

A HANDBOOK TO LITERATURE

Seventh Edition



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omitted and Shylock allowed to "have his bond," the play might be made into a tragedy; conversely, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, a pure tragedy, was made into a comedy by Nahum Tate for the Restoration stage. In English dramatic history the term *tragicomedy* is usually employed to designate that kind of play, developed by Beaumont and Fletcher about 1610, of which *Philaster* is typical. Fletcher's own definition is useful: "A tragicomedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no comedy, which must be a representation of familiar people, with such kind of trouble as no life be question'd; so that a god is as lawful in this [*tragicomedy*] as in a tragedy, and mean people as in a comedy" (from "To the Reader," *The Faithful Shepherdess*). Some of the characteristics are: complex and improbable plot; unnatural situations; characters of high social class, usually of the nobility; love as the central interest, pure love and gross love often being contrasted; rapid action; contrast of deep villainy and exalted virtue; rescues in the nick of time; penitent villain (as Iachimo in *Cymbeline*); disguises; surprises; jealousy; treachery; intrigue; enveloping action of war or rebellion. Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* are examples. Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* is a PASTORAL tragicomedy. Later seventeenth-century tragicomedies are Killigrew's *The Prisoner*, Davenant's *Fair Favorite*, Shadwell's *Royal Shepherdess*, and Dryden's *Secret Love* and *Love Triumphant*. Such plays tended to approach the HEROIC DRAMA. The type practically disappeared in the early eighteenth century, although a number of its characteristics reappear in the MELODRAMA of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Transcendental Club An informal organization of leading transcendentalists living in and around Boston. After their first meeting in 1836 at the home of George Ripley, they met occasionally at Ralph Waldo Emerson's home in Concord and elsewhere, calling themselves "The Symposium" and the "HEDGE CLUB." Their chief interests were new developments in theology, philosophy, and literature. The movement was closely associated with the growth of the Unitarian spirit in New England. The leading members were Emerson, Convers Francis, Frederick Henry Hedge, Amos Bronson Alcott, Ripley, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry D. Thoreau, and William Ellery Channing.

Transcendentalism A reliance on the intuition and the conscience, a form of idealism; a philosophical ROMANTICISM reaching America a generation or two after it developed in Europe. *Transcendentalism*, though based on doctrines of European philosophers (particularly Kant) and sponsored in America chiefly by Emerson after he had absorbed it from Carlyle, Coleridge, Goethe, and others, took on special significance in the United States, where it so dominated the New England authors as to become a literary as well as a philosophic movement. The movement gained its impetus in America in part from meetings of a small group that came together to discuss "new thought." The group seemed to agree that within the nature of human beings there was something that transcended human experience—an intuitive and personal revelation. The movement informally sponsored two important activities: the publication of THE DIAL (1840–1844) and BROOK FARM.

Transcendentalists believed in living close to nature and taught the dignity of manual labor. They strongly felt the need of intellectual companionships and emphasized

spiritual living. Every person's relation to God was to be established directly by the individual rather than through a ritualistic church. They held that human beings were divine in their own right, an opinion opposed to the doctrines held by the Puritan Calvinists in New England. Self-trust and self-reliance were to be practiced at all times, because to trust self was really to trust the voice of God speaking intuitively within us. The transcendentalists believed in democracy and individualism. Some extremists went so far as to evolve a system of dietetics and to rule out coffee, wine, and tobacco. Most of the transcendentalists were by nature reformers, though Emerson—the most vocal interpreter of the group—refused to go so far in this direction as, for instance, Bronson Alcott. Most of the reforms were attempts to regenerate the human spirit rather than to prescribe particular movements. The transcendentalists were among the early advocates of the enfranchisement of women.

Ultimately, despite these practical manifestations, *transcendentalism* was an epistemology—a way of knowing—and what tied together the frequently contradictory attitudes of the loosely formed group was the belief that human beings can intuitively transcend the limits of the senses and of logic and directly receive higher truths denied to more mundane methods of knowing.

[References: Paul F. Boller, Jr., *American Transcendentalism, 1830–1860: An Intellectual Inquiry* (1974); O. B. Frothingham, *Transcendentalism in New England* (1876, reprinted 1959); Perry Miller, ed., *The Transcendentalists: An Anthology* (1950); Lindsay Swift, *Brook Farm* (1900, reprinted 1961).]

Transferred Epithet An adjective used to limit a noun that it really does not logically modify. Examples abound in ordinary discourse ("foreign policy" is *domestic* policy, and the "foreign minister" and "foreign office" are not at all foreign) and in literature (Carew's "A Rapture" mentions "Petrarch's learned arms"—an obvious transference). Sometimes, when we want to make a buck fast, we say we want to make a fast buck.

Translation The rendering of a work, originally in one language, into another. At one extreme stands the literal *translation* of the work into the other language, "word for word." "Word for word" is something of a misnomer, because what is one word in one language may amount to a half-dozen in another or may have no counterpart at all. *Translation* cannot take place consistently at the level of the syllable or the word. Even such common elements as number, gender, tense, mood, and aspect cannot be translated on a one-for-one basis. At the other extreme is the ADAPTATION of the work into the other language, an attempt to communicate the spirit of the work by adapting it to the conventions and idioms of the language into which it is being rendered. Each translator must strike some kind of balance between these extremes—which Croce called "faithful ugliness or faithless beauty." Some *translations* have great literary merit in themselves; notably, the King James Version of the Bible, Amyot's Plutarch, Schlegel's Shakespeare, Baudelaire's Poe, and Putnam's Cervantes. Chaucer was a notable translator, as were many later writers: Wyatt, Surrey, Golding, Sir Thomas North, Jonson, Hobbes, Pope, Longfellow, Bayard Taylor, Housman, Pound, Auden, Nims, Bly, Merwin, Howard—to name but a few.

[References: William Arrowsmith and Roger Shattuck, eds., *The Craft and Context of Translation* (1961); Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (tr. 1970); R. A. Brower, ed.,