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Merriam-
Webster's

Reader's HANDBOOK



YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE
TO LITERARY TERMS

Merriam-Webster's
Reader's
Handbook



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Preface

Merriam-Webster's Reader's Handbook is a reference work for people with an interest in the language of literature. Among its entries, one finds definitions for literary terms, literary styles and movements, and literary prizes and journals. Much of the content of the book is drawn from *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature*, a reference work based both on the lexical resources of Merriam-Webster and the detailed information offered by Encyclopædia Britannica. Because the *Handbook* is more narrowly focused, many of its entries have been expanded from those in the *Encyclopedia of Literature*, offering additional discussion not found in the larger book. New relevant entries also appear. Thus, the *Handbook* should serve as a worthy guide to readers, whether they be serious students or curious browsers.

Merriam-Webster's Reader's Handbook is a joint effort of Merriam-Webster, Inc., and Encyclopædia Britannica. At Merriam-Webster, the editors were assisted in producing this volume by James L. Rader, who prepared the etymologies; Brian M. Seitsema, who prepared the pronunciations; Maria A. Sansalone, Adrienne M. Scholz, and Donna L. Rickerby, who provided the cross-reference and proofreading; Peter D. Haraty and Amy West who compiled index material, and Robert D. Copeland, who managed the project through editorial and typesetting stages. Data entry was performed by Mary M. Dunn under the supervision of Veronica P. McLymont. From Encyclopædia Britannica, the editors were assisted by Kathleen Kuiper, who served as editor of the *Encyclopedia of Literature* and provided much knowledgeable and timely help in the planning of this project and during the course of the book's editing.

The plan for this book was conceived by John M. Morse, Publisher of Merriam-Webster, Inc., who himself offered invaluable help throughout the editing process.

Kathleen M. Doherty
Mary W. Cornog
Editors

Explanatory Notes

Entry Names.

Non-English Language names. In virtually all cases, vernacular usage has governed spelling. For languages not written in the Roman alphabet, the following conventions have been adopted:

Russian and other nonromanized languages have been transcribed using the systems found in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Chinese names are romanized and alphabetized under the Pinyin rather than the Wade-Giles system, but cross-references are provided in the Wade-Giles system.

Alphabetization.

Alphabetization is letter-by-letter, not word-by-word. Thus, **literaryism** falls between **literary criticism** and **Literary Research Association**.

If *The* appears initially at the entry for a periodical title, the entry is alphabetized at the next significant word. Thus the entry **Quarterly Review, The**.

Diacritical marks, marks of punctuation, and spaces within the boldface names are ignored.

Cross-references.

Cross-references are indicated by SMALL CAPITALS. In this book, they are employed chiefly to lead the reader to further information on his or her subject of immediate inquiry.

Dates in text.

In general, dates following the titles of works indicate the date of first publication. The date following mention of a foreign-language title is the year in which the book was first published in the original language. The dates following play titles should be assumed to refer to the dates of original publication unless otherwise indicated.

Translations in text.

For non-English-language works, the date of publication is usually followed by a translation (if the title is not an obvious cognate or a proper name). Translations that appear within quotation marks are approximate renderings, as *La divina commedia* ("The Divine Comedy"). Italicized titles within parentheses indicate the work has been published in English, as *Portrait d'un inconnu* (1948; *Portrait of a Man Unknown*).

Etymologies.

Etymologies in this book are meant to provide historical and philological background for the terminology of literary studies. This work provides etymologies for common nouns, such as names of genres, verse forms and movements, but not generally for proper nouns. Etymologies are also not provided for terms whose literary significance depends on a more general sense of a word (for example, **icon**), or for terms that are obviously compounds or derivatives of words or word-forming elements with unspecialized senses (for example, **flashback** and **naturalism**).

Ordinarily, etymologies are enclosed in square brackets and placed after the pronunciation and before the body of the entry. In some entries the origin of the word is discussed in the text, and there a bracketed etymology will be lacking unless it provides additional data. An asterisk placed before a word indicates that the form can be reconstructed but is not actually attested in writing. In general, intermediate languages, remoter ancestors, and the philological detail appropriate to a dictionary of etymology have been omitted in this book, unless such information is relevant to the literary use of a term.

Pronunciation.

This book provides pronunciation respellings for most entry words. The only entry words without respellings are familiar non-literary words, such as **black humor** or **automatic writing**. The pronunciation for these words may be found in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition*.

When two or more variant spellings of a name have the same pronunciation, the respelling is placed after the last spelling with that pronunciation:

baihua or **paihua** \ˈbī-ˈhwä\

Names and terms from English literature are transcribed in a composite dialect which approximates the speech of the majority of Americans. British names are shown with variants from the Received Pronunciation of British English where this dialect differs noticeably from American speech, as at **Bard of Avon**. Foreign language names are respelled in their native pronunciation and are generally rendered in the standard dialect of the language in question. A variant labeled *Angl* is added for names with familiar anglicizations, as at **Berliner Ensemble**, and for exceptionally difficult foreign names.

Pronunciation Symbols

ə	anoint, collide, data	œ	French <i>neuf</i> , German <i>Köpfe</i>
'ə, ə	cut, conundrum	œ̃	French <i>deux</i> , German <i>Löhne</i>
é	biologist, matches	oi	o yster, to y, fo il
a	rap , cat , sand , lamb	ór	co re, bo rn, oa r
ā	way , paid , late , eight	p	pet , tip , upper
ä	opt , cod , mach	r	rut , tar , error , cart
â	French <i>chat</i> , <i>table</i>	s	sink , bass , lasso
ar	air , care , laird	sh	shin , lash , pressure
au	out , loud , tout , cow	t	top , pat , later
b	bat , able , rib	th	third , bath , Kathy
b	Spanish <i>Hablar</i> , <i>Avila</i>	th	this , other , bathe
ch	chair , reach , catcher	ü	ooze , blue , noon
d	day , red , ladder	ù	wool , took , should
e	egg , bed , bet	ue	German <i>Bünde</i> , <i>füllen</i>
'ē, ē	eat , reed , fleet , pea	üē	German <i>kühl</i> , French <i>vue</i>
ē	penny , genie	v	veer , rove , ever
ei	Dutch <i>eieren</i> , <i>dijk</i>	w	well , awash
f	fine , chaff , office	y	youth , yet , lawyer
g	gate , rag , eagle	ʸ	shows palatalization of a preceding consonant, as in French <i>campagne</i> \kã ⁿ -'pãnʸ\
ġ	Spanish <i>lago</i>	z	zoo , haze , razor
h	hot , ahoy	zh	pleasure , decision
hr	Welsh <i>rhad</i> , Icelandic <i>hraun</i>	˘	indicates a consonant that is pronounced like \h\ with vibration of the vocal cords
hw	wheat , when	\ \	reversed virgules used to mark the beginning and end of a phonetic respelling
i	ill , hip , bid	'	mark preceding a syllable with primary stress: <i>boa</i> \bō-ə\
ī	aisle , fry , white , wide	˘	mark preceding a syllable with secondary stress: <i>beeline</i> \bē-˘līn\
j	jump , fudge , budget	-	mark indicating syllable divisions
k	kick , baker , scam , ask		
k̂	loch , Bach , German <i>Buch</i>		
l	lap , pal , alley		
m	make , jam , hammer		
n	now , win , banner		
ⁿ	shows that a preceding vowel is nasalized, as in French <i>en</i> \ä ⁿ \		
ŋ	ring , singer , gong		
ō	oak , boat , toe , go		
ó	hawk , bawl , caught , ought , Utah		

A

*Shakespeare led a life of allegory:
his works are comments on it.*
—John Keats

Abbaye group \ä-'bā\ A short-lived cooperative community of French writers and artists who promoted new works and who lived together in a house called L'Abbaye, in a Paris suburb, from 1906 to 1907. The group included the writers Charles Vildrac and Georges Duhamel. The house was a center of artistic activity, and other writers and artists, including Jules Romains, were associated with the group (though they were not inhabitants of the house). The Abbaye artists supported themselves by selling books that they printed on their own printing press. One of the works published by the group was the influential *La Vie unanime* (1908) by Romains. The Abbaye community was portrayed by Duhamel in his novel *Le Désert de Bièvres* (1937). *See also* UNANIMISME.

Abbey Theatre \ä'b-ē\ Dublin theater that was established in 1904. It grew out of the Irish Literary Theatre, founded in 1899 by William Butler Yeats and Isabella Augusta, Lady Gregory, and was devoted to fostering Irish poetic drama. In 1902 the Irish Literary Theatre was taken over by the Irish National Dramatic Society, which had been formed to present Irish actors in Irish plays and was led by W.G. and Frank J. Fay. In 1903 this became the Irish National Theatre Society, with which many leading figures of the IRISH LITERARY RENAISSANCE were closely associated. The quality of its productions was quickly recognized, and in 1904 an Englishwoman, Annie Horniman, a friend of Yeats, paid for the conversion of an old theater in Abbey Street, Dublin, into the Abbey Theatre. The Abbey opened in December 1904 with a bill of plays by Yeats, Lady Gregory, and John Millington Synge (who joined the other two as codirector). Founding members included the Fays, Arthur Sinclair, and Sara Allgood.

The Abbey's staging of Synge's satire *The Playboy of the Western World*, on Jan. 26, 1907, stirred up so much resentment in the audience over its portrayal of the Irish peasantry that there was a riot. When the Abbey players toured the United States for the first time in 1911, similar protests and disorders were provoked when the play opened in New York City, Boston, and Philadelphia.

In 1924, the Abbey became the first state-subsidized theater in the English-speaking world. The emergence of playwright Sean O'Casey also stimulated new interest in the theater and from 1923 to 1926 the Abbey staged three of his plays: *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Juno and the Paycock*, and *The Plough and the Stars*, the last a provocative dramatization of the Easter Rising of 1916. In

the early 1950s the Abbey company moved to the nearby Queen's Theatre after a fire had destroyed its playhouse. A new Abbey Theatre, housing a smaller, experimental theater, was completed in 1966 on the original site. Although the Abbey has broadened its repertoire in recent decades, it continues to rely primarily on Irish plays.

abecedarius \,ā-bē-sē-'dar-ē-əs\ [Late Latin, alphabetical, from the names of the letters *a, b, c, d*] A type of ACROSTIC in which the first letter of each line of a poem or the first letter of the first word of each stanza taken in order forms the alphabet. Examples of these are some of the Psalms (in Hebrew), such as Psalms 25 and 34, where successive verses begin with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order.

Abenteuerroman \'ä-ben-,tôi-ər-rō-,män\ [German, literally, adventure novel] German form of the PICARESQUE NOVEL. The *Abenteuerroman* is an entertaining story of the adventures of the hero, but there is also often a serious aspect to the story. An example is the 17th-century *Der Abentheurliche Simplicissimus* (*Adventurous Simplicissimus*) by H.J.C. von Grimmelshausen. The Abenteuerroman is related to the BILDUNGSROMAN, a genre in which the subject is the formative years of the main character.

ab ovo \ab-'ō-vō\ A Latin phrase meaning literally "from the egg" that alludes to the practice of beginning a poetic narrative at the earliest possible chronological point. The Latin poet and critic Horace notes approvingly (in *Ars poetica*) that Homer does not begin a tale of the Trojan war with the twin egg from which Helen was born but rather in the middle of events. *Compare* IN MEDIAS RES.

abbozzo \ə-'böt-sō\ [Italian] A rough sketch or draft (as of a poem).

abridged edition A version of a work that has been shortened or condensed by the omission of words, presumably without sacrifice of the principal meaning. When it is done for purposes of censorship, abridgment is known as bowdlerization. *See* BOWDLERIZE.

absolute \'ab-sə-,lüt, ,ab-sə-'lüt\ Being self-sufficient and free of external references or relationships. In criticism, an absolutist believes that there are inviolable standards by which a work of art should be judged and that there are certain basic and immutable values that determine worth.

abstract \ab-'strakt, 'ab-,strakt\ Expressing a quality apart from an object; the word *poem* is concrete, the word *poetry* is abstract.

abstract \'ab-,strakt\ A summary of points (as of a written work) usually presented in skeletal form; also, something that summarizes or concentrates the essentials of a larger thing or several things.

abstract poem Term coined by the English poet Edith Sitwell to describe a poem in which the words are chosen for their aural quality rather than specifi-

cally for their sense or meaning. An example from “Popular Song” in Sitwell’s *Façade* follows:

The red retriever-haired satyr
 Can whine and tease her and flatter,
 But Lily O’Grady,
 Silly and shady,
 In the deep shade is a lazy lady;
 Now Pompey’s dead, Homer’s read,
 Heliogabalus lost his head,
 And shade is on the brightest wing,
 And dust forbids the bird to sing.

absurdism \əb-’sər-,diz-əm, -’zər-\ A philosophy based on the belief that humans exist in an irrational and meaningless universe and that the search for order brings one into conflict with that universe. *See also* THEATER OF THE ABSURD.

academese \ə-,kad-ə-’mēz, -’mēs; ,ak-əd-ə-\ A style of writing held to be characteristic of those in academic life. The term is generally pejorative, implying jargon-filled writing.

academic \,ak-ə-’dem-ik\ or **academical** \-mi-kəl\ Conforming to the traditions or rules of a school, as of literature or art, or an official academy. Conventional or formalistic.

academic drama Any play written and performed at schools and colleges in England in the early 16th century. *See also* SCHOOL DRAMA.

Académie Française \ā-kā-dā-,mē-frān-’sez\ French literary academy, established by the French first minister Cardinal de Richelieu in 1634 and incorporated in 1635, and existing, except for an interruption during the era of the French Revolution, to the present day. Its original purpose was to maintain standards of literary taste and to establish the literary language. Its membership is limited to 40. Though it has often acted as a conservative body, opposed to innovations in literary content and form, its membership has included most of the great names of French literature—e.g., Pierre Corneille, Jean Racine, Voltaire, Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo, Joseph-Ernest Renan, and Henri Bergson. In 1980 Marguerite Yourcenar became the first woman to be elected to the academy. Among numerous European literary academies, the Académie Française has consistently retained the highest prestige over the longest period of time.

academy \ə-’kad-ə-mē\ [Greek *Akadēmeia*, *Akadēmia* a public grove and gymnasium near Athens where Plato taught, a derivative of *Akadēmos*, a legendary Attic hero after whom the grove and gymnasium were named] A society of learned individuals organized to advance art, science, literature, music, or some other cultural or intellectual area of endeavor. From its original reference in Greek to the philosophical school of Plato, the word has come to refer much more generally to an institution of learning or a group of learned persons.

At the close of the European Middle Ages, academies began to be formed in Italy, first for the study of classical and then of Italian literature. One of the earliest was the Platonic Academy, founded in Florence in 1442 by two Greek scholars under the encouragement of Cosimo de' Medici. Literary academies sprang up all over Italy in the 16th and 17th centuries; the most famous of these was the CRUSCA ACADEMY, which was founded in Florence by A.F. Grazzini in 1582.

The Académie Française, which would become Europe's best-known literary academy, began in 1635. The Royal Spanish Academy was founded in 1713 to preserve the Spanish language, and it published a landmark Spanish dictionary for that purpose.

Academies of science began to appear in the 16th century, and academies of fine arts, music, social sciences, medicine, mining, and agriculture were formed from the 18th century on. Most European countries now have at least one academy or learned society that is sponsored by or otherwise connected with the state. The academies' influence was greatest during the 17th and 18th centuries but declined during the 19th because of their tendency to resist new and unorthodox developments in science and culture.

The United States, like Great Britain, Canada, and other English-speaking countries, has no state-established academies of science or literature, a fact reflective of English beliefs that culture should basically be a matter for private initiative. The first learned society in what would become the United States was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1743 and called the American Philosophical Society. The rival American Academy of Arts and Sciences was founded in 1779, and the National Academy of Sciences was founded in Washington, D.C., in 1863.

acatalectic \,ā-,kāt-ə-'lek-tik\ [Greek *akatálēktos*, literally, not stopping] In prosody, metrically complete (i.e., not falling short of the expected number of syllables in the last foot). It is the opposite of CATALEXIS, the suppression or absence of the final syllable of a line.

Accademia della Crusca See CRUSCA ACADEMY.

Accademia dell'Arcadia See Academy of ARCADIA.

accent \'ak-,sent-,sənt\ [Latin *accentus* variation in pitch, intonation, from *ad* to, toward + *cantus* song; a calque of Greek *prosōidia*] In prosody, rhythmically significant stress on the syllables of a verse, usually at regular intervals. The word *accent* is often used interchangeably with *stress*, though some prosodists use *accent* to mean the emphasis that is determined by the normal meaning of the words while *stress* is used to mean metrical emphasis. In classical prosody, which was based on a quantitative approach to verse rather than the modern stress-based system, accent was used to determine the relative quantity and prominence of a syllable based on sound. For the Greeks, accent was explained as a difference in musical pitch, usually higher, used in the pronunciation of a word. When prosody ceased to be based on quantity, the accent

changed from variation of pitch to variation of force or emphasis. *Compare* STRESS.

Accent (*in full* Accent: A Quarterly of New Literature) Literary magazine published from 1940 to 1960 at the University of Illinois. Founded by Kerker Quinn and Charles Shattuck, the journal evolved from an earlier version called *Direction* that Quinn put out in his undergraduate days. *Accent* published some of the best examples of contemporary writing by both new and established authors, including Wallace Stevens, Katherine Anne Porter, William Gass, James T. Farrell, Eudora Welty, Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, and Richard Wright.

accentual-syllabic verse In prosody, the metrical system that is most commonly used in English poetry. It is based on both the number of stresses, or accents, and the number of syllables in each line of verse. A line of iambic pentameter verse, for example, consists of five feet, each of which is an iamb (an unstressed followed by a stressed syllable). Although accentual-syllabic verse is very strictly measured, variations in both accent placement and number of syllables are often allowed. *See also* METER.

accentual verse \ak-'sen-chü-wə\ In prosody, a metrical system based only on the number of stresses or accented syllables in a line of verse. In accentual verse the total number of syllables in a line can vary as long as there are the prescribed number of accents. This system is used in Germanic poetry, including Old English and Old Norse, as well as in some English verse. The poem "What if a Much of a Which of a Wind," by E.E. Cummings, is an example of accentual verse. In the following lines from the poem the number of accents is constant at four while the number of syllables per line varies from seven to ten:

what if a much of a which of a wind
gives the truth to summer's lie;
bloodies with dizzying leaves the sun
and yanks immortal stars awry?
Blow king to beggar and queen to seem
(blow friend to fiend: blow space to time)
—when skies are hanged and oceans drowned,
the single secret will still be man

See also METER.

accismus \ak-'siz-məs\ [Greek *akkismós* prudery, a derivative of *akkíze^{sthai}* to feign ignorance] A form of irony in which a person feigns indifference to, or pretends to refuse, something he or she desires. The fox's dismissal of the grapes in the Aesop fable of the fox and the grapes is an example of accismus. A classic example is that of Caesar's initial refusal to accept the crown, a circumstance reported by one of the conspirators in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

acephalous \,ā-'sef-ə-ləs, ə-\ [Greek *aképhalos* headless, from *a-* not + *kephalē* head] *See* HEADLESS.

Acmeist \ˈak-mē-ist\, *Russian* Akmeist \ək-mē-ˈēst\, *plural* Akmeisty \-ˈēs-tē\ [Russian *akmeist*, from Greek *akmē* highest point, acme] Member of a small group of early 20th-century Russian poets reacting against what they considered to be the vagueness and affectations of Symbolism. The Acmeist movement was formed by the poets Sergey Gorodetsky and Nikolay S. Gumilyov. They reasserted the poet as craftsman and used language freshly and with intensity. Centered in St. Petersburg, the Acmeists were associated with the review *Apollon* (1909–17). In 1912 they founded the Guild of Poets, whose most outstanding members were Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelshtam. Because of their preoccupation with form and their aloofness, the Acmeists were regarded with suspicion by the Soviet regime. Gumilyov was executed in 1921 for his alleged activities in an anti-Soviet conspiracy. Akhmatova was silenced during the most productive years of her life, and Mandelshtam died en route to a labor camp.

acronym \ˈak-rə-,nɪm\ [Greek *ákros* outermost, at the tip + *ónyma* name] A word formed from the initial letter or letters of each of the successive parts or major parts of a compound term, such as RADAR from *radio detecting and ranging* or SONAR from *sound navigation ranging*.

acrostic \ə-ˈkrɒs-tɪk\ [Greek *akrostichís*, from *ákros* outermost + *stíchos* line, verse] **1.** Short verse composition, so constructed that one or more sets of letters (such as the initial, middle, or final letters of the lines), taken consecutively, form words. An acrostic in which the initial letters form the alphabet is an ABCEDARIUS.

The word *acrostic* was first applied to the prophecies of the Erythraean Sibyl, which were written on leaves and arranged so that the initial letters of the leaves always formed a word. Acrostics were common among the Greeks of the Alexandrine period, and many of the arguments of the plays of the Latin writers Ennius and Plautus were written in acrostic verses that spelled out the titles of the plays. Medieval monks were also fond of acrostics, as were the poets of the Middle High German and Italian Renaissance periods.

An example of an acrostic is the poem in which Lewis Carroll spells out the name of Alice Liddell, for whom *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was written:

A boat, beneath a sunny sky
Lingering onward dreamily
In an evening of July—

Children three that nestle near,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Pleased a simple tale to hear—

Long has faded that sunny sky:
Echoes fade and memories die:
Autumn frosts have slain July.

Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
 Alice moving under skies
 Never seen by waking eyes.

Children yet, the tale to hear,
 Eager eye and willing ear,
 Lovingly shall nestle near.

In a Wonderland they lie,
 Dreaming as the days go by,
 Dreaming as the summers die:

Ever drifting down the stream—
 Linger in the golden gleam—
 Life, what is it but a dream?

2. A type of word puzzle utilizing the acrostic principle. A popular form is double acrostics, puzzles constructed so that not only the initial letters of the lines but in some cases also the middle or last letters form words. In the United States, a Double Crostic puzzle, devised by Elizabeth Kingsley for *The Saturday Review* in 1934, had an acrostic in the answers to the clues giving the author and title of a literary work; the letters, keyed by number to blanks like those of a crossword puzzle, spelled out a quotation.

act \ˈakt\ [Latin *actus*, literally, action, activity] One of the principal divisions of a theatrical work.

action \ˈak-shən\ [translation of Greek *práxis* (in Aristotle's *Poetics*)] **1.** A real or imaginary event or series of events forming the subject of a play, poem, or other composition. **2.** The unfolding of the events of a drama or work of fiction, also called the PLOT.

adab \ˈá-dáb\ [Arabic] Islāmic concept that became a literary genre distinguished by its broad humanitarian concerns; it developed during the height of ʿAbbāsīd culture in the 9th century and continued to be of importance through the Muslim Middle Ages.

The original sense of the word was simply “norm of conduct,” or “custom,” derived in ancient Arabia from ancestors revered as models. As such practice was deemed praiseworthy in the medieval Muslim world, *adab* acquired a further connotation of good breeding, courtesy, and urbanity.

Parallel to and growing out of this expanded social meaning of *adab* there appeared an intellectual aspect. *Adab* came to connote the knowledge of poetry, oratory, ancient Arab tribal history, rhetoric, grammar, philology, and non-Arab civilizations that qualified an individual to be called well-bred, or *adīb*. The vast and erudite *adab* literature was concerned with human achievements and was written in an expressive and flexible style that was rich in vocabulary and

idiom. The best-known writers of *adab* include the 9th-century essayist al-Jāhiz of Basra and his 11th-century follower Abū Hayyān at-Tawḥīdī; the 9th-century Kūfan critic, philologist, and theologian Ibn Qutaybah; and the 11th-century poet al-Maʿarrī.

As the golden age of the ʿAbbāsids declined, however, the boundaries of *adab* narrowed into belles lettres: poetry, elegant prose, anecdotal writing (*maqāmah*). In the modern Arab world, *adab* signifies literature.

adage \ʼad-ij\ [Latin *adagium* proverb] A saying, often in metaphorical form, that embodies a common observation, such as “If the shoe fits, wear it,” “Out of the frying pan, into the fire,” or “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.” The scholar Erasmus published a well-known collection of adages as *Adagia* in 1508. *See also* PROVERB; APHORISM.

adaptation \,ad-ap-ʼtā-shən\ Something that is adapted; especially, a composition rewritten into a new form, such as a novel reworked as a film script.

ad captandum or **ad captandum vulgus** \,ad-,kap-ʼtan-dəm-ʼvəl-gəs\ [Latin, for pleasing the crowd] Designed to attract or please the crowd. An argument in drama, verse, or rhetoric that is directed chiefly to the emotions is often called an argument *ad captandum*.

Adelphi, The \ə-ʼdel-fē\, *also called* (1927–30) The New Adelphi. British literary journal founded by John Middleton Murry in 1923. The publication was more a periodical manifesto than a literary magazine. Originally dedicated to promoting the work and views of the novelist D.H. Lawrence, and of the editor himself, *The Adelphi* (from the Greek word for “brothers”) attempted to reach readers beyond the traditional upper-class literary circle of the time, although this effort met with little success. In fact, Murry’s radical politics, coupled with a disdain for religion as manifested in Lawrence’s published declaration that “Jesus was a failure,” alienated the general readers Murry had hoped to attract. Many members of the influential Bloomsbury group, including Leonard and Virginia Woolf, came to disdain both editor and journal. While the periodical published the work of W.H. Auden, T.S. Eliot, George Orwell, and W.B. Yeats, it is best known as the repository of its founder’s controversial commentary on religious, political, and cultural life.

Adonic \ə-ʼdän-ik\ or **Adonian** \ə-ʼdō-nē-ən\ [Late Greek *Adōnion* an Adonic verse, a derivative of *Adōnis* Adonis] In classical prosody, having a meter consisting of a dactyl (– ∪ ∪) followed by a spondee (– –). It is found in dactylic contexts, and especially in aeolic and sapphic verse.

adynaton \ə-ʼdī-nə-,tän\ [Greek *adýnaton*, neuter of *adýnatos* impossible] A kind of hyperbole in which the exaggeration is so great that it refers to an impossibility, as in the following lines from Andrew Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress”:

Had we but world enough, and time,
 This coyness, lady, were no crime.
 We would sit down, and think which way
 To walk, and pass our long love's day.
 Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
 Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
 Of Humber would complain. I would
 Love you ten years before the flood
 And you should, if you please, refuse
 Till the conversion of the Jews.

a-effect See ALIENATION EFFECT.

aeolic \ē-'äl-ik\ [Greek *Aiolikós*, literally, of the Aeolians, a people of ancient Greece] Of or relating to a group of meters used in Greek lyric poetry. "Aeolic" alludes to the poets Sappho and Alcaeus, of the Aeolian island of Lesbos, who first used these meters. Aeolic meters, such as the glyconic, typically are formed around a choriamb (– ∪ ∪ –), which may be preceded or followed (or both) by a variety of other metrical units to create a wide variety of metrical sequences. (For example, choriambic dimeter has the form – ∪ ∪ – | ∪ – ∪ –; glyconic takes the form ∪ ∪ ∪ | – ∪ ∪ – | ∪ – .) See also POLYSCHEMATIST.

aesthete \es-,thēt, 'ēs-\ One professing devotion to the beautiful, especially in art. The word (usually capitalized) was applied in particular to a group of English writers and artists of the late 19th century whose belief in the doctrine of Aestheticism was manifested in dandyism and affectation. This group included Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, Arthur Symons, and Ernest Dowson.

aesthetic distance The frame of reference that an artist creates by the use of technical devices in and around the work of art to differentiate it psychologically from reality. German playwright Bertolt Brecht built his dramatic theory known in English as the alienation effect to accomplish aesthetic distance.

Aestheticism \es-'thet-ə-,siz-əm, ēs-\ Late 19th-century European arts movement that centered on the doctrine that art exists for the sake of its beauty alone.

The movement began in reaction to prevailing utilitarian social philosophies and to what was perceived as the ugliness and philistinism of the industrial age. Its philosophical foundations were laid in the 18th century by Immanuel Kant, who postulated the autonomy of aesthetic standards, setting them apart from considerations of morality, utility, or pleasure. This idea was amplified by J.W. von Goethe, J.L. Tieck, and others in Germany and by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle in England. It was popularized in France by Madame de Staël, Théophile Gautier, and the philosopher Victor Cousin, who coined the phrase *l'art pour l'art* ("art for art's sake") in 1818.

In England, the artists of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, from 1848, had sown the seeds of Aestheticism, and the work of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward

Burne-Jones, and Algernon Charles Swinburne exemplified it in expressing a yearning for ideal beauty through conscious medievalism. The attitudes of the movement were also represented in the writings of Oscar Wilde and Walter Pater and the illustrations of Aubrey Beardsley in the periodical *The Yellow Book*. The painter James McNeill Whistler raised the movement's ideal of the cultivation of refined sensibility to perhaps its highest point.

Contemporary critics of Aestheticism included William Morris and John Ruskin and, in Russia, Leo Tolstoy, who questioned the value of art divorced from morality. Yet the movement focused attention on the formal aesthetics of art and contributed to the art criticism of Roger Fry and Bernard Berenson. The movement shared certain affinities with the French Symbolist movement and was a precursor of Art Nouveau. *See also* DECADENT; SYMBOLIST MOVEMENT.

affective fallacy In literary criticism, the error of judging a work on the basis of its effect on the reader. The notion of affective fallacy was described by the proponents of New Criticism as a direct challenge to impressionistic critics who argued that the reader's response to a poem is the ultimate indication of its value.

Those who support the affective criterion for judging poetry cite its long and respectable history, beginning with Aristotle's dictum that the purpose of tragedy is to evoke "terror and pity." Other proponents of the affective criterion include Edgar Allan Poe, who stated that "a poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul," and Emily Dickinson, who said, "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry." Many modern critics continue to assert that emotional communication and response cannot be separated from the evaluation of a poem. *See also* NEW CRITICISM.

afterpiece \əf-tər-,pēs\ Supplementary entertainment presented after full-length plays in 18th-century England. Afterpieces usually took the form of a short comedy, farce, or pantomime and were intended to lighten the solemnity of Neoclassical drama and make the bill more attractive to audiences. Long theater programs that included interludes of music, song, and dance developed in the first 20 years of the 18th century, promoted primarily by John Rich at Lincoln's Inn Fields in order to compete with the Drury Lane. The addition of afterpieces to the regular program may also have been an attempt to attract working citizens, who often missed the early opening production and paid a reduced charge to be admitted later, usually at the end of the third act of a five-act play.

Before 1747, afterpieces were generally presented with old plays, but after that date, almost all new plays were accompanied by afterpieces as well. Although farce and pantomime were the most popular forms of afterpiece—the latter usually integrating classical themes with commedia dell'arte characters—other kinds of afterpiece occasionally were performed. These included processions, burlettas (comic operas popular in England in the second half of the 18th century) or burlesques, and ballad operas, which gained popularity after the success of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* in 1728.

afterword *See* EPILOGUE.