

# Conflict • Classifications of Literature

---



# *Types of Conflict*

---

All stories deal with **conflicts** and secondary-conflicts in one fashion or another:

human vs nature	(wilderness / disease / animals)
human vs human	(political / economic / religious / racial differences)
human vs gods/God/ Fate	(Job / Jonah / Oedipus vs Fate) supernatural
human vs self	(mental illness / morality conflicts / physical endurance)
human vs. technology	(computers / industrialism / corporations)

Be able to identify these as they appear in your readings.

# Literary Modes

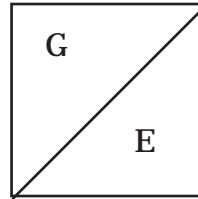
---

**realistic mode:** Equal balance of extremes between good and evil. The world is full of both forces.

The world is controlled by both unseen forces at one time or another.

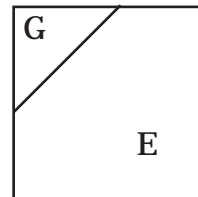
The goal of the work *expresses a want* to achieve the happy ending.

*Keep in mind, the happiness is not always achieved in the story.*



**naturalistic mode:** Writer wants to expose evil, corruption. Here the author shows evil existing in abundance.

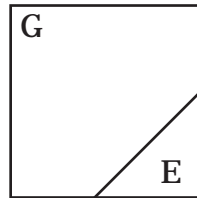
The protagonist fights against extreme horror, suffering.



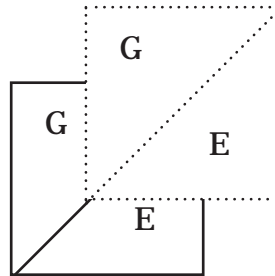
# Literary Modes

---

**romantic mode:** In this case the hero is ultimately good, patriotic, devoted. He/She will triumph even if it means dieing.  
Some are shown in more realistic settings than others. The protagonists ultimately controls the environment.  
There exists an ultimate struggle between good and evil; however, there *will be* a happy ending.



**fantasy mode:** Examples include surrealism, magic-realism, unreality, dream logic.  
Good and evil struggle against one another in terms similar to realistic models.



# *Literary Movements & Genres*

---

• **Literary Movements:** Generally, the movements are markers of time within the various centuries.

The movements shift between these various modes of literature.

Renaissance	Romanticism	Gothic
Transcendentalism	Realism	Naturalism
Symbolism	Modernism	Surrealism
Postmodernism	Magical Realism	Imagism

• **Literary Genre:** on the other hand, a Genre is a different classification of writing.

The *LWP* states in its glossary that Genre is “a classification of literature: drama, novel, short story, poem” (1167).

But the term does go beyond this—a genre is a category of literary composition and are determined by technique, tone, content, or even length.

In other words, there are more than four categories: classes and subclasses exist in this huge litany of Literature.

Just looking at short story alone, some genres include: horror fantasy, science fiction, westerns, romance, mystery, *et cetera*.

# *Myth • Fable • Parable • Folktale*

---

**Myth:** is a religious teaching—the culture which developed these stories viewed them as a truth, as a religious mystery to explain how a god or goddess became a deity.

**Fable:** allegorical story with a moral; explicit message presented to reader at closing.

- Short fictitious work (some are only three sentences long).
- Usually involve animals or inanimate objects as actors within the story
- Animals and natural elements represent human characteristics or personality-types
- Some do use human-centered actors.

**Parable:** is a brief story, based in realistic terms and contain an explicit teaching of morality or philosophy.

- Deals with human characters
- Does not contain magic nor fantasy aspects; strictly contain teachings of a social, political, religious, and/or moral issue.

**Folk-Tale, Fairy Tale:** based on fantasy. These in turn can teach a moral lesson.

- More of an entertainment value rather than a religious, moralistic teaching.
- Shows a magical representation of the world;
- Is based on children’s notions of the world as divided into black and white, no gray areas.
- Prepares children for the violent world of their times.

# myth

*The Age of Fable: Admetus and Alcestis*

Aesculapius, the son of Apollo, was endowed by his father with such skill in the healing art that he even restored the dead to life. At this Pluto took alarm, and prevailed on Jupiter to launch a thunderbolt at Aesculapius. Apollo was indignant at the destruction of his son, and wreaked his vengeance on the innocent workmen who had made the thunderbolt. These were the Cyclopes, who have their workshop under Mount Aetna, from which the smoke and flames of their furnaces are constantly issuing. Apollo shot his arrows at the Cyclopes, which so incensed Jupiter that he condemned him as a punishment to become he servant of a mortal for the space of one year. Accordingly Apollo went into the service of Admetus, king of Thessaly, and pastured his flocks for him on the verdant banks of the river Amphrysus.

Admetus was a suitor, with others, for the hand of Alcestis, the daughter of Pelias, who promised her to him who should come for her in a chariot drawn by lions and boars. This task Admetus performed by the assistance of his divine herdsman, and was made happy in the possession of Alcestis. But Admetus fell ill, and being near to death, Apollo prevailed on the Fates to spare him on condition that some one would consent to die in his stead. Admetus, in his joy at this reprieve, thought little of the ransom, and perhaps remembering the declarations of attachment which he had often heard from his courtiers and dependents, fancied that it would be easy to find a substitute. But it was not so.

Brave warriors, who would willingly have perilled their lives for their prince, shrunk from the thought of dying for him on the bed of sickness; and old servants who had experienced his bounty and that of his house from their childhood up, were not willing to lay down the scanty remnant of their days to show their gratitude. Men asked, “Why does not one of his parents do it? They cannot in the course of nature live much longer, and who can feel like them the call to rescue the life they gave from an untimely end?” But the parents, distressed though they were at the thought of losing him, shrunk from the call. Then Alcestis, with a generous self-devotion, proffered herself as the substitute. Admetus, fond as he was of life, would not have submitted to receive it at such a cost; but there was no remedy. The condition imposed by the Fates had been met, and the decree was irrevocable. Alcestis sickened as Admetus revived, and she was rapidly sinking to the grave.

Just at this time Hercules arrived at the palace of Admetus, and found all the inmates in great distress for the impending loss of the devoted wife and beloved mistress. Hercules, to whom no labor was too arduous, resolved to attempt her rescue. He went and lay in wait at the door of the chamber of the dying queen, and when Death came for his prey, he seized him and forced him to resign his victim. Alcestis recovered, and was restored to her husband.

Bulfinch, Thomas. “Admetus and Alcestis.” *Bulfinch’s Mythology*. New York: The Modern Library. Print.

# *fable*

*The Old Man and Death*

**Aesop**

An old Man cut himself a bundle of sticks in a wood and started to carry them home. He had a long way to go, and was tired out before he had got much more than halfway. Casting his burden on the ground, he called upon Death to come and release him from his life of toil. The words were scarcely out of his mouth, much to his dismay, Death stood before him and professed his readiness to serve him. He was almost frightened out of his wits, but he had enough presence of mind to stammer out, “Good sir, if you’d be so kind, pray help me up with my burden again.”

“The Old Man and Death.” *Aesop’s Fables*. V. S. Vernon Jones, trans. New York: Barnes and Noble. 2005. Print.

# *folktale*

*How Fire Came to the Alabamas and Coushattas*

There was a time, far back, when bears owned Fire. These animals guarded Fire very closely and even carried it about with them. They allowed no creature except a member of the bear clan to use Fire or even to approach it.

One day the bears put Fire on the ground and went away to eat acorns. Now, Fire needed much attention. Since the bears did not come back that day, Fire grew weaker and weaker, and finally began calling for help. But the bears had travelled so far into the woods that they couldn’t hear Fire’s cries.

Some Alabamas and Coushattas heard him, though, and hurried to his aid. They got a stick from the north and laid it on Fire. In the west they found another stick and fed it to Fire. The people found the third stick in the south. Then they went to the East for another stick. When the people put down all of the sticks, Fire blazed up.

After the bears finished their meal of acorns, they returned to claim Fire. However, Fire said, “I don’t know the bears any longer.”

This is how Fire left the bears and went to live with the Alabamas and Coushattas.

“How Fire Came to the Alabamas and Coushattas.” *Myths and Folktales of the Alabama-Coushatta Indians of Texas*. Ed. Howard Martin. Austin: Encino Press. 1977. Print.



# parable

## *The Parable of the Elephant*

### **Buddha**

There was a mighty white elephant with a strong trunk and long tusks, trained by a good master, and willing and serviceable. This elephant, led by his trainer, came to the land of the blind. Very soon the rumours went in the land of the blind that an elephant had come to their country. So the wise men and teachers of the blind came up to the elephant and began to investigate him. And when the elephant was gone they met and discussed the animal among themselves.

There were some who said he was like a great thick snake; others said he was like a snake of medium size. The former had felt the trunk, the latter the tail.

Further, there were some who claimed that his figure was like a high column, others declared he was large and bulky like a big barrel, still others maintained he was smooth and hard but tapering. Some of the blind had taken hold of one of the legs, others had reached the main body, and still others had touched the tusks.

In the end they abused and scolded one another over their disagreements, and finally every one of them swore that everyone else was a liar and was cursed on account of his heresies.

Everyone of these blind men was honest in his contentions, sure of having the truth and relying on his own experience. But the elephant trainer knows that every one

of them has a parcel of the truth, that every one is right in his way, but wrong in believing his outlook to be the whole truth.

Not one of these sectarians observed that the elephant was white, for all of them were blind who had investigated the truth to the best of their ability.

The master of the elephant is an Enlightened One. He has brought the white elephant of truth into the land of the blind, and he who listens to him well will understand all the claimants who have parcels of the truth. He who takes refuge in His doctrine will cease to bicker and quarrel.

The purpose to which life is devoted, also gives worth to that life.

To see the white elephant (it may take time), avoid doing wrongs and let your heart be pure:

Avoid wrong doings and let right and justice and loving-kindness prevail.

Let your heart be pure. / All Buddhas teach this; it will always endure (Dhammapada 183).

“The Parable of the Elephant.” *Parables of Buddha. The Gold Scales.* Ed. Tormod Kinnes. Web. 29 May 2010. <http://oaks.nvg.org>.