

Literary Lexicon

Lexique de termes littéraires

- absolu** *adj.* absolute; without restriction or reservation: as in *le pouvoir absolu*; that which exists apart from any condition (opposite of *relatif*): *Dieu est un absolu.*
- abstrait** *adj.* abstract, the opposite of *concret*; quality of language which avoids particular examples (*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*). An abstract style concentrates more on ideas than on the description of objects or people. *Le style de La Rochefoucauld est abstrait; celui de La Bruyère est plus concret.*
- accent** *m.* stress; grammatical accent, tone
- accent tonique** *m.* stress falling on last syllable of a rhythmic group, also called **accent d'intensité**
- accentué** *adj.* stressed
- accumulation** *f.* the amassing of details in order to produce a strong effect
- achevé** *adj.* perfect
- affectif** *adj.* emotional (effect, use of word, etc.)
- agencement** *m.* arrangement, fitting together, ordering
- alexandrin** *m.* line of poetry containing 12 syllables (see *Versification*, p. 5)
- allégorie** *f.* the expression of ideas, moral qualities, or other abstractions, in concrete terms, frequently in figurative or symbolic language requiring interpretation; a way of creating multiple meanings in a story or poem. A common device is that of personification. (e.g., an aged man representing Time)
- allitération** *f.* repetition of consonants in proximity to each other, especially at the beginning of words or of stressed syllables, in order to produce a certain harmonic effect. (e.g., *Pour qui sont ces serpents qui sifflent sur vos têtes?* — Racine)
- allusion** *f.* (*faire allusion à*) a passing, but significant, reference to a well-known person, place, or event, presumably, if not necessarily, recognizable to the reader.

ambiance *f.* mood found throughout a literary work or some part of it
ambiguïté *f.* vagueness in use of words; expression of multiple meanings by single words or phrases
anachronisme *m.* something happening or represented as happening (or existing) out of its proper historical time
analogie *f.* partial resemblance between two things which outwardly do not resemble each other, as for example, a poem and a painting; a general term for figures involving comparison, such as simile or metaphor
analyse *f.* opposite of **synthèse**; separating the parts of whole; the close examination of a literary work, in whole or in part
anaphore *f.* device which consists in repeating the opening word or phrase in a series of successive clauses, sentences, or verses, e.g.,

Rome, l'unique objet de mon ressentiment!

Rome, à qui vient ton bras d'immoler mon amant!

Rome qui t'a vu naître, et que ton cœur adore!

Rome enfin que je hais parce qu'elle t'honore! — Corneille

anticlimax "The fifth act is an anticlimax." "Avec le cinquième acte nous retombons dans l'ordinaire, dans le trivial."

antiphrase *f.* device of saying the opposite of what one means: the designation of a person or thing by its opposite; the effect is usually ironical
antithèse *f.* (adj., antithétique) device of juxtaposing contrasting expressions, words, or ideas, frequently in balanced syntactical arrangement (e.g., *Triste amante des morts, elle hait les vivants.* — Voltaire; *Car le jeune homme est beau, mais le vieillard est grand.* — Hugo)

aphorisme *m.* a short, concentrated statement of a truth or principle (e.g., *Tel père, tel fils*)

apostrophe *m.* device of addressing persons present or absent, an inanimate object or a personified abstraction (e.g., *O lac! l'amiée à peine a fini sa carrière* — Lamartine)
archaïsme *m.* use of old words or expressions no longer current in common speech

archétype *m.* a term borrowed from the psychology of C. G. Jung, much in favor since the 1930s. It is applied to a character type or plot pattern which recurs in literature and folklore, and is thought to evoke profound responses in the reader by appealing to a "collective unconscious" or racial memory shared by all men. Typical archetypes are the death-rebirth theme, the journey under the sea, the images of the Fatal Woman, the Devil, and God.

assonance *f.* repetition of the same accented vowel or diphthong in associated words, usually at the end of two successive verses. Assonance differs from rhyme in taking no account of the consonant which follows the accented vowel. The earliest French poetry is assonanced, not rhymed (the *Chanson de Roland*, for example).

atmosphère *f.* a general, pervasive mood evoked by a passage or poem, causing the reader to expect a certain course of events, happy or disastrous

audience public or auditoire

background cadre, milieu, or décor

balance équilibre (*m.*)

barbarisme *m.* use or instance of use of words or forms not existing in a language or not recognized as standard; the use of such words or forms
бинаire *adj.* by twos, as **rythme binaire**

cacophonie *f.* the result of harsh combinations of sounds, words, etc.

cadence *f.* (adj., cadence) flow of rhythm; the ending of a sentence, line of verse, hemistich, etc., which receives a vocal stress

cadre *m.* literally, frame; physical background, in fiction; the lay-out (plan) of a literary work

caractère *m.* (adj., caractéristique) fictional character viewed as a moral entity or type; a way of feeling and acting which distinguishes an individual or group
caricature *f.* a picture, description, or imitation of a person, literary style, etc., which deliberately distorts and exaggerates features or mannerisms for satirical effect

césure *f.* pause, following a stress accent, dividing a line of poetry (see *Versification*, p. 5)

chef-d'œuvre *m.* (pl., chefs-d'œuvre) masterpiece

cheville *f.* "padding"; syllable, word, or group of words used only to fill out a line or establish a rhyme

chiasme *m.* chiasmus (placing crosswise); device of inverting the second part of a phrase so as to reverse a somewhat parallel construction, e.g.,

Tout le jour il erra le long de la ravinée,

Admirant tour à tour le ciel, face divine,

le lac, divin miroir. — Hugo

circumlocution périphrase (*f.*)

classicisme *m.* (adj., classique) name given at the end of the 18th century to the general disposition of the 17th as represented by such writers as Pascal, Molière, La Bruyère, Racine, Boileau, La Fontaine. In general, classicism stressed reason and *bon sens*, the study of those aspects of human nature common to all men, external nature studied essentially in relationship to man, rather than for itself, and optimism and respect for human life. As for form, characteristic of classicism is the observance of strict rules in poetry regarding such things as rhyme, the caesura, hiatus, and enjambement. The classic vocabulary was voluntarily restricted. Simplicity was prized, and meaning expressed luminously and lucidly.

classique *adj.* term used to designate writers and writings of the 17th century

cliché *m.* trite or hackneyed thought or expression (e.g., *la couleur argentée de la lune*)

climat *m.* background or atmosphere

climax point culminant (*m.*) or crise (*f.*)
commentaire *m.* intervention by the narrator, discussing the characters or action of his story

comparaison *f.* simile, the simplest of analogical constructions, always with two terms, and using a word like *comme* or *tel*. Typically, two ideas, two objects, or an idea and an object, are brought together. (e.g., *Je suis belle, ô mortels, comme un rêve de pierre.* — Baudelaire)

composition *f.* structure; ordering of materials

concret *adj.* concrete (applies to a thing or class or things existing in reality, as opposed to concepts, qualities, etc.)

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épitaphe m. short poem meant to serve as a funerary inscription; the tone may be solemn or satirical

épithète f. descriptive term, used adjectivally to express some characteristic attribute or quality

épître f. letter in verse on varied subjects, with a great range of tone; the best known in French are by Boileau and Voltaire

épopée f. epic poem

équilibre m. balance, such as that produced by like rhythms or constructions on either side of a caesura (e.g., *Vous n'avez qu'une fille, et moi, je n'ai qu'un fils.* — Cornille)

euphémisme m. a mild or agreeable expression substituted for a harsher or more realistic one (e.g., *Elle a vécu, Myrta, la jeune Tarentine* — Chénier, that is, *elle est morte*)

euphonie f. effect of a series of easily pronounced or otherwise pleasing sounds (e.g., *la fille de Minos et de Pasiphaë* — Racine)

fablé f. a fictitious story meant to teach a moral lesson, in which the characters are usually animals who talk and act like humans

figure f. any use of speech which modifies ordinary literal language to make it more expressive, generally used of recognized types such as metaphor, metonymy, etc.

fond m. content, as opposed to form

forme f. the organization of the elements of a piece of literature

formel adj. relating to form as distinct from content

forme fixe f. poem with set rhyme scheme and/or strophic structure

genre m. a category of art or literature characterized by a certain form, style, subject matter, or atmosphere (tragedy, comedy, novel, romance, etc., also drama, fiction, poetry)

goût, bon goût, mauvais goût m. taste, good taste, bad taste

group rythmique m. series of syllables pronounced as if they were one word, ending with an *accent d'intensité*

hémistiche m. either half of a line of verse divided by a caesura, usually an *alexandrin*

hiatus m. immediate succession of pronounced vowel sounds in the same breath group, unseparated by a consonant; forbidden in traditional verse (e.g., *il y a évité* in classic verse by using *il est*)

hyperbole f. exaggeration for effect (e.g., *un pygmée for un petit homme*)

idée principale f. central idea, in relation to which other ideas are organized

image f. an imaginary picture; by extension, word stimuli which appeal to senses other than sight

impar adj. uneven number, as in *vers impair* (verse with an odd number of syllables)

intention f. purpose

interlocuteur, -trice m., f. person who converses with another

intervention f. interruption of the story while the narrator comments or explains

intrigue f. plot, action

inversion f. a reversal of the normal order of words (e.g., *L'Océan de leur vie a pris toutes les pages* — Hugo)

ironie f. irony; use of words to signify the opposite of what they usually express.

Irony exploits the disparity between what is said and what is meant.

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conjunction f. conjunction (part of speech fixing the relation of one part of a sentence to another)

consonne f. consonant

consonne d'appui f. consonant preceding the vowel in *rime riche*

conte m. tale, short story; the distinction from *nouvelle* is vague

conté fond (m.)

contexte m. the totality of which the text under examination is a part; by extension, the surrounding circumstances of all sorts

couleur f. color, as in English, but also the general effect of a piece of writing (*la couleur d'un épisode*)

couleur locale f. customs and other features characteristic of a certain region or time, introduced into a novel, play, etc., to heighten realistic effect

coupe f. brief pause or hesitation (mental if not physical) following an accented syllable within a line of French verse (see *Versification*, p. 5)

couplet distique (m.)

critique m. critic; *f.* criticism, a review

décor m. setting, background

dénouement m. resolution of a play, or, by extension, a story

didactique adj. pertaining to teaching; intended to be instructive, especially morally instructive

diphthongue f. a complex sound made by gliding continuously from one position for one vowel to that for another, within the same syllable, as in *piéd, yeux, nation, huit*

distance f. sometimes *distance esthétique*; psychological impression produced upon the reader making him feel near, or far from, the action of a story or play

distique m. two self-contained lines of verse

dizain m. a stanza of ten lines

dominante f. a characteristic trait of style

douzain m. a stanza of twelve lines

durée f. time, duration; sometimes used to mean subjectively significant time, as opposed to mere chronological or "clock" time

e muet m. in French, *e*'s not carrying a written accent or followed by a consonant in the same syllable (other than final plural -s or verbal ending -nt); unaccented *e*; although frequently suppressed in speech, in verse it must be pronounced unless followed by another vowel

écoulement m. flow; time conceived as a continuum

effet m. effect (to be distinguished from technique); effect is what is produced, technique what produces it

élégiaque adj. having the character of elegy

élégie f. gravely meditative poem, formal and sustained, on a subject such as death, love, or suffering; Lamartine wrote the most famous elegies in French.

élément m. unit

ellipse f. ellipsis (omission of words in a grammatical construction)

émotionnel affectif, -ive

enjambement m. a run-on line in verse (see *Versification*, p. 5)

épique (noun) *épopée (f.)*

épique adj. epic (the noun is *épopée*)

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mythique adj. pertaining to or participating in myth

narrateur m. person telling a story, not necessarily the author

narratif adj. narrative

narration f. act of narrating; particularly useful to distinguish parts of a fiction in which the author is actually story-telling as opposed to describing, commenting, etc.

nasale f. quality of sound produced by not allowing air to escape through the nose, with the uvula (the back part of the tongue near the soft palate) lowered, so that the nasal cavity acts as a resonator. The nasals in French are *an, am;*

in, ain, éin, on, om; un, um.

naturalisme m. the variety of realism which developed around 1865. It assumed a "scientific" attitude, seeing man as a higher-order animal who is determined entirely by two kinds of natural forces, heredity and environment. According to

naturalist theory, the novel should be a form of human case history. The naturalist novel came to concentrate on the lowest aspects of human nature.

naturaliste adj. m., naturalist, naturalistic. As an adjective, designates the school of Zola and the Goncourts or a writer reminiscent of them; used loosely, as in

description naturaliste, it is indistinguishable from *réaliste*. As a noun, it applies to any writer who exhibits naturalistic traits.

nouvelle f. a fictional form of intermediate length, shorter than a novel, longer than a short story

novelist see *romancier*

octave f. first eight lines of a sonnet

octosyllabe m. an eight-syllable line of verse

œuvre m. works of a writer as a whole (e.g., *l'œuvre de Voltaire*: the works of Voltaire, seen as a whole); *f.* a literary work; *f. pl.* works of a writer (e.g., *les œuvres de Corneille*: the works of Corneille)

onomatopée f. word whose sound imitates its meaning (e.g., *cliquetis*: clinking of glasses, jingling of keys, clash of swords)

optique f. perspective or point of view

ouvrage (littéraire) m. a piece of work

oxyimoron m. a figure of speech in which opposite or contradictory terms of ideas are combined (e.g., *joie cruelle*)

pair adj. equal, even, as in *les vers pairs* (the even-numbered lines)

palatal adj. applies to sound produced in the region of the hard palate, or roof of the mouth; *e* and *i* are the *voyelles palatales*, *ch, j*, and *gn* are the *consonnes palatales*

parabole f. a short, simple story from which a moral lesson may be drawn

paradoxe m. a seemingly self-contradictory, unbelievable, or absurd statement which may actually be true

parallelisme m. close resemblance or identity in the structure of sentences or paragraphs

paraphrase f. reformulation of the content of a piece of writing using other words

paratactique adj. paratactical; applies to sentences or clauses syntactically independent of those preceding and following (e.g., *J'ai vu, je rougis, je pâlis à sa vue*—Racine)

parodie f. satirical imitation of the characteristic style of some other work or artist

partie du discours f. part of speech

pastiche f. a detailed and usually satirical imitation of the style and manner of a writer

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lexique f. glossary; sometimes means the stock of words an author commands, his vocabulary

liaison f. sounding of final consonant before initial vowel; transition (between paragraphs, moods, thoughts, etc.)

lieu commun m. a commonplace, banality, platitude

line (of verse) vers (m.)

litote f. device of intentional understatement, in which something is affirmed by the denial of its opposite (e.g., *Voilà, je ne le hais point*—Corneille)

locution f. group of words performing one grammatical function

lyrisme m. lyricism; singing quality or intensity of feeling in a poem

marivaudage m. the word invented to describe the refined and conscious style used by characters in the plays and novels of Marivaux; it is used more generally to describe writing which resembles that of Marivaux in its psychological subtlety and stylistic elegance. The term is sometimes applied to the use of language in a typical Marivaux "situation" in which two characters, when faced by a complication to the fulfillment of their love, make crafty and more or less consciously cruel attempts to force each other to express their feelings and often demonstrate a reluctance to confess the truth to themselves.

matière f. subject matter

maxime f. a concisely expressed rule of conduct or statement of a general truth

membres m. pl. parts; in literary analysis, the parts of a sentence

mesure f. meter in the sense of the rhythm or beat of a verse; rhythmic group of syllables occurring between pauses in a line of verse; also the quality of moderation, as in the language of the 17th century

métaphore f. a figure of speech which presents an analogy between two things without explicitly stating it (e.g., *"La nature est une temple..."*—Baudelaire);

métaphore incohérente mixed metaphor

métonymie f. a figure of speech in which an object or idea is designated by a word associated with or suggested by it. The effect can be substituted for the cause (boire la mort instead of boire le poison) or vice versa. The container can designate the contents (je bois un verre = le coffre en cède), etc.

milieu m. environment; social background, circle

mobile m. motive

mœurs f. pl. manners, customs, as in *comédie de mœurs, roman de mœurs*;

moral

moi (le moi) m. the ego, self

monologue intérieur m. the reproduction of a character's unspoken inner thoughts

monosyllabe m. a one-syllable word or line of verse

moment privilégié m. moment of special insight

mood see *ambiance*

motif m. a type of character, verbal pattern, or situation that recurs regularly in literature, art, or folklore; motive

motive see *mobile*

mythe m. archetypal story, such as may have been devised to explain some natural phenomenon or to provide a people with a legend of its origins; the distinction between natural and supernatural is regularly neglected. Greek myths are of special importance for French classical tragedy.

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qualification *f.* use of adjectives and adverbs to affect the meaning of a word, or

phrase

quatrain *m.* a four-line stanza

rapport *m.* relationship

réalisme *m.* writing characterized by extremely faithful attention to familiar, everyday, unpicturesque physical detail rendered in a matter-of-fact and seemingly unselective way. Written as *Réalisme* it refers to a movement in the French novel, at its height between 1850 and 1865.

réaliste *adj.* that which is characteristic of *réalisme* (see above)

récit *m.* an account, delivered by a character in the play, of action which took place off-stage (e.g., *récit de Thérèse* in Racine's *Phèdre*); a piece of fiction shorter and simpler than a novel, often narrated in the first person (the general meaning of *récit* being a recital or relation of events)

refrain *m.* a phrase or verse repeated at intervals in a poem

règle *f.* rule, such as that of the three unities

rejet *m.* the part of an *enjambement* which runs over into the next verse (see *Versification*, p. 5)

relatif *adj.* that which has existence or value only as a function of something else (opposite of *absolu*, q.v.)

résonance *f.* resonance

retour en arrière *m.* flashback

rhétorique, figures de *f. pl.* special syntactical organizations of words intended to produce a special emotional effect

richesse *f.* opulence of style or feeling

rime *f.* identity of sound (of the vowel and of whatever consonants follow the vowel) in the final accented syllable of two or more words (see *Versification*, p. 5)

rime féminine *f.* a rhyme involving words ending in a mute *e*, -*es*, or the verbal ending -*ent*

rime intérieure *f.* a rhyme involving words in the interior of a line of verse

rime masculine *f.* a rhyme involving words with endings other than mute *e*, -*es*, or the verbal ending -*ent*

roman *m.* novel

roman-fleuve *m.* novel continuing through a number of volumes (e.g., Jules Verne's *Les Hommes de bonne volonté*)

roman-journal *m.* novel in the form of a diary

romancier *m.* novelist

romantique *adj.* romantic; written as *Romantique*, it refers to members of the literary school (see *romantisme*, below)

romantisme *m.* term applied to the general disposition toward life and art of the Romantic school in the first half of the 19th century. Literature became a direct expression of man's senses and emotions, nature was seen as a reflection of man's inner world; the conventions governing classical literature were rejected as too rigid to allow the expression of fresh feelings and sensations, the exploration of new subject matter.

rule see *règle*

rythme *m.* patterned recurrence of stress accents; more generally, any patterned recurrence

sentiment *m.* feeling

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période *f.* période historique: a division of time, indeterminate as to length; période or phrase périodique: a rounded, closely organized, oratorical sentence, with subordinate clauses linked in such a way as to suggest grandeur of thought through apparent grandeur of form

péripétie *f.* sudden change of fortune in character's situation; *pl.* mishaps, adventures

phrase *f.* a figure of speech which consists of using many words where one or a few would do (circumlocution). It was extremely common in the 17th century when writers tended to avoid words deemed too explicit and specific by using indirect expressions, usually descriptive phrases. Thus, *le soutien de la vie = le pain*.

personnage *m.* fictional character

personnification *f.* device of treating an abstract idea or inanimate object as if it were human (e.g., *O la!... Regarde!...*—Lamartine)

perspective *f.* point of view; a proper evaluation with proportional importance given to the component parts

phrase see locution

pictorial *adj.* quality of being like a picture; striking, vivid

plan *m.* project, plan, outline; level, point of view

pléonasme *m.* the use of more words than are necessary for the expression of an idea. It may be mere redundancy or an attempt to reinforce the thought, as in *je l'ai vu de mes yeux*.

plot see intrigue

poésie *f.* poetry; poem, piece of poetry

point culminant *m.* climax

pointe *f.* verbal witicism; generally applied to a brief, subtle thought where the subtlety is obviously designed less to refine a given idea than to call attention to the ingenuity of the writer

portrait *m.* literary form fashionable in the 17th century, in which eminent members of society were described from a moral and physical point of view

préciosité *f.* as a linguistic phenomenon, exaggerated periphrasis. Strong in 17th century France, preciousness was a disciplined attempt to achieve distinction in manners and language. At its best this pursuit of elegance and delicacy in sentiment and expression led to greater precision and refinement; at its worst it degenerated into obscurity and ridiculous affectation, and was associated with excessive pedantry and prudery. Some neologisms of the period remain in the language (*flicicler, anonyme*), others have disappeared (*soupirer*). Archaic words, popular and technical expressions were excluded. Words deemed too crudely realistic, like *chemise* or *poitrine*, were banned. Scrupulous refinement insisted on saying *les chers souffrants* for *les pieds*, *les élus du cerveau* for *le nez*. The desire for distinction led to unexpected word combinations, the personification of abstract qualities, and grotesquely elaborate metaphors.

proposition *f.* clause

prosodie *f.* the rules governing metrical structure

prosopopée *f.* procedure by which either an inanimate object or a person who is dead or absent is made to speak or act

protase *f.* the first part of a période

purpose see intention

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series see *suite*

short story see *conte*

sifflante f. sibilant, that is, letters such as *f, v, s, z, ch, j*, where the escaping air causes a hissing sound

solécisme m. a deviation from standard usage, particularly in matters of syntax

soliloque f. soliloquy; the term *monologue* is used in the French theater

son m. sound

sonnet m. long-established poetic form of fourteen lines, the most persistent and durable of the *formes fixes* (see *Versification*, p. 5)

sonore adj. audible, sonorous

sonorité f. sound, quality of a sound

stance f. stanza

stanza see *stance, strophe*

stichomythie f. a *réplique* of one-line length; dramatic dialogue in which one character speaks a line and another replies by a line

strophe f. unit within a poem formed by a group of verses; in French all stanzas of a poem generally keep the same rhyme scheme

structure see *composition*

style m. a characteristic manner of writing

style indirect libre m. an internalization of the narrative, it approximates the point of view of a fictional character while retaining some of the detachment of the third person and avoiding the formality of indirect discourse (e.g., *Elle entraînait dans quelque chose de merveilleux où tout serait passion, extase, délire... Madame Bovary*—Flaubert)

subjectivité f. inwardness, preoccupation with one's own thoughts and feelings

suite f. series, succession

suite d'idées f. ordering of ideas, plan

sujet m. subject; broadest, most inclusive term for what a literary work is "about"

surréalisme m. an extremist movement in the 1920s and 1930s attempting to reach back to the preconscious mind by means of freely associated images

syllabe f. unit of sound, syllable

symbole m. an image used as a sign for something else, e.g., the scales as a symbol of justice

symbolisme m. the use of symbols; *Symbolisme* refers to the Symbolist school, which began around 1880 and which saw as the function of poetry the evocation of impressions, intuitions, or sensations in verse that sought fluidity and musicality

synecdoche or *synecdoque f.* a figure of speech in which a part of something is used to signify the whole, or vice versa (e.g., *Mon bras, qu'avec respect toute l'Espagne admire*—Corneille)

synesthésie f. faculty of responding with two or more senses when only one sense is being stimulated; in literature the term is applied when one kind of sensation is described in terms of another, for example, odor is attributed to colors, sound to odors, etc. (e.g., *Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants, / Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies*—Baudelaire)

syntaxe f. syntax, the part of grammar which has to do with sentence structure and the relations between words

technique f. the means by which an author obtains an effect

temps fort m. one of a series of stress accents, the recurrent heavy beat of a rhythm

tercet m. a three-line stanza

ternaire adj. ternary, made up of three parts

thème m. subject common to writers of a given time or recurrently treated in the work of one writer

ton m. quality of the literary piece which suggests a certain attitude on the part of the writer; the predominant character, spirit of a piece

tour de force m. a striking demonstration of the author's virtuosity and skill

tournure f. form, way of putting something

verisimilitude see *vraisemblance*

vers m. in the singular, a line of poetry; in the plural, verse

vers blancs m.pl. a succession of unrhymed lines

vers libres m.pl. in the 17th century: a verse form used particularly in the lighter genres, e.g., *faibles, madrigals, épîtres familières*; the metrical basis remains syllabic but the rhyme scheme follows no set pattern and the length of lines and stanzas varies; in the 19th century: a late 19th century innovation (ca. 1880) which considered rhythm as the only essential basis of poetic form; it abandoned both the division of the line into a prescribed number of syllables and the necessity of rhyme

versification f. body of accepted practice for writing verse, involving mastery of rhyme and rhythm

vraisemblance f. verisimilitude, imitation of reality

I. Glossaire

Binaire (adj.)—se dit d'un vers qui est divisé en deux parties ou d'une mesure qui a deux syllabes.

Carpe diem—les deux premiers mots d'un vers latin d'Horace: «Puisque la vie est courte, il faut se hâter d'en jouir.» (*Odes*, I, ii, 8)

Césure (f.)—repos marqué dans le vers de dix syllabes après la quatrième (quelquefois après la cinquième) syllabe, et dans l'alexandrin après la sixième syllabe.

Cheville (f.)—expression inutile à la pensée et qui n'est qu'un remplissage pour finir le vers.

Consonne (f.)—Loi des trois consonnes—principe de phonétique d'après lequel on évite de prononcer trois consonnes ensemble dans la même syllabe.—**Consonne d'appui**—à la fin d'un vers la consonne qui précède la voyelle rimée.

Décasyllabe (m.)—vers de dix syllabes.

Dissyllabique (adj.)—ayant deux syllabes.

Dizain (m.)—poème ou strophe de dix vers.

Eglogue (f.)—petit poème pastoral.

Élégie (f.)—petit poème consacré au deuil ou à la tristesse.—**Élégiaque** (adj.)—qui se rapporte à une élégie.

Enjambement (m.)—on dit qu'un vers enjambe sur un autre quand, le sens n'étant pas fini, il faut rejeter au vers suivant un ou deux mots qui en rompent la cadence. (Voir *Rejet*.)

Épître (f.)—lettre en vers.

Exegi monumentum—premiers mots d'un vers latin d'Horace (*Exegi monumentum aere perennius*) qui veut dire: «J'ai achevé un monument plus durable que l'airain.» C'est le premier vers de la dernière ode du troisième livre d'odes d'Horace, ode où le poète promet à son œuvre l'immortalité.

Fil logique—terme que nous employons pour désigner le contenu discursif d'un poème; ce qui en relie les diverses parties. Ce terme se distingue toujours des images d'un poème, car ces dernières peuvent n'avoir aucun rapport entre elles.

Hémistiche (m.)—la moitié d'un alexandrin. On parle du premier et du second hémistiche.

Hétérométrique (adj.)—se dit d'une strophe où le nombre des syllabes varie d'un vers à l'autre.

Homophonie (f.)—similitude exacte de son.

Isométrique (adj.)—se dit d'une strophe où les vers ont tous le même nombre de syllabes.

Liquide (adj.)—se dit des consonnes l, r, quand elles suivent une consonne occlusive, ou fermée (p, t, k).

Madrigal (m.)—pensée fine, tendre et galante renfermée dans un petit nombre de vers.

Mesure (f.)—1. mètre dans le sens de rythme qui domine dans un vers; 2. à l'intérieur d'un vers, division rythmique formée d'un certain nombre de syllabes.

Monosyllabique (adj.)—ayant une syllabe.

Octosyllabe (m.)—vers de huit syllabes.

Parnasse (m.)—groupe de poètes qui, suivant Gautier, se révoltèrent contre le lyrisme personnel des romantiques et épousèrent le culte de l'art pour l'art. La poésie parnassienne est surtout descriptive.

Pointe (f.)—un trait d'esprit trop recherché.

Quatrain (m.)—strophe ou poème de quatre vers.

Rejet (m.)—souvent confondu avec *enjambement*; quelquefois on distingue en appelant *rejet* le mot ou les mots qu'on «rejette» au vers suivant. (Voir *Enjambement*.)

Sixain (m.)—poème ou strophe de six vers.

Sonnet (m.)—ouvrage de poésie composé de quatorze vers distribués le plus souvent en deux quatrains suivis de deux tercets.

Sonore (adj.)—se dit des consonnes b, d, g, etc., où l'on fait vibrer les cordes vocales en les articulant; l'opposé de *sourd*.

Syllabe (f.)—voyelle ou combinaison de lettres qui se prononce par une seule émission de la voix.

Symbole (m.)—figure ou image employée comme signe d'une chose; fondé sur une correspondance entre deux objets dont l'un généralement appartient au monde physique et l'autre au monde moral.

Symbolisme (m.)—mouvement poétique français du dernier quart du dix-neuvième siècle; défini ainsi par Paul Valéry: «L'intention commune à plusieurs familles de poètes (d'ailleurs ennemies entre elles) de reprendre à la musique leur bien.» Des poètes compris dans ce livre, Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Laforgue, Merrill, Jammes et Valéry sont considérés comme des symbolistes.

Tercet (m.)—strophe de trois vers, usitée généralement dans le sonnet.

Ternaire (adj.)—se dit d'un vers qui est divisé en trois parties ou d'une mesure qui a trois syllabes.

Vers (m.)—assemblage de mots mesurés et rythmés d'après un nombre défini de syllabes; une ligne de poésie.—**Vers blancs**—vers non rimés dans les langues où la rime est d'usage.—**Vers libres**—vers de différentes mesures qui ne sont pas soumis à des retours réguliers (voir Nos. 11 et 12); chez les symbolistes, vers indépendants de toute règle traditionnelle.

Vers romantique—alexandrin de structure ternaire, appelé également *trimètre* ou *trimètre romantique*.

Voyelle (f.)—**Voyelles claires**—les voyelles [i, y, e, ø, ε]—**Voyelles graves**—les voyelles [o, u, a, ɔ, œ].