRESSED** syllables in the lines. **METRICS** ['mætriks] (the study of metre) is also called **PROSODY**. Lines can be divided into a number of **FEET**, or **MEASURES** for some modern metrists. A foot is made up of two or three syllables, one of which must be stressed.

A **STRESSED** or **ACCENTED** or **STRONG** syllable (marked / below) is also called a **BEAT**.

An **UNSTRESSED** or **UNACCENTED** or **WEAK** or **SLACK** syllable (marked ∪ below) is also called an **OFF-BEAT**.

e.g. ∪ / ∪
| syllabic (the stress is on the second syllable).

Three elements must be taken into consideration to decide on what particular syllables stress will fall:

- word stress: in a word like “falling”, the stress can only be on the first syllable;
- the metrical pattern of the line, which creates expectations;
- the grammatical function of the word, since it is unusual for words such as “it”, “has” or “by” to carry the stress.

One of the most interesting effects of metre is to create a tension between the rhythm of ordinary speech and the expected rhythm of the metrical pattern.

Note the difference between:

- a **LINE**,
- **VERSE** (poetry, a number of lines),
- a **VERSE** (a stanza).

1. Here are the most common types of metrical feet

- The **IAMB** ['aɪəmb] (adj. = iambic [ai'æmbɪk]): ∪ /

A two syllable foot consisting of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. It is the basic rhythm of English poetry.

e.g. ∪ / ∪ / ∪ / ∪ /
| In doubt | to deem | himself | a god, | or beast. (Alexander POPE)