

FIFTH EDITION

A DICTIONARY OF LITERARY TERMS AND LITERARY THEORY

J. A. Cuddon

Fifth Edition

Revised by M.A.R. Habib

Associate Editors

Matthew Birchwood

Vedrana Velickovic

Martin Dines

Shayn Fiske

 WILEY-BLACKWELL

A DICTIONARY OF
Literary Terms
and Literary Theory

A DICTIONARY OF

Literary Terms and Literary Theory

FIFTH EDITION

J. A. CUDDON

*Revised by
M. A. R. Habib*

*Associate Editors
Matthew Birchwood, Vedrana Velickovic,
Martin Dines and Shanyn Fiske*

 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**

A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication

This edition first published 2013
© 2013 The Estate of J. A. Cuddon

Edition History:

André Deutsch Ltd (1e, UK, 1977); Doubleday & Company Inc. (1e, USA, 1977); André Deutsch Ltd (2e, UK, 1979); Doubleday & Company Inc. (2e, USA, 1980); Basil Blackwell Ltd (3e, 1991); Blackwell Publishers Ltd (4e, 1998).

Blackwell Publishing was acquired by John Wiley & Sons in February 2007. Blackwell's publishing program has been merged with Wiley's global Scientific, Technical, and Medical business to form Wiley-Blackwell.

Registered Office

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Offices

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148–5020, USA

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell.

The right of J. A. Cuddon and M. A. R. Habib to be identified as the authors of this work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book. This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cuddon, J. A. (John Anthony), 1928-1996.

A dictionary of literary terms and literary theory / J.A. Cuddon. – 5th ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4443-3327-5 (cloth : alk. paper) 1. Criticism–Terminology. 2. Literature–Terminology. 3. English language–Terms and phrases. 4. Literary form–Terminology.

I. Title.

PN41.C83 2013

803–dc23

2012035085

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Cover design by www.cyandesign.co.uk

Set in 10.5/12.5 pt Stempel Garamond by Toppan Best-set Premedia Limited

CONTENTS

Preface to the Fifth Edition by M. A. R. Habib	vi
Preface to the Fourth Edition by C. E. Preston	viii
Preface to the Third Edition by J. A. Cuddon	x
Acknowledgements	xvi
List of Abbreviations	xvii
A–Z of Entries	1–784

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

While our editorial aim has been to produce an updated and more comprehensive version of the fourth edition of J. A. Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, we have tried to remain mindful of the fact that we are revising a volume that has hitherto enjoyed great success and has effectively created a wide audience. Hence, while we have endeavoured to update and modernize the book, it seemed unbecoming to transform it beyond recognition and to discard its distinctive characteristics of (a) historical range, (b) conciseness and wit, (c) intercultural breadth, and (d) readability, appealing as it does to a broad spectrum of people. And we wished to avoid turning it into yet another glossary of contemporary critical terms. While we acknowledge that current debates concerning literary theory are moving in many directions, we have sought not to dilute the range or depth of what Cuddon has already accomplished.

Nonetheless, after consulting with many people, we concurred that there were clearly areas where the book could be improved and made more effective as a resource. For example, some of the extant entries reflect Cuddon's esoteric interests, as in the discussions of unwieldy length on topics such as 'ghost story' and 'spy story'. These have been retained but in a much abbreviated form. Furthermore, a number of very obscure terms have been removed altogether.

One of the factors that rendered Cuddon's dictionary so accessible and usable was the conciseness of *most* entries. And this made it a work of reference different in kind from, say, the *Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* (a splendid book in its own right), where often it will take an hour or more to read a single entry. But again, some of the entries in the Cuddon *Dictionary* were disproportionately lengthy, as for example, the forty pages on the novel. Any reader who wants that kind of detailed information on the novel can easily go to fuller sources. Hence we have tried to keep the longest entries to a maximum of about three pages; this also had the advantage of creating room for numerous new entries, as well as for expanding and updating some of the existing ones, without the book's length being substantially altered. Some of the entries that needed revising and updating, such as those on 'dialectic', 'logocentrism', 'estrangement' and 'essentialism', have been reconceived from what we

hope is a more philosophically informed perspective. Other entries have been modified in the light of more recent theoretical developments.

There are a number of areas in which we thought that additional entries needed to be included: gender studies and queer theory; postcolonial theory; poststructuralism; postmodernism; narrative theory; cultural studies; terms from other literatures (Chinese, Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Indian); and a number of miscellaneous terms, including cybercriticism, life writing, world literature, and dub poetry.

Even with such a range of additions, the dictionary can hardly claim to be exhaustive or as comprehensive as we might have wished. We have had to exercise a great deal of selectivity in choosing terms from these various fields. Finally, such is our admiration for Cuddon's work that it is only with a great deal of tentativeness that we hope to have produced a dictionary which both retains the merits of the original and is firmly grounded in the twenty-first century.

M. A. R. Habib,
Rutgers University

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

I make not therefore my head a grave, but a treasure of knowledge; I intend no monopoly, but a community in learning; I study not for my own sake only, but for theirs that study not for themselves.

Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*

Charles Cuddon was the author of twelve plays, three libretti, five novels, two travel books, two dictionaries, and many short stories and essays; he was the editor of ghost and horror stories, a schoolmaster, a talented sportsman, and even, in his youth, a photographic model. When this remarkable man died in the spring of 1996, he left, among these many works, the incandescent *Owl's Watchsong* (1960) (his astonishing elegy to Istanbul), the colossal and witty *Dictionary of Sport and Games* (1980), and the present work, the *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (1976), which he was readying for its fourth edition. The number and quality of his literary remains are his own memorial: they are the testimonial of the range of his interests, his lucid scholarship, his large intelligence, his delightful sense of humour, and his elegant prose. Above all, they are a record of his generosity, to friends, students, scholars, and all who have benefited, and will benefit, from his labours.

Like one of his favourite writers, Sir Thomas Browne, Charles Cuddon would not make his head a grave; at his death in March 1996, he was far advanced in the revisions which are contained in this new edition of his *Dictionary*; the task of incorporating the new entries and the corrections to existing ones which he left among his extensive notes has therefore been pleasant and easy. Charles also left proposals for many new entries which he could not himself finish, and a substantial number of these have been adopted and written, often according to rough drafts he had already sketched out.

Over the years, Charles and his *Dictionary* prompted correspondence from readers and friends who suggested improvements and additions; fortunately, a number of these were willing to be dragooned into the project of completing the fourth edition, and their help was indispensable. Anna Cuddon, Jean Gooder, Eric Griffiths, Kevin Jackson, John Kenyon, John Kerrigan and Ato Quayson fielded random queries and supplied vital information. Three others produced

Preface to the Fourth Edition

major rewriting as well as entirely new entries for the *Dictionary*: John Lennard wrote 'Rhyme', 'Punctuation' and 'Crime fiction'; Clive Wilmer wrote 'Verse novel', 'Dramatic monologue', 'Sonnet cycle', and a number of shorter entries; and Anne Henry wrote 'Ellipsis'. I should like to record special thanks to Anna Cuddon, Charles' widow, for her constant encouragement; and to Clive Wilmer for his interest and enthusiasm for the *Dictionary*, both in its new form and over the long years of his friendship with Charles.

C. E. Preston
Sidney Sussex College Cambridge

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

As is usual in the making of anything, one of the main problems at the outset in compiling this dictionary was to decide what to put in and what to omit. In the first place, it is not easy to decide what a literary term really is, because, by most standards, it is a vague classification. Epic is one, hexameter is, and so is elegy. But are pornography, pattersong and apocrypha? In the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* the main definition of 'literary' runs thus: 'Of or pertaining to, or of the nature of, literature, polite learning, or books and written compositions; pertaining to that kind of written composition which has value on account of its qualities of form.' If we accept this as a working indication of what is meant by 'literary', then what is to be done about the terms (and there are many) used by printers and compositors? What about the language of grammarians and the proliferating terminology of linguisticians? Most or all of these are related, however tenuously in some cases, to the literary, and to literature. After a good deal of deliberation on these matters, I decided to be judiciously selective and include a few terms of printers, grammarians, philologists and linguisticians. So, for instance, I have included **quarto** and **folio** but left out **line-block** and **galley**. **Paragraph** and **loose** and **periodic sentence** are in; **supine** and **declension** are not. **Keneme** and **morpheme** are in; **diphthong** and **labial** are not.

Another poser was whether to include all literary terms from all or most languages and literatures and to provide illustrations and examples, but this would surely have seemed like assuming the function of the encyclopaedist, and greatly lengthened the book. In any case, some terms are so obscure (and rare) as to be of interest only to the specialist.

What I have endeavoured to do, then, is to provide a serviceable and fairly comprehensive dictionary of those literary terms which are in regular use in the world today; terms in which intelligent people may be expected to have some interest and about which they may wish to find out something more. If by any chance they do not know (or have forgotten) what a *haiku* is, or *verso tronco*, or how blue-stockings came to be so named, then I hope that this dictionary will provide them with the basic information.

I say 'fairly comprehensive' because any work of orismology is bound to be limited by the author's reading and knowledge. No man or woman can be

expected to have read even a title of everything. I am familiar with Classical, European, Slavonic and Near Eastern literatures and have some knowledge of the literatures of North America and of Commonwealth nations. But my knowledge of Oriental literatures and those of Spanish America and South America is limited. There are, therefore, inevitably, considerable gaps.

Most of the terms are drawn from Greek, Latin, English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Arabic, Japanese, Old French, Old Provençal and Old Norse. A few are Serbian, Chinese, Persian, Turkish, Welsh or Korean.

Twelve main categories can be distinguished at the outset, as follows:

1. Technical terms (e.g. iamb, pentameter, metonymy, *ottava rima*).
2. Forms (e.g. sonnet, *villanelle*, limerick, *tanka*, clerihew).
3. Genres or kinds (e.g. pastoral, elegy, *fabliau*, *Märchen*, *conte*).
4. Technicalities (e.g. pivot word, tenor and vehicle, communication heresy, aesthetic distance).
5. Groups, schools and movements (e.g. Pléiade, Parnassians, Pre-Raphaelites, School of Spenser).
6. Well-known phrases (e.g. willing suspension of disbelief, negative capability, *discordia concors*, *in medias res*, *quod semper quod ubique*).
7. -isms (e.g. realism, primitivism, Platonism, plagiarism, structuralism, orientalism).
8. Motifs or themes (e.g. *ubi sunt*, *carpe diem*, Faust-theme, *leitmotif*).
9. Personalities (e.g. *scop*, *jongleur*, villain, *gracioso*, *guslar*).
10. Modes, attitudes and styles (e.g. *dolce stil nuovo*, irony, Marinism, grotesque, sentimental comedy).
11. Objects/artefacts (e.g. *coranto*, holograph, manuscript, gazette, buskin, book).
12. Concepts (e.g. sincerity, the sublime, concrete universal, noble savage, decorum).

These twelve categories account for a fair proportion of literary terms but there are scores which do not belong to any particular family or phylum, and any kind of taxonomical approach soon breaks down as one begins to classify. The following haphazard list suggests the difficulty of satisfactory division: abstract, *belles lettres*, brief, censorship, forgery, Freytag's pyramid, *hamartia*, inspiration, juvenilia, Grub Street, palindrome, quotation titles – to mention no others.

The plan of the dictionary is simple. It is alphabetical and runs from Abbey Theatre (though it would have been more suitable to start with *ab ovo*) to zeugma; and, so to speak, from epic to limerick. Each term is given a brief description or definition. In some cases, but by no means always, when I thought it might be helpful and/or of interest, I give some brief etymology of the term. This is particularly necessary when a term comes from one thing but now denotes another. For instance, the Spanish *estribillo*: the word signifies 'little stirrup', being the diminutive of *estribo* 'stirrup'. It here denotes a refrain or chorus (also a pet word or phrase) and is a theme, verse or stanza (of from

Preface to the Third Edition

two to four lines) of a *villancico*; and there is more to it than that. *Fit* (a division of a poem, a canto or stave) and *slang* are other interesting examples.

Many indications of origin are added in brackets. Where it was not possible to do this in a simple fashion I have shown the history at greater length within the definition of the term. Often this description explains the etymology and what the term denotes. For literary forms and genres I have provided a *résumé* of origins, history and development, and I have also provided details of notable examples and distinguished practitioners. I have not included bibliographies; to have done so would have been to lengthen the book by perhaps a third as much again. But, where appropriate, I have referred to the classic work on a particular theme or subject (e.g. C. S. Lewis's *The Allegory of Love*, A. O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being*, Maud Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*).

I would have liked to provide an example in full to illustrate every poetic form and genre (e.g. **rondeau**, **ode**, **elegy**, **lyric**), but this was not feasible either. I would also have liked to include a quotation for every kind of metrical scheme, but this again would have expanded the book inordinately. It would have entailed quoting in at least sixteen different languages and this would have required translation in many instances. Moreover, it would have involved using seven alphabets (Greek, Japanese, Hebrew, Arabic, Cyrillic, Sanskrit and Chinese) in addition to the Roman. Thus, in the interests of simplicity and brevity, I have settled, whenever possible, for a quotation in English verse.

Apropos versification I am obliged to mention the matter of terms used in Classical prosody. Miscellaneous hierophants have pointed out that Classical prosody, its systems and classifications, bear little relationship to English verse. This may well be so, but we have inherited the terms (as have other nations and languages); they have been in use for some hundreds of years; and it will be found that the vast majority of poets have a very thorough knowledge and understanding of them. Moreover, if in doubt about their utility, one might ask: is it easier to say (or write) 'an iambic pentameter', or 'a line of verse consisting of five feet with a rising rhythm in which the first syllable of each foot is unstressed and the second stressed'? The Greeks in fact *did* have a word for almost everything and we have inherited these terms whether we like them or not. And it seems to me much simpler to understand and use them rather than to pretend they do not exist, or find verbose alternatives.

Some entries were peculiarly difficult to condense, and none more so than **novel**. The chief problem here was what to include out of the thousands of possible examples. In the end I decided to go by that principle which guided me throughout the making of the dictionary and to include only those writers whose books I am familiar with and which have seemed to me to be of particular merit. Naturally enough, the selection must often coincide with what, in all probability, most other people would choose. Some novelists have to go in whether you like them or not because the general consensus over the years has confirmed that their novels are outstanding or at any rate of notable quality. On the whole, as far as the novel is concerned, I have mentioned most of those who I believe are major novelists, and I have provided a selection of minor novelists.

Inevitably, the treatment of the novel (like the treatment of travel books, short stories, detective stories, spy, ghost and horror stories) has involved long lists.

I have some misgivings about the lists but I have kept them fairly detailed in order to be fair, as it were, and also in the hope that the browser or reader may encounter things that they have not met before or which they have forgotten existed. For instance, the works of some authors of distinction have, unhappily, sunk leaving few traces. A mention of their neglected books may help to revive interest.

With regard to works of fiction in general, I would have liked to include more evaluative comments, however brief, but to have done this would have been to double or even triple the length of the entries.

As for dates – these, as we all know, can become boring. On the other hand, their absence can be frustrating. Accordingly, I have attempted a compromise. It seemed otiose to put in the dates of every author each time I referred to him or her, especially the famous. There are, for instance, many references to Aristotle, Plato, Horace, Dante, Chaucer, Sir Philip Sidney, Shakespeare, Molière, Dryden, Pope, Goethe, Keats, Thomas Mann, James Joyce, W. B. Yeats and T. S. Eliot – to cite only a handful. When referring to the famous I assume that the reader is familiar with the approximate period in which they flourished. When referring to the not-so-famous, but, nonetheless, important (e.g. Archilochus, Lucian, Cavalcanti, Dunbar, Clément Marot, Thomas Campion, Tieck, Lady Winchilsea, James Sheridan Knowles, Théophile Gautier, Queiros) I have, in many instances, included some indication of their dates. In any event it is clear as a rule when they lived because I refer to the century, or I give the dates of their works whenever it is helpful or necessary to do so. The dates given refer, unless otherwise indicated in the text, to the first performance of plays, the first publication in one volume of prose works, and the first collected publication of poems. I diverge from this system only where it might be misleading. I have cited in English those titles of works which are less familiar in their original form to an English-speaking reader. The dates given in such cases refer to the first publication in the original language.

The whole dictionary is cross-referenced so that the user can move easily from one entry to another. The references are the plumbing and wiring of the book. If, for example, you look up **ballad** you will be referred to REFRAIN, ORAL TRADITION, HOMERIC EPITHET, KENNING, INCREMENTAL REPETITION, NARODNE PESME, BROADSIDE, FOLKSONG, LAY and NARRATIVE VERSE.

In the twenty years since this book was first published a great deal has happened in the world of literature. Thousands of novels have been published in many languages, thousands of short stories, poems, biographies and autobiographies; several hundred new plays have been produced – and so on. Since the early 1970s the full impact of structuralist theory has been experienced and has been succeeded or added to by poststructuralism, of which deconstruction is a vital part. Feminist criticism has burgeoned; so, to a lesser extent, have Marxist criticism and psychoanalytic and Freudian criticism. Reader-response and reception theories have developed. Such concepts as narratology and grammatology have become established. Indeed, literary theory has proliferated,

Preface to the Third Edition

sometimes counter-productively in so far as there are commentaries about commentaries about commentaries so that we approach that state of affairs so vividly predicted by E. M. Forster in his admonitory short story *The Machine Stops*. A select bibliography of books, essays and miscellaneous discourses concerned with literary theory during the last fifteen to twenty years (in the major languages of the world) may run to five hundred or more entries.

With the theories and the theories about theories have come a considerable number of what might be called 'technical terms' (e.g. *aporia*, *différance*, dissemination, *écriture féminine*, indeterminacy, intertextuality, logocentrism, metalanguage, phallogocentrism, *plaisir/jouissance*, readerly/writerly, *supplément*, *qq.v.*).

In this revised and expanded edition I have attempted a *résumé* and clarification of these matters which, very often, are extremely complex and not infrequently abstruse to the point of being arcane: to such an extent, in fact, that sometimes one is reminded of 'the lone scholars' sniping at each other from the walls of learned periodicals.

However, the *raison d'être* of a dictionary is, I take it, to provide information – be it commonplace or recondite. A decent dictionary of geography, for instance, will tell us what exfoliation, jungle and *Karst* are. It should also inform us about katabatic winds, *poljes* and diastrophism. So, in this edition, in response to quite a large number of letters (one from a man who requested a list of *all* the rare technical terms left out of earlier editions) I have included a good many esoteric technical terms and semitechnical terms, plus information about important theatres and theatrical companies which have had a potent influence in the world of drama.

I have also devoted a good deal of space to some of the more 'popular' forms or modes. In earlier editions there were no entries for **ghost story** or **horror story**. In view of the wide and apparently increasing interest in these I have now included quite long accounts. The original entry for **detective story** was totally inadequate and that has been much expanded. I have also expanded the entries on, for example, **gothic novel**, **limerick**, **nonsense**, **spy story** and **thriller**, and included entries for, among other things, **ensorship**, **literary forgery**, **literary prizes**, **police procedural**, **roman policier** and **Western**.

I should also add that, as this is a personal book, I have, occasionally, spread myself with entries on subjects of particular interest to me; for example, conceit, *danse macabre*, the limerick, nonsense, primitivism, revenge tragedy and table talk – to name but a few. But every author and reader has his or her favourite themes and subjects. It is probable that, from time to time, I have allowed my opinions (and perhaps some prejudices) an easy rein; but when one has read many thousands of volumes of verse, plays and fiction, essays, discourses, sermons, courtesy books, encyclopaedias, *novelle*, *Festschriften*, tracts and interpretations (and what not?) perhaps one is entitled to ventilate a few opinions. They are unlikely, I feel, to do any harm in such circumstances, and they may have the beneficial effect of provoking argument, comment or disagreement.

I have also taken the liberty of contributing a few items of my own: firstly, a double-dactyl verse – under that heading; secondly an example of synthetic

rhyme – under that heading; and thirdly, three neologisms – namely *birocrat*, *sufferingette* and *verbocrap* (all under **neologism**). At any rate, I put in a modest claim for having devised these ghost-words.

I wrote above that this is a ‘personal’ book, but, naturally, in the course of making it, I have consulted a number of friends and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking them for giving me the benefit of their knowledge and advice. They are: Mrs Heywood, Margaret J. Miller, Mr John Basing, Dr Derek Brewer, Mr Paul Craddock, Mr Vincent Cronin, Professor Ian Jack, Mr Kevin Jackson, Dr Harry Judge, Mr Paul Moreland, Mr T. R. Salmon, Mr Philip Warnett, Professor and Mrs Singmaster, Mr and Mrs McNally, Dr David Stockton, Mr Hardcastle, Mr Clive Wilmer, Mr Michael Charlesworth, Mr Alastair Ogilvie, Mr Colin Chambers, Mr Steve Gooch, Mr Andrew Brown, Mr Stuart Thomson, Mr Harry Jackson, Mr Barry Duesbury and Mr Kenneth Lowes.

I remain much indebted to my original editors in the Language Library Series, the late Professor Simeon Potter and the late Eric Partridge. Professor Potter showed much patience and gave me the unstinting help of his wide learning and experience; Eric Partridge, often by means of his famous postcards, sustained my sometimes flagging spirits with help, praise and encouragement.

I am also much indebted to Mr Martin Wright who devoted many hours to checking the manuscript of this edition and to making suggestions for improving it, and to Mr Michael Rossington who also gave much time and thought to many entries. Finally, my thanks also to my current editors for their help: Mr Alyn Shipton, Mr Philip Cartwright, Miss Helen Jeffrey and Miss Caroline Richmond.

J. A. Cuddon

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank the following for the benefit of their expertise and advice during the preparation of this fifth edition: David Lyle Jeffrey, David Rabeeya, Gloria Mazziotti, Lewis Eron, Carol Singley, Laurie Bernstein, Ed Bryant, William Fitzgerald and J. T. Barbarese. I would especially like to thank the associate editors of this volume, Matthew Birchwood, Vedrana Velickovic, Martin Dines and Sharyn Fiske, for their thorough, intelligent and timely work. Finally, it has been a pleasure, as always, to work with Emma Bennett and her colleagues at Wiley-Blackwell, including Ben Thatcher, Bridget Jennings, and copy-editor Ann Bone.

M. A. R. Habib

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A	Arabic
abbrev.	abbreviation, -ated
AL	Anglo-Latin
AN	Anglo-Norman
Ar	Armenian
c.	century, or centuries
c.	<i>circa</i> (as in c. 1150, meaning the approximate date)
cf.	<i>confer</i> 'compare'
Ch	Chinese
Du	Dutch
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> 'for example'
Eng	English
<i>et al.</i>	<i>et alii</i> 'and others'
F	French
fl.	<i>floruit</i> 'he flourished'
G	German
Gk	Greek
Heb	Hebrew
HG	High German
i.e.	<i>id est</i> 'that is'
It	Italian
J	Japanese
K	Korean
KJV	King James Version of the Bible
L	Latin
LDu	Low Dutch
LG	Low German
LL	Late Latin
MDu	Middle Dutch
ME	Middle English
MedL	Medieval Latin
MHG	Middle High German

List of Abbreviations

MLG	Middle Low German
ModL	Modern Latin
NGk	Neo-Greek
NT	New Testament
OE	Old English
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
OF	Old French
OHG	Old High German
ON	Old Norse
OT	Old Testament
P	Persian
Pg	Portuguese
pl.	plural
Pr	Provençal
Pt	Part
publ.	published
<i>qq.v.</i>	<i>quae vide</i> 'which see' (pl.)
<i>q.v.</i>	<i>quod vide</i> 'which see' (sing.)
R	Russian
S	Serbian
sing.	singular
Skt	Sanskrit
Sp	Spanish
Sw	Swedish
T	Turkish
trans.	translation, -ated
viz.	<i>videlicet</i> 'namely'
W	Welsh

A

Abbey Theatre Celebrated Dublin home of the Irish dramatic movement founded in 1899 by W. B. Yeats, Augusta Gregory and Edward Martyn, first incarnated as the Irish Literary Theatre and later the Irish National Theatre Society. Other early important contributors were two local acting brothers, William and Frank Fay, the playwright-director John Synge and wealthy tea heiress Annie Horniman whose patronage allowed for the acquisition of the Abbey Street site, incorporating the old city morgue. The theatre first opened in 1904.

According to its published manifesto, the movement aimed ‘to bring upon the stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland’ and to ‘show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and easy sentiment, but the home of an ancient idealism’. This early synthesis of national ideological and cultural aims would characterize the spirit of the Abbey Theatre throughout the turbulent century to come. On its opening night Synge’s *Playboy of the Western World* (1907) was greeted with riots on account of its allegedly immoral and unpatriotic portrayal of Irish women. Periodically attracting popular acclaim and criticism in equal measure, in its early years the Abbey continued to commission and produce the work of important playwrights, including Padraic Colum, George Bernard Shaw and Lennox Robinson.

The fortunes of the theatre declined following Horniman’s financial withdrawal from the enterprise in 1909, but were partly relieved through three famous plays by Sean O’Casey. Premiering in 1923 at the height of the Irish Civil War, *Shadow of a Gunman* was followed by *Juno and the Paycock* (1924) and *The Plough and the Stars* (1926). The last of these was once again the cause of civil disorder, this time in reaction to O’Casey’s pacifist critique of the nationalist struggle. In 1925, the theatre received a grant from the Irish government and became the first state-supported theatre in the English-speaking world.

In the period following Yeats's death in 1939, the theatre lapsed into relative decline with few original productions to rival the ground-breaking works of its earlier years. Following a fire in July 1951, the company was forced to relocate to the old Queen's Theatre. Exiled from its Abbey street location for fifteen years, it was not until the 1960s with the rebuilding of a second theatre on the original site that the playhouse reinvoked its experimental heritage, showcasing the work of playwrights such as Hugh Leonard, Brian Friel and Tom Murphy. More recently, plans were announced to move and expand this iconic theatre once again.

abecedarius A type of ACROSTIC (*q.v.*) following an alphabetical pattern.

Abenteuerroman (G 'adventure novel') A form of fiction related to the picaresque novel in which the hero conventionally undergoes a series of testing and episodic adventures, often involving travel to colourful and exotic locations. The tradition has its roots in medieval verse tales such as *Herzog Ernst*, *König Rother* and *Salman und Morolf* and is discernible in Arthurian romance cycles. An influential example, the German chapbook *Volksbuch Fortunatus* (1509), centring upon a hero whose wanderings are funded by a magically inexhaustible purse, found its way into several European versions, including Thomas Dekker's *Old Fortunatus* (1600). The so-called *Simplicianische Schriften* series of novels by Johann Grimmelhausen is often cited as the apogee of the tradition, in particular *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus* (1609). The popularity of the form continued into the late 17th and 18th c. in the writings of Johann Beer (1655–1700) and *Die Insel Felsenburg* (1731–43) by Johann Schnabel. Thomas Mann's *Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull* (partly published in 1922) is a conscious variation on this theme, relating the unlikely escapades of a roguish anti-hero. *See also* GOTHIC NOVEL/FICTION; PICAESQUE NOVEL; ROBINSONADE; VOLKSBUCH.

abjection A psychoanalytic concept developed by Julia Kristeva in *Powers of Horror* (1980) to explain the formation and maintenance of subjectivity. For Kristeva, subject formation – that is, the development of a discrete 'I' – occurs in early infancy, prior even to Lacan's 'mirror stage'. The infant creates borders between the 'I' and other by abjecting – violently throwing out, jettisoning – that which seems improper; Kristeva's rather visceral examples include sour milk, excrement and an all-engulfing mother. Despite being radically excluded, that which is abjected continues to linger at the fringes of consciousness. Indeed, while utterly repulsive, because it threatens our sense of ourselves as separate and autonomous beings, the abject is at the same time deeply alluring, since it invokes a comforting state of unity with the maternal. Thus the abject exists as a constant companion through life, always challenging – and requiring maintenance of – the tenuous borders of selfhood. Kristeva argues that much literary production, from the Old Testament, with its insistence on purification, to Céline's anti-Semitic writings, relates this perpetually anguished struggle. Abjection has since become a key concept in the study of Gothic literature. The horror or fascination associated with

threshold states, for example between life and death, or between the human and the non-human, has similarly been understood to be a consequence of the essentially insecure nature of selfhood. *See also* GOTHIC NOVEL/FICTION; PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM.

abolitionist literature The term ‘abolitionist’ refers to the 18th and 19th c. black British, African-American, and white European and American men and women who campaigned for the abolition of slavery in the British Empire and North America. The origins of abolitionist literature can be found in the long history of slave rebellions, particularly in the Caribbean colonies in the 17th and 18th c. Such literature takes a moral stand against slavery, exposes the horrors of the slave trade and the inhumanity of slavery, and calls for the abolition of this institution. It often uses sentimental and biblical rhetoric to attract sympathy for the abolitionist cause. It comprises miscellaneous writings and documents, including poetry, novels, songs, pamphlets, speeches, court rulings, anti-slavery periodicals and slave narratives (*q.v.*). Slave narratives – the autobiographical accounts of former and runaway slaves – were a particularly popular genre in the antebellum period and had a considerable impact on the struggle to end slavery in America.

Abolitionist literature comprises a diverse body of writing and material culture, ranging, for example, from the famous inscription ‘Am I Not a Man and a Brother?’ (1787) on Josiah Wedgwood’s medallions, which were distributed during the 18th c. anti-slavery campaign in Britain, to the speech ‘Ain’t I a Woman?’ by the African-American former slave and women’s rights activist Sojourner Truth (1797–1883). Well-known instances in 18th c. English Literature include slave narratives by early black British writers and abolitionists such as Ignatius Sancho, Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cugoana, political writings and speeches by the white abolitionists such as James Ramsey, Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce, and anti-slavery writings by the Quakers. Their joint efforts helped end the British slave trade in 1807 and slavery in British colonies in 1833. American abolitionist literature is equally diverse. It includes the writings of the American Anti-Slavery Society (1833–70), the narratives by former slaves and abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845) and Harriet Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1863), and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s best-selling sentimental novel (*q.v.*) *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852). By writing about the harsh reality and persistence of slavery, many of these authors exposed the inherent flaws in the idea of ‘universal rights’ guaranteed by the US Declaration of Independence. Together, these writings sparked debates about the moral, political and economic nature of slavery in America, which was one of the key factors leading to the Civil War (1861–5) and the abolition of slavery in 1865. *See also* SENTIMENTAL NOVEL.

ab ovo (L ‘from the egg’) This term may refer to a story which starts from the beginning of the events it narrates, as opposed to one which starts in the middle – *in medias res* (*q.v.*). Horace used the expression in *Ars Poetica*.

abridged edition An abbreviated or condensed version of a work. Abridgement may be done in order to save space or to cut out passages which are thought unsuitable for some sections of the reading public. School editions of Shakespeare were often abridged (and still are occasionally) lest the sensibilities of adolescents be offended. *See also* BOWDLERIZE.

absence/presence Terms or concepts given a particular meaning by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930–2004). Speech and the spoken word imply the immediate presence of somebody: a speaker, orator, actor or politician, for example. Writing does not require the writer's presence. Thus, the originator of the word is absent.

absolutism The principle or doctrine that there are immutable standards by which a work of art may be judged. The absolutist contends that certain values are basic and inviolable. *See* RELATIVISM.

abstract (a) A summary of any piece of written work, especially a long poem, prose narrative, proposal, conference proceeding, article or dissertation; (b) not concrete but rather dealing with the conceptual or general. In the history of criticism, the perceived abstractness or concreteness of the prevailing imagery of a given work has often been taken as a measure of literary worth. Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* (1595) praised the poet's unique ability to combine the 'general notion with the particular example' (as opposed to the philosopher, who deals with abstractions, or the historian, who is necessarily mired in the particular and often accidental details of situations). Similar positions (though argued very differently) were advanced by many thinkers, including Kant and Hegel, as well as by Romantics such as Wordsworth and Coleridge who professed a preference for a fusion of the abstract and concrete over the conventionalized abstractions of 18th c. neoclassicism. Modernist poetry, influenced by the French symbolists, exhibited a preoccupation with 'the dry hardness' of poetic language (in T. E. Hulme's words), especially in the literary criticism and poetic practice of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot. *See also* ABSTRACT POEMS; IMAGISTS; NEOCLASSICISM.

abstract poem More generally known as 'Sound Poetry', a form of verse which depends primarily upon patterns of sound rather than conventional syntactic or grammatical structures to constitute meaning. Edith Sitwell coined the term 'abstract poem' to describe her collection *Façade* (1950), inviting a comparison with the revolutions of abstract art. Gerard Manley Hopkins also made daring use of onomatopoeic and melopoeic devices; so did the French poet Rimbaud. Among writers using English, Roy Campbell (1901–57) was perhaps the most outstanding and prolific experimenter. This example is taken from his series *Mithraic Frieze*, published in *Mithraic Emblems*:

Of seven hues in white elision,
the radii of your silver gyre,
are the seven swords of vision
that spoked the prophets' flaming tyre;

their sistered stridencies ignite
 the spectrum of the poets' lyre
 whose unison becomes a white
 revolving disc of stainless fire . . .

abusio The misapplication of a word (L, from rhetoric). *See* CATACHRESIS.

academic Four basic meanings may be distinguished: (a) that which belongs to the school of thought of Plato – from academy (*q.v.*); (b) a person or work that is scholarly and erudite; (c) concerned with the rules of composition rather than with the result of the act of creation; (d) of little importance or note. In the second and fourth senses the word is often used pejoratively.

academic drama A dramatic institution of the late 15th and early 16th c. in England, in which plays written by schoolmasters or other scholars were performed by students at schools, universities or Inns of Court. Translations of Roman playwrights such as Terence and Plautus were popular and, along with original dramatic compositions in Latin, were performed as part of the curriculum. Following a pedagogical ideal influenced by European humanism, imitations of these classical models also appeared in English from the mid 16th c., with the comedy *Ralph Roister Doister* (c. 1552) by the Westminster schoolmaster Nicholas Udall surviving as an early example. Relatively neglected in comparison to the public theatres of the age, academic drama also constituted an important link between crown and academe, with Elizabeth both receiving plays at court and commissioning their performance as royal entertainment during state visits to the universities. *See also* SCHOOL DRAMA.

academy The word is derived from the name of a park near Athens where Plato's Academy was situated from 387 BC to AD 529. The name was adopted in Italy by scholars during the Renaissance and now usually applies to some sort of institution devoted to learning, even if it be only the trade of war – as at the Royal Military Academy. There are a large number of academies scattered round the world. Most of them are concerned with research and culture and have limited memberships. Some are very exclusive. Probably the most famous is the Académie Française, founded by Richelieu in 1635. This is primarily a literary academy, one of whose main tasks is the compilation and revision of a dictionary of the French language. The British Academy was founded in 1902 for the promotion of moral and political sciences. The exclusiveness of many academies may account for the pejorative use of the word 'academic'. The Académie Française, for instance, has been described as the 'hôtel des invalides de la littérature'. The pejorative use may equally derive from the anti-intellectualism of modern culture. *See also* ACADEMIC.

acatalectic (Gk 'not lacking a syllable in the last foot') It denotes, therefore, a metrical line which is complete. If a line lacks one or more unaccented syllables, it is truncated (*see* CATALEXIS). If a line contains an extra syllable it is

accelerated rhyme

then hypercatalectic (or hypermetrical, redundant or extrametrical). In the following stanza from William Blake's *Art and Artists* the first line is catalectic, the third acatalectic, and the fourth hypercatalectic:

When S^r Joshua Reynolds died
All Nature was degraded;
The King dropp'd a tear into the Queen's Ear,
And all his Pictures Faded.

See BRACHYCATALECTIC; CATALEXIS; DICATALECTIC.

accelerated rhyme A term referring to the decreased spacing of rhymes. As with delayed rhymes, accelerated rhymes may be used to modify an established pattern. See RHYME.

accent The emphasis or stress (*q.v.*) placed on a syllable, especially in a line of verse. It is a matter of vocal emphasis. Where the accent comes will depend on how the reader wishes to render the sense. In the following lines the metrical stress is fairly clear, but the accents can be varied:

All human things are subject to decay,
And, when Fate summons, Monarchs must obey.

The variables are 'all', 'human', 'and', 'when', 'Fate', 'Monarchs', 'must', and 'obey'. At least half a dozen emphases are possible. Obviously, where the metrical scheme is very strict, then accent variation is limited. In blank verse (*q.v.*), however, many subtleties of accent are possible. See BEAT; HOVERING ACCENT; ICTUS; LEVEL STRESS; LOGICAL STRESS; QUANTITY.

accentual verse Verse in which the lines are defined by the number of stressed syllables in each line, rather than the number of syllables taken altogether. Anglo-Saxon poetry is accentual in this sense. Perhaps the most renowned example of Old English accentual poetry is *Beowulf*. Although syllabic verse (*q.v.*) became the favoured form for much English poetry from the late Middle Ages on, the meter survived in popular forms such as ballads and nursery rhymes. In the early 20th c., the possibilities of accentual verse were brought to the attention of a number of modernist poets following the lead of Gerard Manley Hopkins, who coined the term 'sprung rhythm' (*q.v.*) for his own version of accentual verse. See also ALLITERATIVE VERSE; METER; SPRUNG RHYTHM; SYLLABIC VERSE.

accidence That branch of grammar which deals with 'accidents'; that is, the inflexions or the variable endings of words.

acclamatio An expression of enthusiastic public approval (or disapproval) deriving from the popular cries of the Roman Republic.

acephalous (Gk 'headless') A metrical line whose first syllable, according to strict meter, is wanting. An iambic line with a monosyllabic first foot would be acephalous.

acervatio (L ‘heaping together’) A term used by the Roman rhetorician Quintilian to describe the compounding of various ideas and clauses. *See also* POLYSYNDETON.

acmeism The Acmeists were a group or school of Russian poets, who, early in the 20th c., began a new anti-symbolist movement. Much of their work and their theories were published in the magazine *Apollon*. They were in favour of an Apollonian (*q.v.*) lucidity and definiteness and strove for texture (*q.v.*) in their verse. The movement did not last very long (it seems to have faded out by c. 1920) but it included some distinguished poets: principally, Nikolai Gumilyev (1886–1921), Osip Mandelstam (1891–1940?) and Anna Akhmatova (1889–1967), who is still highly regarded as a writer of lyric (*q.v.*) poems.

acroama (Gk ‘something heard’) Two meanings may be distinguished; (a) a dramatic entertainment or a recital, during a meal or on some such occasion; (b) a lecture to the initiated; for instance, a discourse given by a *guru*, professor or comparable Gamaliel.

acronym (Gk *acron*, ‘tip, end’ + *onyma*, ‘name’) A word formed from or based on the initial letters or syllables of other words. For example: ENSA (*Entertainments National Services Association*); NAAFI (*Navy, Army and Airforce Institute*); NATO (*North Atlantic Treaty Organization*); NIMBY (*Not In My Back Yard*); OPEC (*Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries*); PEN (*Poets, Playwrights, Editors, Essayists and Novelists*); RADAR (*Radio Detection and Ranging*). The economy of characters offered by acronymic phrasing has made them a convention of email, mobile phone texting and new communications media generally. As well as the ubiquitous ‘asap’ (‘as soon as possible’), common informal shorthands include ‘imho’ (in my humble/honest opinion) and ‘lol’ (‘laughing out loud’), among many others.

acrostic Apart from puzzles in newspapers and magazines the commonest kind of acrostic is a poem in which the initial letters of each line make a word or words when read downwards. An acrostic might also use the middle (mesostich) or final (telestich) letter of each line. In prose the first letter of each paragraph or sentence might make up a word.

The acrostic may have been first used as a kind of mnemonic device to aid oral transmission. In the Old Testament most of the acrostics belong to the alphabetical or abecedarian kind. The forming of words from the initials of words is also a form of acrostic. Chaucer used a simple acrostic device in *ABC*, a twenty-four stanza poem in which the first letter of the first word in each stanza is the appropriate letter of the alphabet, from A to Z. Some dramatists have put the titles of their plays in acrostic verses which give the argument (*q.v.*) of the play. A well-known instance is Ben Jonson’s *Argument* prefacing *The Alchemist*.

acryology

A famous example of an ‘all round’ acrostic, which is a form of palindrome (*q.v.*), is the Cirencester word square, Roman in origin:

R O T A S
O P E R A
T E N E T
A R E P O
S A T O R

There has been much learned debate as to the possible meanings of this acrostic, which is known in a second form from an Egyptian papyrus of the late 4th or early 5th c. AD, thus:

S A T O R
A R E P O
T E N E T
O P E R A
R O T A S

Various permutations suggest that one meaning may be: ‘the sower Arepo holds the wheels carefully’.

This, like many acrostics, may have magic and/or religious significance. In Ethiopia in the 6th c. the five words, corrupted to Sador, Alador, Danet, Adera and Rodas, were used as the names of the five nails of Christ’s Cross.

The word square is known to have been used in France as a form of charm (*q.v.*); a citizen of Lyon was cured of madness by eating three crusts of bread (each inscribed with the square) while making five recitations of the Pater Noster in remembrance of the five wounds of Christ and the five nails. In the 19th c. in South America it was used as a charm against snake bites and also to aid childbirth. *See also* LOGOGRIPH.

acryology Incorrectly used or obsolete diction. *See* EUPHEMISM.

act A major division in a play. Each act may have one or more scenes. Greek plays were performed as continuous wholes, with interpolated comment from the Chorus (*q.v.*). Horace appears to have been the first to insist on a five-act structure. At some stage during the Renaissance the use of five acts became standard practice among French dramatists. Plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries have natural breaks which can be taken as act divisions. In shaping their plays Elizabethan dramatists were influenced by Roman models (e.g. Seneca). The act divisions were marked as such by later editors. Ben Jonson was largely responsible for introducing the five-act structure in England. From the second half of the 17th c. the vast majority of plays were in five acts. The introduction of the proscenium and the curtain (unknown in the Elizabethan theatre) during the Restoration period (*q.v.*) had some influence on structure. In the Restoration period the curtain rose at the end of the prologue (which was spoken on the forestage) and stayed

out of sight until the end of the play. By c. 1750 the curtain was dropped regularly to mark the end of an act. Ibsen (1828–1906) cut the number of acts to four. Dramatists like Chekhov (1860–1904) and Pirandello (1867–1936) also used four. Since early in the 20th c. most playwrights have preferred the three-act form, though the two-act play is not uncommon. In modern productions, especially in the cases of five- and four-act plays, there is only one curtain-drop and interval. Thus the first three or two acts are run together without a break. Many modern plays are written and presented in a sequence of scenes. Pirandello, Shaw, Brecht and Beckett, among others, have been responsible for an increased flexibility. T. W. Baldwin gives an illuminating account of Elizabethan methods in *Shakespeare's Five-Act Structure* (1947). See SCENE.

actant In narratology (*q.v.*), a term used by A. J. Greimas to describe the paired roles he argued as common to all stories: subject/object, sender/receiver, helper/opponent. See NARRATOLOGY.

action Two basic meanings may be distinguished: (a) the main story (in cinematic jargon ‘story-line’) of a play, novel, short story, narrative poem, etc.; (b) the main series of events that together constitute the plot (*q.v.*). Action is fundamental to drama, and implies motion forward. Much action is achieved without physical movement on stage, or even without anything being said. An essential part of action is the unfolding of character and plot. See CONFLICT.

activism At the end of the First World War activism (in German *Aktivismus*) denoted active political commitment or engagement among and by intellectuals. Historically it is closely associated with expressionism (*q.v.*), and as far as drama was concerned it required realistic solutions to social problems. It is particularly associated with Kurt Hiller, who organized the Neuer Club for expressionist poets, and with the magazine *Aktion*, founded in 1911 by Franz Pfempfert. Now, activism is predominantly a political term.

actual reader In reader-response theory (*q.v.*), the individual reader who brings his or her personal experience to a text and who combines with the implied reader (*q.v.*) to construct the meaning of a given text. See IMPLIED READER/ACTUAL READER.

adage A maxim or proverb (*qq.v.*). A well-known collection of adages was made by Erasmus and published as *Adagia* (1500).

adaptation The process by which one narrative form or medium is converted into another, for example a novel to film, a stage play to screenplay, or a classical poem to graphic novel. Adaptation theory has recently sought to develop its purpose and methodology beyond the straightforward identification of how close a retelling might be to the original. The move away from so-called ‘fidelity’ criticism, with its implicit attendant critical judgement (the film is rarely deemed as ‘good as the book’), has opened up a theoretical debate

addendum

concerning the nature of appropriation, authorship and the canon. Prominent examples include 'reimaginings' of Shakespeare, with Baz Luhrmann's film resetting *Romeo and Juliet* at Verona Beach a much-discussed example, popular television adaptations of classics in Austen and Dickens, and fictionalized versions of documented political events such as the Watergate scandal in *Frost/Nixon* or the death of Princess Diana in the film *The Queen*.

addendum (L 'something to be added') An addition or an appendix to a book (pl. addenda).

Addisonian In the manner or style of Joseph Addison (1672–1719): equable, relaxed, good-humoured and urbane. Some would also add complacent. Addison is chiefly famous for his contributions to the periodical essay (*q.v.*).

address A statement or speech of some formality, which may be delivered or written. It also denotes the kind of audience or reader an author intends. He may be self-communing or addressing a single person or a group of people.

adjunctio See ZEUGMA.

adnominatio See POLYPTOTON.

adonic A line consisting of a dactyl (*q.v.*) followed by a spondee (*q.v.*). The fourth and last line of the Sapphic (*q.v.*) are usually adonic.

adversaria (L *adversaria scripta*, 'things written on the side') Miscellaneous collections of notes. The kind of things that most writers accumulate in a notebook, day book, journal or diary. See ANNOTATION; COMMONPLACE BOOK; DIARY AND JOURNAL.

adynaton (Gk 'not possible') A form of hyperbole (*q.v.*) which involves the magnification of an event by reference to the impossible. There are famous examples in Marvell's poem *To His Coy Mistress* and his *The Definition of Love*, which begins:

My Love is of a birth as rare
As 'tis for object strange and high:
It was begotten by despair
Upon Impossibility.

Another famous example is Christ's statement: 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God' (Matthew 19: 24, KJV).

ae freislighe In Irish prosody (*q.v.*), a quatrain (*q.v.*) of seven-syllable lines, rhyming abab. The poem should end with the same first syllable, line or word with which it begins.

Aeolic The name derives from the Greek dialect which Alcaeus and Sappho used for their poetry. Thus it applies to particular meters in which dactyls