Literary Terms for *The Road*

**Directions**: Below are 12 literary terms. For each term you must type a double-spaced, half page response applying the term to *The Road*. I encourage you to do more research concerning the term so you know have a clear understanding of how each term pertains to the novel. Within each response you must have at least 2 quotes (correctly cited) from the book as examples for your argument.

|  |
| --- |
| **1. LITERARY ONOMASTICS:** examines the use of proper names in literature, and often focuses on the names of characters in fiction (*characternyms*). A primary requirement of **onomastics** is the clarification of certain basic terms relating to the concept *proper name*. In casual usage, proper names, proper nouns, and capitalized words are often taken to be the same thing. That assumption, however, can mislead, because the three expressions refer to three different things which partially overlap."(John Algeo, "Onomastics," in *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*, ed. by Tom McArthur. Oxford Univ. Press, 1992) |
|  **CHARACTONYM/CHARACTERNYM-**(Aka **fictional aptronym**) A name given to a fictional character that suggests that character's traits, e.g. **Mr. Bumble**.  |

|  |
| --- |
|  |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **2. ALLUSION**: A casual reference in literature to a person, place, event, or another passage of literature, often without explicit identification. Allusions can originate in mythology, biblical references, historical events, legends, geography, or earlier literary works. Authors often use allusion to establish a tone, create an implied association, contrast two objects or people, make an unusual juxtaposition of references, or bring the reader into a world of experience outside the limitations of the story itself. Authors assume that the readers will recognize the original sources and relate their meaning to the new context. For instance, if a teacher were to refer to his class as a horde of Mongols, the students will have no idea if they are being praised or vilified unless they know what the Mongol horde was and what activities it participated in historically. This historical allusion assumes a certain level of education or awareness in the audience, so it should normally be taken as a compliment rather than an insult or an attempt at obscurity. |

 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **3. ESCHATOLOGICAL NARRATIVE**:Eschatalogy in Christian theology is the study of the end of things, including the end of the world, life-after-death, and the Last Judgment. An eschatalogical narrative refers to a story dealing with these matters, a story which explains what the ultimate ending or conclusion of something. The term should not be confused with [**scatological narratives**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_S.html#scatology_anchor). Contrast with[**etiological narrative**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_E.html#etiological_narrative_anchor), below. |

 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **4. ARCHETYPE**: An original model or pattern from which other later copies are made, especially a character, an action, or situation that seems to represent common patterns of human life. Often, archetypes include a symbol, a theme, a setting, or a character that some critics think have a common meaning in an entire culture, or even the entire human race. These images have particular emotional resonance and power. Archetypes recur in different times and places in myth, literature, folklore, fairy tales, dreams, artwork, and religious rituals. Using the comparative anthropological work of Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, the psychologist Carl Jung theorized that the archetype originates in the [**collective unconscious**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_C.html#collective_unconscious_anchor) of mankind, i.e., the shared experiences of a race or culture, such as birth, death, love, family life, and struggles to survive and grow up. These would be expressed in the subconscious of an individual who would recreate them in myths, dreams, and literature. Examples of archetypes found cross-culturally include the following:(1) ***Recurring symbolic situations***(such as the orphaned prince or the lost chieftain's son raised ignorant of his heritage until he is rediscovered by his parents, or the damsel in distress rescued from a hideous monster by a handsome young man who later marries the girl. Also, the long journey, the difficult quest or search, the catalog of difficult tasks, the pursuit of revenge, the [**descent into the underworld**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_D.html#descent_into_underworld_anchor), redemptive rituals, fertility rites, the great flood, the End of the World),(2) ***Recurring themes*** (such as the [**Faustian bargain**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_F.html#faustian_bargain_anchor); pride preceding a fall; the inevitable nature of death, fate, or punishment; blindness; madness; taboos such as forbidden love, patricide, or incest),(3) ***Recurring characters***(such as witches or ugly crones who cannibalize children, lame blacksmiths of preternatural skill, womanizing Don Juans, the hunted man, the *femme fatale*, the snob, the social climber, the wise old man as mentor or teacher, star-crossed lovers; the caring mother-figure, the helpless little old lady, the stern father-figure, the guilt-ridden figure searching for redemption, the braggart, the young star-crossed lovers, the bully, the villain in black, the oracle or prophet, the mad scientist, the underdog who emerges victorious, the mourning widow or women in lamentation),(4) ***Symbolic colors*** (green as a symbol for life, vegetation, or summer; blue as a symbol for water or tranquility; white or black as a symbol of purity; or red as a symbol of blood, fire, or passion) and so on.(5) ***Recurring images*** (such as blood, water, pregnancy, ashes, cleanness, dirtiness, caverns, [**phallic symbols**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_P.html#phallic_anchor), **[yonic symbols](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_Y.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22yonic_anchor)**, the ruined tower, the rose or lotus, the lion, the snake, the eagle, the hanged man, the dying god that rises again, the feast or banquet, the fall from a great height).The study of these archetypes in literature is known as [**archetypal criticism**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_A.html#archetypal_criticism_anchor) or **mythic criticism**. Archetypes are also called**universal symbols**. Contrast with [**private symbol**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_P.html#private_symbol_anchor). |

 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **5. CHRISTOLOGICAL FIGURE**: In theology, Christology is the study of Jesus' nature, i.e., whether Christ had both a human and divine nature, whether he had one sentient will alone or one human will and one divine will, whether he was theoretically capable of sin like humanity or perfectly righteous like the other persons in the trinity, whether he shared in the Father's omniscience or suffered from human afflictions like doubt or ignorance, whether he existed or not before his biological birth, whether he was equal in authority and power to the other persons in the trinity, and whether he actually had a physical body (the orthodox view) or was composed entirely of spirit (the Arian view).In literary studies, the term *christological* has been commandeered to refer to (1) an object, person, or figure that represents Christ allegorically or symbolically, or (2) any similar object, person, or figure with qualities generally reminiscent of Christ. Examples of christological figures include the Old Man in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, who after his struggle with the fish ends up bleeding from his palms and lying on the floor in a cruciform pattern; the lion Aslan in C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, who allows himself like the lion of the tribe of Judah to be slain in order to redeem a traitorous child; and the unicorn in medieval bestiaries, which would lie down and place its [**phallic**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_P.html#phallic_anchor), ivory-horned meekly in a maiden's lap so that hunters might kill it--which medieval monks interpreted as an allegory of Christ allowing himself to enter the womb of the virgin Mary so that he might later be sacrificed. Zora Neale Hurston creates a christ-figure in Delia Jones, who in the short story "Sweat" suffers to support her ungrateful husband and "crawled over the earth in Gethsemane and up the rocks of Calvary many, many times . . ." and so on. |

 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| ***6. DEUS EX MACHINA*** (from Greek *theos apo mechanes*): An unrealistic or unexpected intervention to rescue the protagonists or resolve the story's conflict. The term means "The god out of the machine," and it refers to stage machinery. A classical Greek actor, portraying one of the Greek gods in a play, might be lowered out of the sky onto the stage and then use his divine powers to solve all the mortals' problems. The term is a negative one, and it often implies a lack of skill on the part of the writer. In a modern example of *deus ex machina*, a writer might reach a climactic moment in which a band of pioneers were attacked by bandits. A cavalry brigade's unexpected arrival to drive away the marauding bandits at the conclusion, with no previous hint of the cavalry's existence, would be a*deus ex machina* conclusion. Such endings mean that heroes are unable to solve their own problems in a pleasing manner, and they must be "rescued" by the writer himself through improbable means. In some [***genres***](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_G.html#genre_anchor), the *deus ex machina* ending is actually a positive and expected trait. In various *vitae*, or Saint's Lives, divine intervention is one of the normal climactic moments of the narrative to bring about the rescue of a saint or to cause a mass conversion among conventional pagan characters. See [***vita***](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_V.html#vita_anchor). |

 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **7. DYNAMIC CHARACTER**: Also called a **round character**, a dynamic character is one whose personality changes or evolves over the course of a narrative or appears to have the capacity for such change. The round character contrasts with the [**flat character**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_F.html#flat_character_anchor), a character who serves a specific or minor literary function in a text, and who may be a [**stock character**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_S.html#stock_character_anchor) or simplified stereotype. Typically, a short story has one round character and several flat ones. However, in longer novels and plays, there may be many round characters. The terms *flat* and *round* were first coined by the novelist E. M. Forster in his study, *Aspects of the Nove*l. See [**flat character**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_F.html#flat_character_anchor), [**character**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_C.html#character_anchor), [**characterization**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_C.html#characterization_anchor), [**round character**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_R.html#round_character_anchor), and [**stock character**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_S.html#stock_character_anchor). |

 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **8. HEMINGWAY CODE**: Hemingway's protagonists are usually "Hemingway Code Heroes," i.e., figures who try to follow a hyper-masculine moral code and make sense of the world through those beliefs. Hemingway himself defined the Code Hero as "a man who lives correctly, following the ideals of honor, courage and endurance in a world that is sometimes chaotic, often stressful, and always painful."  This code typically involves several traits for the Code Hero:(1) Measuring himself against the difficulties life throws in his way, realizing that we will all lose ultimately because we are mortals, but playing the game honestly and passionately in spite of that knowledge(2) Facing death with dignity, enduring physical and emotional pain in silence(3) Never showing emotions(4) Maintaining free-will and individualism, never weakly allowing commitment to a single woman or social convention to prevent adventure, travel, and acts of bravery(5) Being completely honest, keeping one's word or promise(6) Being courageous and brave, daring to travel and have "beautiful adventures," as Hemingway would phrase it(7) Admitting the truth of *Nada* (Spanish, "nothing"), i.e., that no external source outside of oneself can provide meaning or purpose. This [**existential awareness**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_E.html#existentialism_anchor) also involves facing death without hope of an afterlife, which the Hemingway Code Hero considers more brave than "cowering" behind false religious hopes.The Hemingway Code Hero typically has some sort of physical or psychological wound symbolizing his tragic flaw or the weaknesses of his character, which must be overcome before he can prove his manhood (or re-prove it, since the struggle to be honest and brave is a continual one). Also, many Hemingway Code Heroes suffer from a fear of the dark, which represents the transience or meaninglessness of life in the face of eventual and permanent death. |

 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **9. JUXTAPOSITION**: The arrangement of two or more ideas, characters, actions, settings, phrases, or words side-by-side or in similar narrative moments for the purpose of comparison, contrast, rhetorical effect, suspense, or character development. See also ***[antithesis](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_A.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22antithesis_anchor)***,[***bathos***](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_B.html#bathos_anchor), [**foil**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_F.html#foil_anchor), [**mirror passage**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_M.html#mirror_passage_anchor), and [**mirror scene**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_M.html#mirror_scene_anchor). |

 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **10. ONEIROMANCY**: The belief that dreams could predict the future, or the act of predicting the future by analyzing dreams. Elements of oneiromantic belief may have influenced the [***genre***](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_G.html#genre_anchor) of medieval [**dream visions**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_D.html#dream_vision_anchor), especially Biblical passages regarding divine premonitions appearing in the form of dreams. Likewise, in Renaissance literature such as Shakespeare's plays, Shakespeare readily adapted oneiromantic beliefs into the dreams of his characters to create [**foreshadowing**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_F.html#foreshadowing_anchor). |

 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **11. PILGRIMAGE**: An act of spiritual devotion or penance in which an individual travels without material comforts to a distant holy place. The journey often has spiritual overtones--it may symbolize a journey to the celestial city of heaven or repeat the journey of a saint or biblical hero. Pilgrimage has become a prominent symbol in both Western Christian writings and Middle-Eastern Islamic writings. John Bunyon's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are two literary examples using the pilgrimage [**motif**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_M.html#motif_anchor). |

 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **12. REALISM**: An elastic and ambiguous term with two meanings. (1) First, it refers generally to any artistic or literary portrayal of life in a faithful, accurate manner, unclouded by false ideals, literary conventions, or misplaced aesthetic glorification and beautification of the world. It is a theory or tendency in writing to depict events in human life in a matter-of-fact, straightforward manner. It is an attempt to reflect life "as it actually is"--a concept in some ways similar to what the Greeks would call [***mimesis***](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_M.html#mimesis_anchor). Typically, "realism" involves careful description of everyday life, "warts and all," often the lives of middle and lower class characters in the case of **socialist realism**. In general, realism seeks to avoid supernatural, transcendental, or surreal events. It tends to focus as much on the everyday, the mundane, and the normal as events that are extraordinary, exceptional, or extreme. As J. A. Cuddon notes, realism "more crudely [. . .] suggests jackets off, sleeves rolled up, 'no nonsense'" attitudes toward literary art (773).(2) Secondly and more specifically, realism refers to a literary movement in America, Europe, and England that developed out of [**naturalism**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_N.html#naturalism_anchor) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although realism and the concern for aspects of [**verisimilitude**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_V.html#verisimilitude_anchor) have been components of literary art to one degree or another in nearly all centuries, the term *realism* also applies more specifically to the tendency to create detailed, probing analyses of the way "things really are," usually involving an emphasis on nearly photographic details, the author's inclusion of in-depth psychological traits for his or her characters, and an attempt to create a literary facsimile of human existence unclouded by [**convention**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_C.html#convention_anchor), [**cliché**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_C.html#cliche_anchor), formulaic traits of [***genre***](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_G.html#genre_anchor), sentiment, or the earlier extremes of naturalism. This tendency reveals itself in the growing mania for photography (invented 1839), the tendency toward hyper-realistic paintings and sculpture, the continuing rise of the popular prose novel, the growth of "realism" in philosophical movements, and in the increasingly realistic stage productions during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The movement contrasts with (and is often used as an antonym for) literary forms such as the[**romance**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_R.html#romance_modern_anchor), science-fiction, fantasy, magic realism, [**mythology**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_M.html#mythology_anchor), surrealistic art, [**modernism**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_M.html#modernism_anchor) and [**postmodernism**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_P.html#postmodernism_anchor).Note that the earlier literary movement known as [**naturalism**](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_N.html#naturalism_anchor) is often used as a precursor and antonym for **realism**, even though both literary movements share many similarities. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between naturalism and realism. Some writers are classified as part of both movements. Personally, I distinguish between them by noting how naturalism goes out of its way to obsessively and grimly point out the limitations of human potential. Realism shares this concern, but seems less obsessed with this point. My distinction, however, is one not generally accepted by literary critics. Often, writers like Thomas Hardy are said to be both naturalistic and realistic, for instance.Examining the wide variety of writers called "realists" at one time or another shows how flexible the term is. These writers include such diverse artists as Mark Twain, Flaubert, Balzac, Zola, Guy de Maupassant, Tolstoy, Gogol, Gorki, William Howells, William Burroughs, Thomas Hardy, and Norman Mailer. Dramatists normally considered realists include Henrik Ibsen, George Bernard Shaw, and Strindberg. |

 |