Context

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What We Saw Last Week

- **Hominins as story-tellers**
- **passing stories on (selectively)**
- **role of Origin Stories/Founding Myths for identities in populations**
- **lingering impact of Genesis**
  - **"Cultural Mandate" and Climate change**
  - **"Curse of Ham" and enslaved Africa**
- **seductive narratives**
  - **plots: conspiracy theories and denialism**
  - **protagonists, antagonists and the "affected"**
  - **question of confronting such narratives**

The Plan for Today

- **Literature/literature in the light of performance theory**

- **Literature and language**

- **using levels of linguistic as an approach to literature**

- **exploring the methodology**

- **parting shots**

URGENT PUBLIC HEALTH WARNING

This is going to be pretty hard-core linguistics
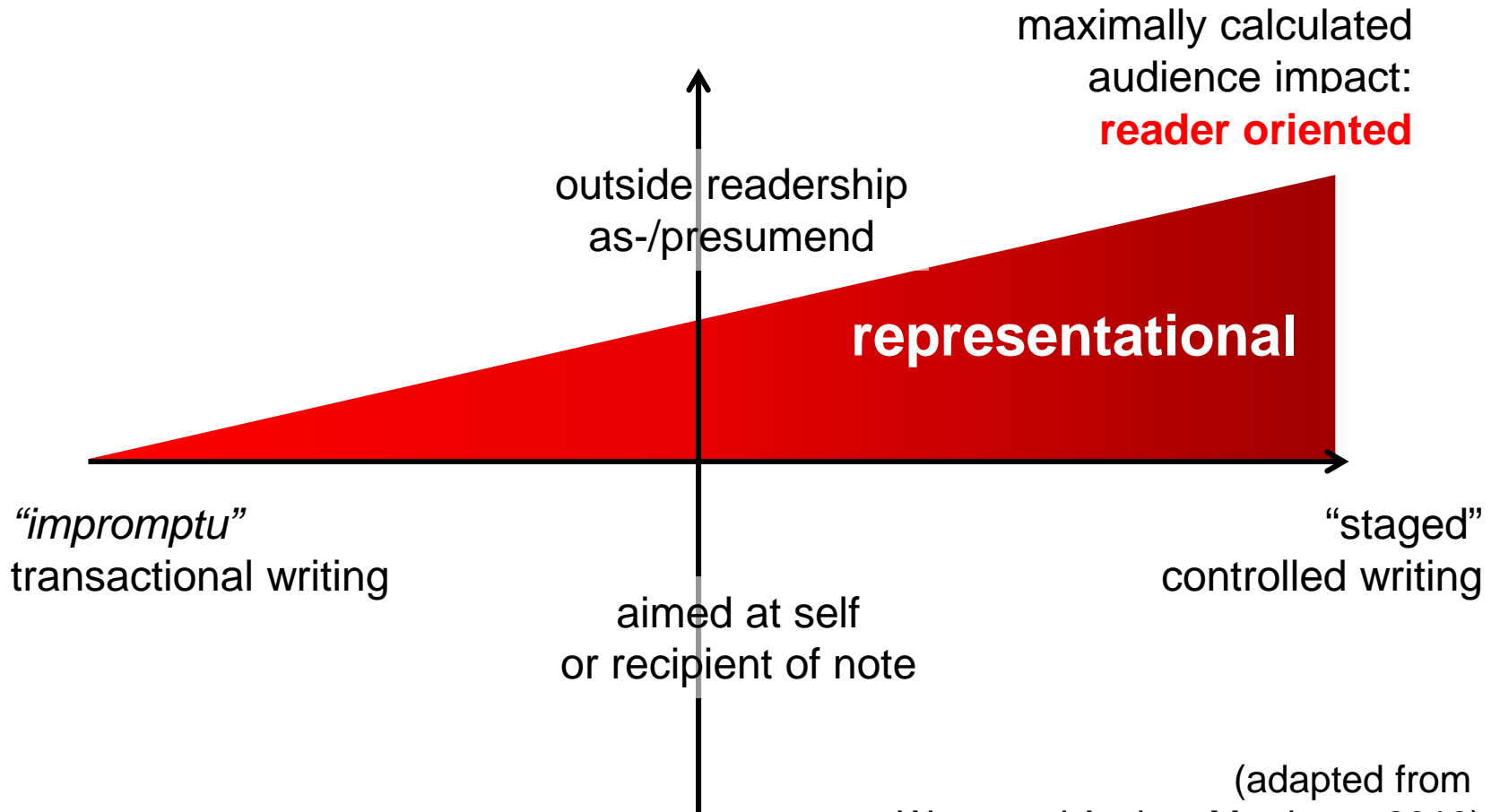
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Literature/literature as Performance

Introductory considerations

L/literature as performance?

- **heightened "break-through" register**

- **basic / archaic meaning as a "work of art"**

- **but also...**

Calculating audience effect

maximally calculated
audience impact:
reader oriented

outside readership
as-/presumend

representational

"impromptu"
transactional writing

aimed at self
or recipient of note

"staged"
controlled writing

(adapted from
Watts and Andres Morrissey 2019)

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L/literature as performance?

- heightened "break-through" register

- basic / archaic meaning as a "work of art"

- representational performance
  - audience-directed specific aim of the "performance" (readership awareness)
  - rehearsed in the sense of carefully contrived (conceived and edited)
  - is "staged",
  - may affect the environment,
  - may define the individual actor and the community

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L/literature may do all these

entertain

conduct a ritual

present a self / selves

use language for effect

influence surroundings

bond with others ?

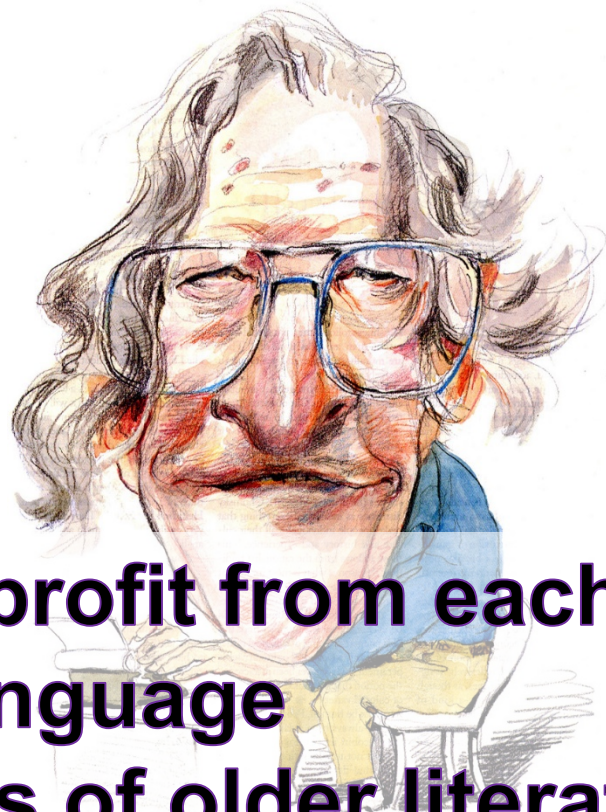educate

conform to norms

persuade

fulfil expectations

exercise control ?

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Literature/literature and Linguistics

Common grounds or incompatibility

Literary scholars and linguists

- both disciplines profit from each other
- literature uses language
- linguistic analysis of older literature gives insights into historical forms
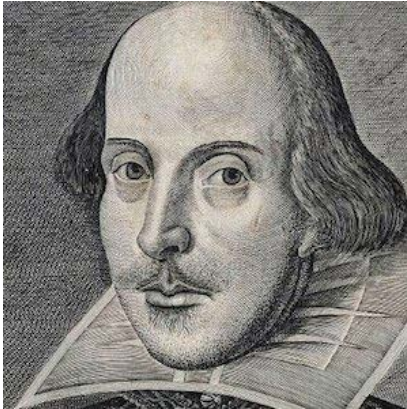
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A fruitless question

What is L/literature?

Perhaps a less fruitless question:

Is there something about the language of L/literature that makes the difference?

Some prototypical examples

William Shakespeare

Charles Dickens

Emily Brontë

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Something about the language?

Get thee to Gloucester, Essex. Do thee to Wessex, Exeter.

Fair Albany to Somerset must eke his route.

And Scroop, do you to Westmoreland, where shall bold York

Enrouted now for Lancaster, with forces of our Uncle Rutland,

Enjoin his standard with sweet Norfolk's host.

Fair Sussex, get thee to Warwicksbourne,

And there, with frowning purpose, tell our plan

To Bedford's tilted ear, that he shall press

With most insensate speed

And join his warlike effort to bold Dorset's side.

I most royally shall now to bed,
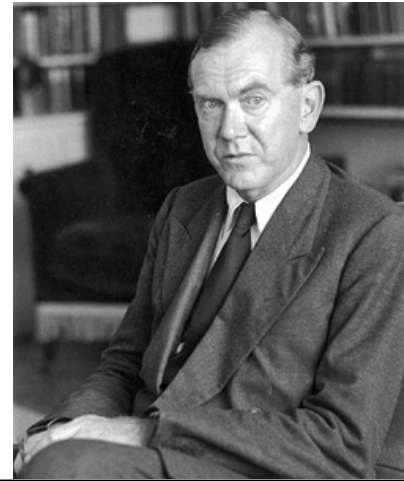
To sleep off all the nonsense I've just said.

Some prototypical (?) examples

Graham Greene ?

Roger McGough ?

John le Carré ?

How to approach a (literary) text

Focus on … language

An opening of a poem

No coward soul is mine,

No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:

I see Heaven's glories shine,

And faith shines equal, arming me from Fear.

Emily Brontë

I don't have a coward's/cowardly soul

my soul isn't cowardly

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1. Segmental considerations

2. Prosodic considerations

No coward soul is mine,

↓   ↓

nəʊ kaʊwərd səʊl ɪs maɪn

s?   s   w   s   w   s

u^b

No coward soul is mine,

↓   ↓

nəʊ kaʊwərd səʊl ɪs maɪn

s?   S   w   S   w   s

3. Word formation (b

griːn haus
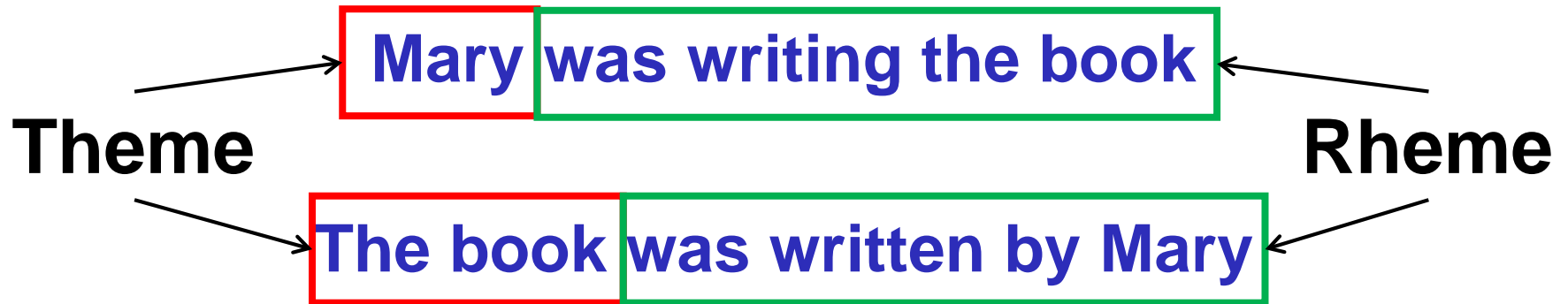s   w

kaʊwərd səʊl
S   w   s

spec=N   head=N

griːn   haus
w   s

kaʊwərd   səʊl
s   w   S

spec=adj. +   head=N

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4. Theme-Rheme organisation a)

Theme

| Mary | was writing the book |

Rheme

| The book | was written by Mary |

Theme (= focus on)

Mary   the book

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4. Theme and word classes

I don't have a cowardly soul

Theme

my soul isn't cowardly

No coward soul is **mine**

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5. Syntactic analysis
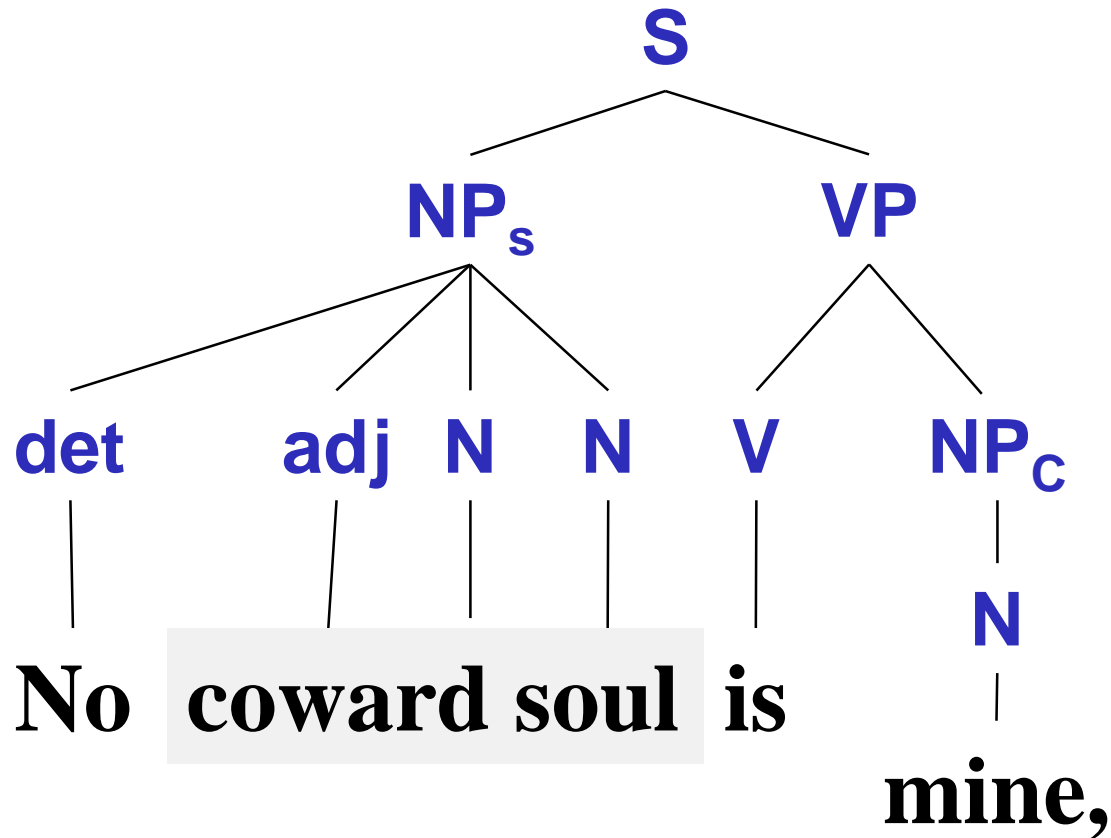
S

NP$_s$ VP   NP$_s$ V $_{linking}$ NP$_c$

det   adj N   N   V   NP$_C$ NP$_s$ =   NP$_c$

No **coward soul** is

N

mine,

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A methodology

analysing text with linguistic means

What we have done a)

We used a simple (simplistic?) method to examine a text:

- **phonology (segmental and suprasegmental)**
- **morphology (compound vs. adj + N)**
- **Semantic analysis (theme/rheme, word classes and their meaning)**
- **Syntactic structure (equivalence of NPs)**
- **Discourse ('register' literary vs. everyday style)**

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What we have done b)

We documented each step of the analysis in detail

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What we have done c)

We explored an approach that others can repeat

- **on the same text**

- **or on a different one:**
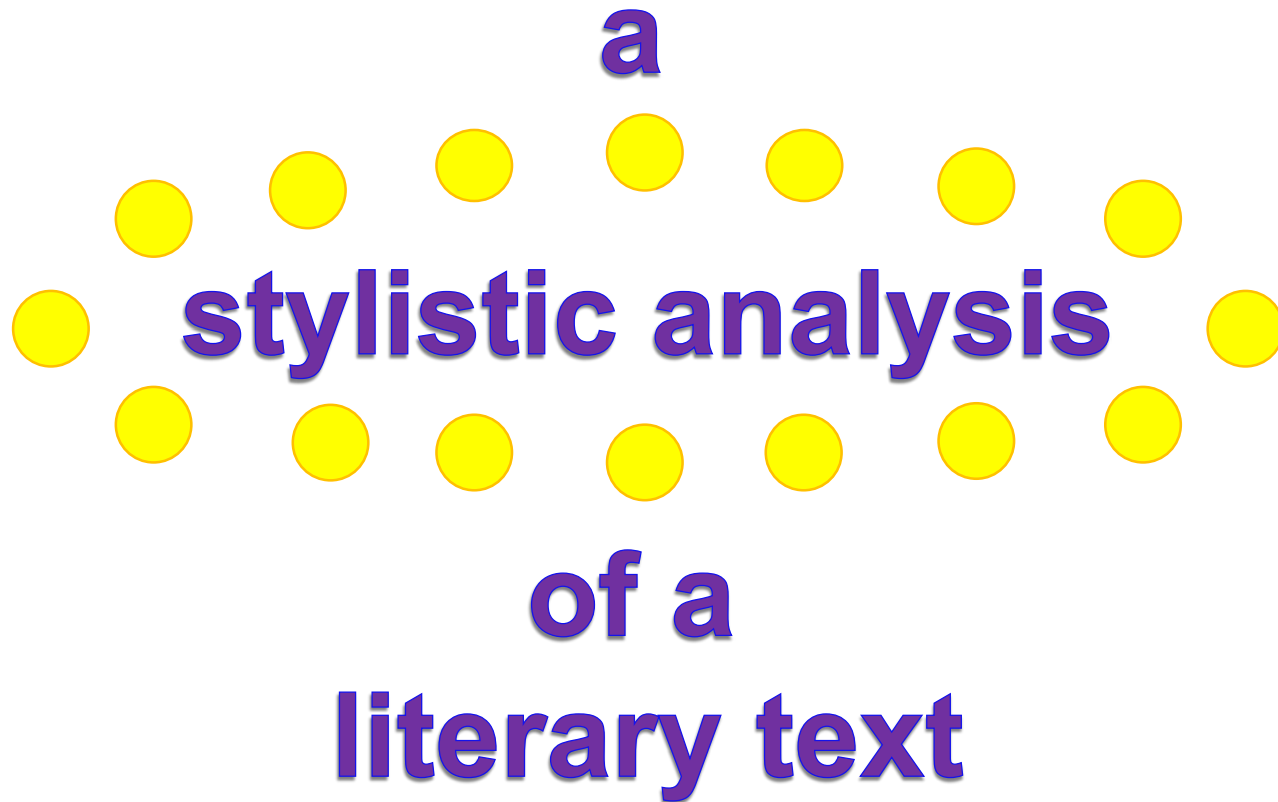
The tide rises, the tide falls

The twilight darkens, the curlew calls.

(Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

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a

stylistic analysis

of a
literary text

Simpson's 'Three R's' (2004: 4)

Stylistic Analysis must be

Rigorous

→ based on a clear and explicit framework
of linguistic analysis   **What we have done a)**

Retrievable

→ *analysis needs to be* 'documented'
clearly   **What we have done b)**

Replicable

→ others must be able to repeat the same
analysis   **What we have done c)**

on the same and on other texts

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Basic terms and concepts

остранение "estrangement"
defamiliarisation
"friction"

↓

foregrounding
"markedness"

What 'draws attention'?

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Foregrounding:

Pieter Bruegel the Elder: De val van Icarus

Basic terms and concepts ctd.

остранение "estrangement"
defamiliarisation
"friction"

⬇

foregrounding
"markedness"

parallelism   **deviation**

text-internal   **external**

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Basic terms and concepts concl.

foregrounding
"markedness"

Which field(s) of linguistics is/are most useful for an explanation?

parallelism

repeated patterns

- sound
- syntactic structures
- verbal "quirks"
- etc.

deviation

text-internal

changes in
- repeated patterns
- speaker perspective…

external

what we would expect in
- our world
- the language
- the genre …

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To consider before we wind up

Criticism from the literary side:

Stylistics

- is mechanistic
- is only ever deductive
- does not give any insights into literary or cultural theory
- provides no insights into aestheticism
- or the creative urge to write (and read)

… but focusing on the concrete, it avoids fruitless speculation, e.g. about what the writer was trying to say

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That's it for today...
See you next week when
we will have a look at

Trust me, I'm a Poet (or so...)

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