

Front matter



Thinking at University

<https://bit.ly/4yZH1K2>

Bharat Toge

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Author's Note

The cover art and such other properties of the present book, which I am presently developing, will take the least amount of time and effort on my part.

Introduction

This book is not, say, **M.H. Abrams** (the Internet Archive has an older version of [A Glossary of Literary Terms](#) by Abrams available to borrow), something that you learn by heart, and **lest I be held to account for presumption**¹, here is my authority:

“Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.”

—Francis Bacon, [Of Studies](#)

Of the three types, this book belongs to the first, that is, *this book is a book to be tasted*. What is interesting here is the **metaphor** and I would invite you to think about how far you can take the **analogy**². In sum, it is my purpose that you become *acquainted*³ with this book. You are *encouraged*, but by no means *expected*, to read from or use the [General Resources and Background Reading](#) chapter, for instance.

I am designing this book to encourage a habit of looking up dictionaries and other sources. And I believe that the **concept** of the Sphinx is a great one. Therefore, **counter-arguments** such as “terms have been used without their meaning set out” I hope I have anticipated⁴. Think of it as a composite work which requires you to *complement* it instead of some infallible “Word was God”. What is the **allusion** in the last sentence? One allusion, one celebrated allusion, is from Apuleius and you likely already know about it. My **assumption** is that if you are interested in some *entity* in 2026, you do not need to scour printed materials that you may not even be able to reach for one reason or another. That said, my advice is that “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.”

The way I am writing this book, I know that it appears deceptively simple if we set aside the density. I am writing it in such a manner so that the reader deliberately thinks about what I am discussing on any given page. Matters like vocabulary are easily resolved by looking things up and since we are in the age of the internet and AI, I do not think looking things up is a topic to spend time on. That said, using particular resources, like the JSTOR database, I am going to include in relevant parts of the book.

I might as well add that you must note what I do, how I do it and why I do it. The verb ‘do’ is general and you may recall Macbeth I.i. So instead, you must note what language I use, how I use it and why I use it. To illustrate, if you have not already noticed, I have used **metonymy** by referring to Abram’s deservedly celebrated book through my use of his name. And there is **cataphora** also. My purpose of writing in the present manner is deliberate: I would encourage you to focus on the way I am writing to observe and learn from it. And that includes both what to replicate and what not to. This is an instance of, or is related to—I will

¹ This is a very old use of language and you will find style guides advising against its use. I am including this here precisely for the purpose of illustrating this stylistic convention to you.

² Metaphor is one thing, analogy another. Note the structure of the sentence—it is elliptic.

³ If I had used ‘be’ instead of ‘become’, my use would be of the *subjunctive* mood, which is being depreciated as are other stylistic practices in written English.

⁴ This will be graded down for word order—I will be told to write I hope I have anticipated the etc. following a Subject Verb Object word order. See P.C. Wren and H. Martin’s *High School Grammar and Composition*.

invite you to ascertain which—stepping out of the situation and thinking about it (as in discussing agency, free will, fate, destiny, *moira*, *wyrd* etc. and the plot of *Oedipus Rex*). In fact, the exercise is a simple one: read Book I of [The Odyssey](#) and you should grasp what I am trying to communicate. You will also realise the difference between **subjectivity** and **objectivity** as you attempt these exercises.

Finally, this work is oriented towards **literary research** and I am certain that critical and academic writing is intertwined with research. On a more serious note, I must add that much of studying is transformed from respective areas in philosophy and the language that is mathematics. There is much that is *metatheoretical* in what I am doing here, making observations about ways of studying these things themselves. In this vein, a point that I must make is that these days, people use these tools—mathematical tools—without knowing a thing about them and there are reasons for this, reasons which are better left for another occasion but you can refer to Walker (2016). And I mention [Up for grabs: PhD thesis available for Rs 30K in south Delhi markets](#) and [Datalab](#). However, I think it is Rabindranath Tagore whom this quote about the bird faith is attributed to and so I will link [k-LLMmeans: Scalable, Stable, and Interpretable Text Clustering via LLM-based Centroids](#) here⁵. Perhaps it is obvious that there are bound to be academic sources I can cite to support what I am saying. But until I provide the validation myself, I invite the reader to validate these rather strong propositions I am making. In a word, before you say (or even think about) ‘research’, ensure you know what it entails.

This is a reflection of years of work on my part and I am not expecting you to acquire certain skills, not to mention knowledge and intuition, in a short space of time. This I am obligated to qualify by saying that if you wish to ace exams like the UGC NET, you must not limit yourself and indeed, you are the only person who can limit yourself. I hope you will find the present work of use.

⁵ See Appendix A for a table comparing different clustering algorithms.

Abbreviations, conventions and typography used

In **boldface** are words and phrases you need to find the definition of, think about and learn. They are **concepts**. In philosophy, this is related to *noesis*. *Italicised* words and phrases are the ones you can learn about later on but I am including them to facilitate our exploration of the **domain** of **literary** writing. I must admit the possible counter-argument that this is overly advanced at your stage and I will do so by citing evidence to the contrary: I will request you to ask yourself if some external agency must determine what you can read, listen to, know about etc. as long as you are reading, listening to, knowing about *entities* (simply, anything to which you may attach a name, including **abstract things**) that you can know about without *transgressing* what must not be transgressed (knowing about certain information can be problematic, to say the least and the simplest example is knowing someone else's password(s)).

It should not be difficult for you to differentiate between italics used for emphasis, titles of works etc. (It is ~~the~~ *Ur Hamlet* that was one of the *real* sources of *Hamlet*.) and the particular use I have stated above. I have included a list of all the words and phrases in **boldface** at the end of this book.

Note that I have changed the **formatting** for AI responses to reduce the clutter. Examples of this include removing external links and the **citations**. The latter probably are hallucinations. I have **boldfaced** words and phrases and/or highlighted them otherwise for our present purposes (e.g., 'Metamorphoses' boldfaced).

This book uses standard abbreviations. A list is provided for your reference.

Cf. *confer*, meaning 'compare with'.

E.g., *exempli gratia*, meaning 'for instance' or 'for example'.

Qtd.: 'quoted'.

General Reference and Background Reading

What is Literature?

Start with [Chapter 1 in William J. Long](#). Actually, I would say just “सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरम्” suffices to summarise what Long’s chapter has to say. Yes, of course, there’s an additional element and all that it brings with it but my point holds.

Repositories, dictionaries, encyclopedias etc.

[Green’s Dictionary of Slang](#)

[OATD.org: Open Access Theses and Dissertations](#)

[Encyclopaedia Britannica 1926](#)

[Glossary of Greek and Latin Rhetorical Terms](#)

[OAPEN: free, public access to a large, curated digital library of peer-reviewed, open-access academic books.](#)

[Glossary of dramatic and theatrical terms - Cambridge International AS & A Level Drama 9482](#)

Dictionary of Themes in Two Volumes by Jean-Charles Seigneuret

In the context of cultural materialism

The now phased-out book, *Kshitij*, containing the chapter [“Upbhoktavad ki sanskriti”](#) High Art/Low Art. Start with Adorno and Horkheimer.

Digitisation of texts

[Venetus A \(Marciana 454 = 822\), folio 12, recto](#)

[Digital Criticism: Editorial Standards for the Homer Multitext](#)

Academic integrity

[Up for grabs: PhD thesis available for Rs 30K in south Delhi markets](#)

Underlying philosophical ideas

[Metaethics | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

[Philosophy Dictionary of Arguments](#)

[Science and Pseudo-Science](#)

[The Concept of Emotion in Classical Indian Philosophy](#)

An informed look at academic policy implementation in the UK

[Exaggerated Claims? The ESRC, 50 Years On](#) by David Walker

Imprints etc.

[Worldview Critical Editions](#)

What is writing?

Writing is 'something we write'. Yes, that is undeniably true but it is **trivial** and if I were arguing about the topic, I would say any random sample from a population, I mean person, of course, any random person from a population would give me that⁶. The problem with saying that “‘something’ vs. ‘all’ we write” is that the meaning intended by the speaker when the **utterance** was spoken was that at any given instance, if we write something, we call it writing. I would expect this kind of **reasoning** and since it was not to be found where expected, I have included it here for your benefit. So much for trivial answers for now⁷.

For various reasons, writers and readers and everyone in between romanticise the very idea of writing and you may find a large number of things said about it in ways whose aesthetic quality will enchant you and make you exercise the **suspension of disbelief** to possibly, but hopefully for your betterment, unimaginable extents. I for myself will give you an ordered triple for now: cognitive stuff, processor, cognitive stuff. This formulation of writing entails the following.

A simple block diagram of the writing process

Let me now move from the topic of producing **dictionary definitions** to that of *modelling* the **process** of writing as one which accepts *entities* such as **ideas and thoughts** or the outcome of *cogitation* (or **thinking deliberately**, for which English has words like ‘**reflecting**’) and on the other end produces **ideas** in ~~written~~ physical or electronic form (from papyrus, *taamra patra* etc. to present-day digital editions, something that lets us tap into **the subject of the history of printing and publishing**).

It is this block diagram that is responsible for works that talk about questions like ‘How should people be governed?’, which the present-day subject of political theory studies and of which *Arthashastra* is an example. The important word to note here is ‘should’. I hope I do not need to actually include a block diagram and that you can draw one based on my description.

One would dive deeper into one or another aspect of the **process**: for instance, how the **content** of an academic essay is organised (Introduction, Body Text, Conclusion, of which Body Text is key because it is *the argument*). This, incidentally, comes under the mechanics of writing, which is something best learnt by doing instead of using **some catechistic manner of teaching and learning**. To illustrate, consider the **hypothetical** situation that I am writing an **advertisement** of sorts for the present book. My **proposition** or **proposal** will be “*Buy my book now!*”, my reason for this will be along the lines of why it would help you with writing at

⁶ Note that ‘any random sample (person)’ is highly suboptimal: Lamborghini’s not advertising on TV is a good illustration of this. Also, you do not need to look at specific sources to gain this kind of knowledge: there is a Hindi film that gives you the same knowledge (not about cars, Lamborghini or advertisements) and I will encourage you to find out which—I know it is not easy but then ‘easy’ is ‘subjective’.

⁷ NCERT Mathematics has ‘trivial solutions of systems of equations’, so the reader may already know this, depending.

university and my evidence would be, for instance, the way information is communicated to the reader in this book. The real debate regarding ‘the way information is communicated to the reader’ is a separate one and out of the scope of this discussion ~~and we might discuss it on some other occasion.~~

Another example of an argument behind an advertisement is as follows.

Proposition: I will watch films from all production houses.

Reason (connected with Proposition using words and phrases such as ‘because’): I will have the opportunity to explore...

Evidence: When I was selective about watching (or not watching) from certain production houses, I missed some really good films I now think I must have watched.

This reasoning has an **empirical** basis: it *requires* me to **experience** watching films in a certain way. A question to you: can I experience *not* watching films?⁸ **Rationalistic** arguments would instead enquire: what if after all the experience that I could possibly acquire, I reach the same conclusion I initially held to be true? For now, suffice it to say that **rationalism** is not time-dependent but **empiricism** is and that is why the latter works for **free market economies**, which include the publishing industry. The term ‘time-dependence’, through the ‘**slipperiness**’ of language (more on which later), allows me to include the associationist albeit admissible example from the opening sequence of Vanga’s film *Animal*: the concept of measuring love using time.

A note on the **organisation** of the three components of the argument is in order. **Western tradition** requires one to write a **topic sentence** and frame the rest of the paragraph around this topic sentence. I encourage you to search for other **semantic equivalents**: for instance, how was it in Sanskrit? Bringing in Sanskrit to this discussion can be justified by starting with the abandoned proposal of renaming the Backus Naur form to Panini Backus form (Ingeman, 1967). Equally importantly, the tradition requires each paragraph to have its own single idea. We will see more on this later in the present book but let me broach it here itself that the **combinations**⁹ will be so numerous that coming up with meaningful possibilities would be an exercise in futility unless you are thinking of competing against machines (find out about Sedol and the game Go in ~~AI folklore~~). One analogue is found in biology: the possibilities for combinations of proteins, DNA sequences and the human genome. To put it into perspective, we do not yet have the technology to count these many possibilities even as we are anticipating developments in AI and quantum computing.

The two examples from the advertising domain clearly introduce the **concept** of an **argument** by demonstrating three **essential** components of an argument. Let us call¹⁰ these components ‘Proposition’, ‘Reason’ and ‘Evidence’ as we have seen above. Now, you must realise that in real arguments (*pointedly* not in the connotation of ‘argument’ as, for instance,

⁸ Cf. 08:10 to 09:40, Ep. 73, *Mahabharata*, B.R. Chopra. Closer than experiencing ‘not watching films’ is Gandhari’s experiencing not seeing. Another related idea is: how does this compare with ‘unlearning’?

⁹ nCr , or choosing r things out of n available ones to combine in a particular way, e.g., how many meaningful English phrases can be generated with a given set of words? There was an Indian scholar who worked on something related to this—poetry and combinatorics, I believe.

¹⁰ Remember that you can call a glass of water ‘Tom’ cf. [nominalism](#). If you need an authoritative word on this, refer to NCERT where it says “Let there be ‘ x ’ such that x satisfies...” —you get my drift.

Achilles and Agamenon had), things will not be this simple. For instance, if John Kerrigan argues about Shakespeare's originality, he will not be able to give you a short three-sentence argument (or a syllogism) unless he is performing **reductionism**¹¹ to an extreme limit. To give you another example: reducing a 500-page novel to a 500-word summary does not give you a substitute. Instead, it gives you a plot, more or less, that you can compare with any of the **types**¹². We will discuss summarising later. A ready example of such 'types' is the song with the **catalogue**, or list, of stories that follow the same patterns: *Chali Kahani* from *Tamasha*. With this, I hope I have convinced you to conclude that academic arguments will be much more complex, denser and **larger**.

What are claims, or propositions?

I must mention this right at the outset: when I am using **vocabulary** to name these concepts, I am using words *flexibly*. You may not be surprised to know that the ancient tradition of the wise spelling out **definitions** continues to this day ~~and an argument against the recent claim by Mark Zuckerberg, one of personalised AI for everyone, would presume the continuance of this tradition.~~

How words are used depends on several factors and **expert or scholarly consensus based definitions** are the ones that prevail. It follows that who the experts and scholars and decision makers are determines what the definitions will be. So, when I am consulting a set of sources, I am making **ontological commitments**¹³. Therefore¹⁴, for the time being, when I say, "proposition" or "claim", I mean the same thing. With time, we will see if this changes and how.

Turning to spell out a **working definition** of the term 'proposition' (or 'claim'): a proposition is an **assertion**. Assertions are found in common everyday speech, e.g., "A fine day this is.", which can be **sarcastic** and therefore mean something totally different to what it appears to mean. Assertions can be scientific claims such as "Quantum mechanics explains puzzles such as Schrodinger's cat." Assertions are also exemplified as those from **discourses** in **metatheoretical** or **metanalytic** research such as the ones in the film *Bhoolbhulaiya*, with its commentary/take on psychology (cf. psychology, parapsychology and psychiatry as well as the 'replicability crisis' or 'replication crisis' in psychology). Of the latter, particularly concerning debates about **science and pseudoscience**, examples are numerous and you could start with relevant parts from *Prahaar*, *Shawshank Redemption*, *Forrest Gump*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (and its Hindi adaptation) or even *Dhurandhar*. I encourage the reader to search using AI to see if appropriate films are suggested—they likely will not be unless you precisely specify what you are looking for. Examples from other domains, to reiterate from the domain of advertising, include jingles (e.g., "Diamond biscuit!" from *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*, where the proposition is "Buy Diamond biscuits!" and the appeal to emotion or *pathos* is exemplified by the music and singing.). Closer to literary studies, it

¹¹ Here, I mean 'the practice of considering or presenting something complicated in a simple way, especially a way that is too simple' from [Cambridge Dictionary](#).

¹² cf. If there exists the term 'typology of narratives', look it up and this is where I would like to drop the name '**ontology**'.

¹³ One example of ontological commitment would be that God exists.

¹⁴ Notice my use of the word: use words only when you mean to use them.

would be of merit to know and quote that Salman Rushdie worked as a copywriter and had to write considerably for advertisements and all. To make it deliberately formulaic, as in ending a **mathematical proof** with a 'QED', I will copy the **sentence structure** above: with this, I hope I have convinced you to conclude that claims are assertions. Juxtapose this with the formulaic conventions in the **dream allegory**, or **dream vision**, of medieval times as seen in **Geoffrey Chaucer's** works, among those of many other excellent writers of the time. And to continue in my self-referential **style**, I will introduce a new concept and encourage you to look it up: associationist thinking (cf. Daniel Kahneman's concepts).

Formulating Claims

Let us now take up a question to explore claims further: "How does one literary text differ from another?". We will discuss later whether the way we are approaching the question in a certain way (which is where terms like/such as *structuralist* and *cultural materialism* will enter the scene). One factor or criterion that affects this is the physical form of the 'text'. This necessitates that we talk about how the physical object comes into being, and therefore about the history of printing and publishing. Previous to the advent of technologies that enabled us to use paper, materials used for the purpose of recording were derived from animals as well as from plants, e.g., sheep skin, goat skin and calf skin, for preparing vellum, parchment and papyrus. Johannes Gutenberg ("printing from movable type" [Britannica reference insert]) and William Caxton are two indispensable names connecting with the history of printing and publishing. You are already familiar with associated ideas: block-printed textiles are but one example and I would recommend you start here to know more about the process: [PIB Press Note on Bharat Tex 2026](#). Then there is Nitin Singhania's *Indian Art and Culture* book that mentions this technique of printing [AI says this statement is true and I invite the reader to fact-check it for himself]. Returning to different types of writing material used in other times, as I have mentioned above, there were media such as *taamra patra* (copper plates), stone tablets, clay tablets, palm leaves etc. and from the *Dead Sea Scrolls* to the *Vedas* to the many extant manuscripts we have preserved in various parts of the world constitute a wide range of material to study if you are interested in this aspect of literary research. Writing instruments, further, have a history of their own. Scripts, for instance, developed in keeping with the constraints these material factors imposed. You are already familiar with calligraphy and you will appreciate that one constraint in the development of scripts was that letters with sharp edges would tear the writing material in the process of being written down¹⁵.

Inductively, I can **generalise** that there can be several such factors particular to the times under consideration that affected the creation of physical texts over millennia. One **inference** or **deduction** that we can make from our discussion so far is that these constraints necessitated¹⁶ impositions on what was recorded. You can see that we have a claim which, though¹⁷ derived from the facts we have seen so far, is something we can be almost certain about. Almost but not quite. Because if I say that only and only what was

¹⁵ Note on language: You could ask "Can I use the expression 'the writing process' instead of 'in the process of being written down' etc."

¹⁶ Use of 'necessitated' here would be an example of **hyperbole**.

¹⁷ Exercise for the reader: do I need to change the 'though' to something else?

absolutely worth preserving was indeed preserved, I may make the error of excluding the **possibility** of the preservation of a great amount of records that perhaps existed and were even passed down the ages. That is precisely why I would want to qualify, or limit in scope, our inferred claim: these constraints necessitated impositions on what was recorded, prioritising that which was prized¹⁸ above all by the people who recorded it. Again, examples abound: from Noah's Ark to the legend of the Elder Wand to present-day ideas of digital afterlives, you can trace how information survives time, its quality and its kinds.

Today, when everyone can, so to speak, self-publish, we have the much needed caveat against misinformation, disinformation and fake news. With advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI), the totality of which is basically breakthroughs in mathematics, the problem has become comparable with Medusa's head (or the three-headed dog or *what you will*). That is, with access to knowledge at different levels to any and every individual (or AI agent, for that matter), every individual threatens to become a source of knowledge, as it were. This is where I can introduce you to Aristotle's discussion of *doxa* and *endoxa*¹⁹ and encourage you to read from [Episteme and Techne \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#). The opposite position of this, say, discussing the wise spelling out how the world works requires us to first become qualified, apart from its being a political idea. If interested, you can start with Footnote 25 on NIRF Rankings and retractions. Actually, this gives me another opportunity to share how technology can be enabling: search on the internet something like "the idea of the wise spelling out how the world works" and see what results are returned. I must add that you will need to refine your search as you explore the topic.

What you have gone through is an example of a **digression**. We will resume our consideration of the idea of the physical form of a literary text and its connection or connections with the question we asked (how literary texts differ from each other). To **particularise**, I can pick three plays: *Oedipus Rex*, *Macbeth* and *The Glass Menagerie*. You can consider any other plays or literary works for testing your understanding once you go through this illustration.

For the first one, we know that it was performed in the ancient Greek amphitheatre and without roping in any other knowledge, we can safely **surmise** that the version that we have today must have satisfied some criteria relating to contemporary ancient Greek aesthetics. But there is one caution: what if there were multiple versions that did qualify as worth preserving but were lost in time? The question applies because we know it was an oral tradition and the play was not a religious text. In their time, the plays were performed and categorically not read. In fact, religion then is reconstructed today through these extant texts (read the abstract for Sourvinou-Inwood, 4997/2023). This is one factor that mandates that we appropriately qualify any relevant claims we make. For the second one, we know that were it not for Heminges and Condell, we would not even have *Macbeth*. Also, were it not for its popularity, we would not have it preserved even by Heminges and Condell. Further, were it not for its popularity, we would not have it on syllabi in the twenty first century²⁰. But wait: is there a problem with the last statement? I will invite you to consider the question deliberately.

¹⁸ Note the use of this verb: it comes from a noun and is different from the 's' (British) and 'z' (American) spelling distinction.

¹⁹ Things for which I would like you to find appropriate reading material on (books by Aristotle is the source, of course).

²⁰ What is the rhetorical device that these sentences exemplify?

The last one in our example: *The Glass Menagerie*, were it not for socio-political concerns near 1944 in America, we would not be reading the play in India (see also Bharucha, 2004). I invite the reader to consider the last statement as deliberately. As to physical form, which is what we were considering as a criterion for differentiating literary texts, we know²¹ that for *Macbeth* we would consult quartos, *pace* relevant scholars, if we wished to go about the play with a magnifying glass²². Note that here I am indeed roping in knowledge about the play as opposed to what I did while considering *Oedipus Rex*. For *The Glass Menagerie*, given that there was the Cold War and every other sensible observation that can be thrown in, such as the reach of the Western media (I have already mentioned Waves OTT), the physical form, now in its multiplicity and multi-modality, for example, ensured that *perhaps* more than *Macbeth* and *Oedipus Rex*, Williams' play was what people *consumed*. For such information, you will need bibliographies—and there are different types of bibliographies— Hunter (2001) is such a bibliography.

Apart from technological factors like the writing media and instruments, other connections that you can make between the physical form of a text and differentiating it with another involve considering what the centres of production of texts were in the time under consideration (e.g., monasteries, the church, the emperor, the pharaoh, Alfred the Great, Ashoka etc.), how religion affected their production and *consumption* (reading, performance etc.), the *techne* (e.g., as discussed in Horace's *Ars Poetica*) of composing literary texts, including **diegesis** (telling) and **mimesis** (showing), the language or languages in which texts were composed, circulation (local, regional, national, global²³) and access²⁴, literacy, geographical considerations (the Vikings' writings will have different preservation and transmission constraints than inland Middle English poetry, for instance), invasions (e.g., *Beowulf* in its original form compared with the version by the Church), physical (archaeological) evidence of the possible originals (inscriptions and to a lesser extent in the present context, rock paintings).

To conclude, note that the examples I have given, viz., the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, the *Vedas*, *Beowulf* and so on to *The Glass Menagerie* will constitute part of the evidence to support our claim that the physical form of a literary text can be used as a criterion to differentiate it from another and this will entail a consideration of the material aspects of its times. The discerning reader will connect this discussion with my remarks on the economic ramifications of bringing into this discussion the likes of *Macbeth* and *The Glass Menagerie* and juxtaposing it with Bharucha (2004) and Hunter (2001).

The mechanics of writing

Resources for academic writing

[Strategies for Essay Writing | Harvard College Writing Center](#)
[Essay and dissertation writing skills | Oxford University](#)
[The Thesis Whisperer Blog: 5 books to help you with your PhD](#)

²¹ Or I am telling you—hardly matters which as long as you bear in mind my remarks about the wise and all.

²² What did that make you think of?

²³ Cf. the Silk Road and how stories traveled across geographies.

²⁴ Incidentally, JSTOR has recently changed its availability from 100 to 30.

What you need to know to write about literary texts

Hyperbole is hard to defend: “I am the best professor in the world.” On the other hand, “Shakespeare is one of the finest dramatists of all time.” would be more palatable²⁵.

Analogies are necessary just as **metaphors** are. It is essential to know about analogies because they allow for mapping between **knowledge domains**, which is needed for **interdisciplinarity** since arguably, literary writing spans **all** experience.

Allusion: MND ass's head: see the section on Source Research below. I have already illustrated how metonymy can be used. I would like you to **keep an eye out for** how scholarly writing uses **figures of speech** and **rhetoric** to reason about propositions and my motivation for this is for you to critically think about any and every proposition before accepting, rejecting or qualifying it.

Approaching a text critically: exploratory research questions

If you are writing about *Oedipus Rex*, the first thing you need to know is that there exists **ethics**, a branch of philosophy. This domain of knowledge studies questions like the ones you encounter in *Lord Jim* (the commercial film *Kaala Patthar* was *inspired* by the novel). To write an **argumentative essay** on “What control did Oedipus have?”, you need to make **ontological commitments** about, for instance, the existence and role of concepts such as *moira* and *wyrd*, which have different meanings in the original. A comparison with any other text, like *Macbeth* or *Hamlet*, would certainly reveal parallels. However, since Freudian fantastical theories have been discredited (start with Paul Bloom in *Introduction to Psychology*), it is essential that one question studies such as that by Ernest Jones. Given this reasoning grounded in authoritative **evidence**, you will appreciate the ethics involved: not only do you have to know, but you need to consider factors like what kind of evidence is admissible and how to approach this through an **axiological** framework. With this, I have set out ‘first things’ and **I encourage you to take it further from here. I will continue on this topic later on.** Until then, here are some questions to consider:

1. What makes some writing timeless, thereby allowing it to be included in Literature?
2. What justifies comparisons such as that of ‘Classics’ with ‘Modern Classics’?
3. How to account for **quoting out of context** and **logical fallacies**? Especially in a publish-or-perish academic climate?
4. What is **academic integrity**? How have things changed with advancements in AI?
5. How do **cognitive abilities** affect writing?
6. What is the litmus test for a work of literature in an age where statistics is the *de facto* measure—e.g., is popularity a measure of literariness?
7. What are some issues with using statistical patterns as a basis for decision-making? E.g., A. if the majority in the class understands, the class understands. B. How do you measure truth? You certainly cannot measure it in terms of percentage.

The following is particularly relevant to Empiricism vs. Rationalism and selectivity.

²⁵ Note the metaphor.

- 1 How to define influencing the psyche?
2. Influencing the psyche by influencing vocabulary from a particular ideological perspective.
3. How are **translation** and **interpretation** related, where by 'interpretation' I mean **hermeneutic interpretation** etc.? What is an **adaptation**? Example: distortion of facts as in Shakespeare's history plays vs. Jayasi's *Padmavat*.

Questions to ask

- a. Who controls metaphor?
- b. Metaphor in political discourse?
- c. Use of metaphor by academicians?

Reasoning: formal and informal

- a. Toulmin's model for informal reasoning in his [The Uses of Argument](#)
- b. Rhetorical Structure Theory

What is reasoning?

Long story short: proposition P is true or false or has **property** (cf. **the subjective experience quale**) X if certain **conditions** are met. The process of reasoning is the opposite of the process of thinking and deciding as in: "Oh! Wow! Such a pretty thing to buy! Let's buy it!", and the opposition is comparable with RBI cautionary advertisements against the **manipulation** of this aspect of human nature. It is these 'certain conditions' we need to study and to learn to work with.

Consider the conditions Daiches is tackling while writing his excellent work *A Critical History of English Literature*. Firstly, conditions that determine what goes into print and what does not have close ties with centres of authority. It follows that the reasoning used in an argument, since it reflects these conditions and assumes others, will necessarily be affected by them. To illustrate from the Elizabethan times, every play first had to be approved by the state before it could be performed. It was the Master of Revels, appointed by the monarch, that managed these records and one source, ~~one epistemological source~~, for scholars past and present to ascertain if a play was performed is the Stationers' Register. All of this bears on our discussion of reasoning because when you are analysing (or synthesising) an argument, you are using information that has been established using some authority or authorities. If the truth of this information changes, it is brought to notice in relevant circles (through publications, e.g., the journal *Notes and Queries*) and the changes are propagated in a top-down manner (from universities to schools, say). That is, that Shakespeare wrote 38 plays has been established by scholarly authority and students reading about this the world over will be reading this because it is an established fact about his plays. On the contrary, information that is likely to be disputed by scholars or that is still open to scrutiny, will not be part of standard curricula even though you may find it in sources such as Wikipedia, which is why it is not advisable to use such sources for certain purposes. Facts like the number of plays by Shakespeare being 38 may change in the future but it is highly unlikely that they will. The fact of the matter is that a few plays attributed to Shakespeare have substantial parts by others, including Marlowe (to the reader: fact-check some of this). **Therefore, conditions that determine what goes into print include the state of the knowledge at the time of its writing (Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a good example of a writer synthesising the totality of knowledge in his time and this is a characteristic of epic poetry) and the resources available to the author (by which I mean availability of people, reference material, access to knowledge bases etc.). In literary arguments, these conditions manifest themselves visibly in review works and such other works (such as Sullivan Jr.'s *Recent Studies in Tudor and Stuart Drama*, which is available for reading online for personal JSTOR accounts). A final word on sources for now: it is of use and relevance to add that sources themselves change and two particular examples in this relation are the facts that the Encyclopedia Britannica is no longer available in print (see [After 244 Years, Encyclopaedia Britannica Stops the Presses - The New York Times](#)) and that the US has taken down the CIA World**

Fact Book from the public internet (see [Spotlighting The World Factbook as We Bid a Fond Farewell - CIA](#)). You can compare this with reporting or citing information from **ephemera**.

For another illustration close to literary studies, let us look at the history of how Shakespeare's plays have been categorised over the centuries. Originally, when they were first published in the First Folio, they were set out as tragedies, comedies and histories (~~which incidentally is a previous year UGC NET English question~~). Today, apart from these three groups, we have the Roman and Greek plays and the 'problem plays'. The takeaway here is that it is the later scholarly or academic division that assigns these categories to the respective works. The people who proposed these groupings would have given their **reasoning** for doing so, which includes developing English Studies as a formal course²⁶. You will appreciate this if first you realise that English once had a status lower to Latin, which would parallel the status of the vernacular in relation to that of Sanskrit. For the interested reader, today this topic is studied under *linguistic typology*. All the same, you will find the same studied under history of language and literature as well. You are right to **infer** that this is, among other things, about turf-wars.

You should compare this with the development of the 'artificial epic', e.g., Milton reorganised his *magnum opus*²⁷ to conform to the 12-book format instead of the original 10 books. Milton's **reasoning** was that he did so to align the number of books of his epic with the tradition of epic poetry²⁸. The comparison is suggested for you to observe that it is human agency, doubtless authoritative, that first ~~determines~~ invents and then propagates these intangible entities, in the present case *categories* and *formal* features respectively, to posterity. The original motivation behind the development of the FF was to preserve Shakespeare's works. *That behind the second one was to propagate the English achievements that the British Empire boasted at its height. The fact that such literature was produced is a reflection of the material achievements of the times, which facilitated the production of literature. I must also add that Milton was a deeply religious individual—one of the most prominent ones in his day and Paradise Lost was in the main²⁹ about religion and politics.*

As another exercise, I will encourage you to ascertain if other than the categories I have mentioned above, there were others that have been suggested or used. You can start with **variorum** editions of Shakespeare's plays.

A. Toulmin's model for informal reasoning

Toulmin's model of argumentation is a functional framework for analyzing everyday informal logic, comprising six core parts: **Claim, Grounds, Warrant, Backing, Qualifier, and Rebuttal**. Developed by British philosopher Stephen Toulmin in 1958, it maps how people justify practical arguments rather than strict mathematical proofs. Source: Google AI Overview

²⁶ For more on this last part, start with Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory* Introduction and Chapter 1.

²⁷ Using this phrase is a stylistic flourish on my part just to make an exercise out of it, if truth be told.

²⁸ And this might make you wonder why he did not follow the ancient Greek convention instead.

²⁹ Modern style guides and current technology will have me write "mainly" or some such other expression instead, but more on this later.

C. Rhetorical Structure Theory

[later.]

Paraphrasing and Summarising as skills AI is still learning

[this is a research topic in itself; I am sharing something on this below.]

Related Notes [detail redacted]

1. How are translation and interpretation related, where by interpretation I mean hermeneutic interpretation etc.? what is an adaptation?
2. critiques of empiricism
3. LLMs modelled as summarisers:
 - a. Why would I use something other than latent space analysis?
 - b. "Absolute Interpretability (Explainability) Latent Space: Yields a dense vector of raw numbers (e.g., [0.12, -0.45, ...]). It is impossible to explain why two items are 85% similar." I recently said one cannot model summarising text with a neural network. Would this be the correct reason to say that?
 - c. What I said was that thinking of an LLM summarising text was not the best way to talk about summarisation in particular because what I had on my mind was that there was no telling what weights mattered in which layer and so on. Given this, revise your answer.
14. epistemology and evidence hierarchy
15. deductive reasoning evidence pyramid
16. forensic evidence hierarchy vs scientific evidence hierarchy are necessarily inverted
17. ai to format research papers over latex?

*

How a literary text is composed: Source Research

*Prompt: What is the golden ass by Apuleius; if "2nd-century CE satirical novel written in Latin by the Roman-Berber philosopher Lucius **Apuleius**", what was it categorised as in its time? Certainly, the concept of "novel" was not present then?*

The Golden Ass (originally titled **Metamorphoses**) by **Apuleius** is a 2nd-century CE **narrative** about a young man named Lucius who is obsessed with magic. He is accidentally turned into a donkey and undergoes a long, chaotic journey of abuse, observation, and sexual misadventure before being saved by the goddess Isis to become her devotee.

You are correct that the modern concept and word "novel" did not exist in antiquity. In the 2nd century CE, classical Latin and Greek literary theory did not have a distinct, formalized category for long-form, realistic prose fiction.

How it was Categorized in its Time

Instead of "novel," ancient writers and readers placed works like **Metamorphoses** under a few overlapping traditional headings:

- **Fabula (Story / Fable):** A general term for a fabricated tale or plot, distinguishing it from historical or philosophical truth.
- **Milesian Tale (*Fabula Milesia*):** Apuleius explicitly hints at this tradition in his prologue. Milesian tales were short, racy, entertaining, and often bawdy or magical folktales originating from the Ionian city of Miletus. However, calling *The Golden Ass* a Milesian tale is a playful understatement by Apuleius, as his work spans eleven extensive books rather than being a short anecdote.
- **Satire / Menippean Satire:** Because of its biting social commentary, shifting tones, and mixing of prose with high philosophy or low comedy, it shared lineage with satirical traditions.
- **Metamorphosis / Transformation genre:** Stories tracking physical changes (like **Ovid's** epic poetry) were a well-known category, though Apuleius uniquely adapted the trope into a sprawling prose narrative.

The Ancient vs. Modern View

The ancients viewed long prose fiction as a marginal, low-status, or purely recreational form of entertainment compared to epic poetry, history, or oratory. It was only much later—long after the Renaissance—that literary historians grouped ancient prose fiction (*The Golden Ass* and the surviving Greek romances) under the umbrella term "ancient novel" because they mapped structurally onto the modern prose-fiction format.

Searching: Deterministic and Non-deterministic Search

Example of JSTOR database search (advanced search option)

(((((academic writing) AND (ti:"20th century")) OR (ti:"twentieth century")) OR (ti:"20th c.")) AND (India)) AND la:(eng OR en)

Relevant Google Searches (non-deterministic)

1. all keywords related to X for university courses
2. X courses for Y reading list
3. journals for X
4. X catalogue Y

Example of research with primary sources:

<https://www.folger.edu/blogs/collation/>

Cf. The Thesis Whisperer and The Marginalian (formerly Brain Pickings)

Together, let us look up a few **definitions** of the following words and phrases on the internet:

1. Disputation, argumentation, [ethos](#), [pathos](#), [logos](#), Thesis/Dissertation etc.
2. Episteme, techne and doxa
3. Axiology
4. Ontology, ontological commitment
5. Abstract entities, nominalism
6. Paraphrase, summary and reductionism
7. [Empiricism](#) and rationalism

Critically Analysing a Text

Knowing sufficiently

To begin discussing critical analysis, one entry point and an associated incomplete **working definition** is: literary criticism involves performing what Matthew Arnold has proposed in his method of the touchstone. Arnold's point is that to evaluate a literary text, one must compare it with others that satisfy certain criteria. These criteria *can include* the quality of language employed, the clarity and quality of thought, the triviality of the subject matter or its timelessness, whether the text is by definition against the grain and so on. For instance, about the *Vedas* it may be said that these texts contain knowledge that speaks of and to the universals, assuming that the idea of the universals obtains³⁰ and this assumption further relates to questions like "Is nominalism a foundational pillar for empiricism?". As I look up the question on the internet, I find that my deduction was correct and I am writing this here to encourage you to observe what I am doing and apply it. See Footnote 7, the one about nominalism (naming a glass 'Tom').

We will return to this and such other concerns later. For now, suffice it to say that Arnold's metaphorical touchstone is *analogous* to (as categorically different from 'equivalent to') comprehensive frameworks meant for assessment. You can think of other analogues—in fact, I encourage you to do so. So, for instance, we could ask of a literary text if the language it employs is language worth speaking, listening to, reading etc. or if the force of ideology (or the market or some other idea) behind the creation of the text is such that it purposefully molds the language to its ends. To particularise, is certain language in a text present primarily because the text is written under the banner of **realism**? An example one can relate this to is the scene from *Jaane Tu ... Ya Jaane Na* where the protagonist Jai clarifies it to another character that the physical object the two see before them is the object³¹, not some transformed *fictum* of the imagination, say. To elaborate, compare these instances (language in realism and the film scene) with the purpose Samuel Richardson (1689 – 1761) had in mind when he produced his epistolary novels. Further, Richardson's purpose can in turn be compared with those of Saul Bellow (1915 – 2005), **the former being a pioneer of the genre and the latter writing in the epistolary vein much later in time**³².

What 'evidence' serves literary studies?

In any analysis, you need to weigh evidence as well as think about its admissibility. For a quick initiation into what that entails, you can watch *Shekhar Home*³³. If you can read competently, read the original by A.C. Doyle. To continue, to work with evidence, you need data, which may not be the most appropriate way to frame texts: we are considering abstraction and if I am allowed to metaphorise, **distilled abstraction**. That may just be the

³⁰ Authors love to use words and language that readers will have to look up dictionaries and other references for; this use of the word 'obtain' is but an example illustrating this idea.

³¹ That is, by virtue of being, refers to its own being. This is related to 'X is X' and I may discuss this point later. Here, however, it makes perfect sense.

³² This is most probably problematic because former and latter can refer to 'purpose(s)'.

³³ Read [a review of it from India Today](#) to observe the qualities of a review.

worst line I have written in this text so far, but the point here is that it is along the lines of “mixing memory and desire” (what is the allusion, reader?) that reading and writing texts is about.

1. Essentially, when I am reading a text to analyse it for its aesthetic appeal *inter alia*, I am relying heavily on memory and associations—without knowing it as well as consciously. Yet this is not to say that I will not be looking at the rational parts of the text. To illustrate, Edward Lear’s poetry is indeed worthy of appreciation but it is not for its rational content [I need to change that phrase] or wisdom (as in the *Psalms* and other **wisdom literature**) that it is appreciated. If anything, Lear’s poetry is celebrated for its inversion of rationality and would serve in tests such as nonsensicality (and this is very different from ‘the absurd’ of Kierkegaard, Camus, Kafka, Brecht etc.). This conception of evidence [do I need to change that phrase?] is a far cry from, say, the one used in forensic science, where evidence is not abstract like *thoughts* and *memories*³⁴ or vector embeddings³⁵, for that matter. Therefore, I have established the need to consider how the concept of evidence can be treated when working with abstractions.

Moving away from memory and associations, another aspect of evidence in literary critical analysis relates to ideological concerns. And this is evident in our example of language employed in realist texts above. In a frame removed from this one³⁶, we can consider **belief**: refer to the discussion on writing materials in this book and you will realise that perhaps you do not wish to read material about animal skin. Mangal Pandey and others’ concerns are a case in point and other relatively innocuous illustrative cases are hecatombs and *Jallikattu*.

“Upon investigation, Company administrators discovered that tallow or lard had in fact been used to lubricate the cartridges, and it was suspected that animal fat from pigs or cows had been included in the Mixture.” [Kaye's and Malleson's History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8. v.3](#)

[Is this an example of block quote, reader?]

This is self-evidently part of larger, unrelated debates and is therefore deferred to other occasions. There can be other aspects and for now I will turn directly to the sufficiency of knowledge.

It is a requisite in critical thinking (and therefore writing) that the individual critiquing a text knows sufficiently about literature to enable him to decide on the merits of a text [citations]. As a corollary, the question arises, “What is *knowing sufficiently*?” Now, that *does* necessitate reading *much* but it must be simultaneously noted that ‘reading’ as it is performed by people who ‘read much’ is drastically different from people who do not. And it

³⁴ You could and would talk about jurisprudence here and I can quote multiple examples but that is not what I am talking about here. I am talking about the quality of thoughts, memories etc. and not, say, about whether memory can be used to testify against someone.

³⁵ See *Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Forensic Sciences* by Geradts and Franke.

³⁶ Whether inside or outside this frame is immaterial here.

will not come as a surprise if I brought into this discussion ancient sages³⁷. If that makes your eyes roll, you can watch *Batman Begins*³⁸. I hope I do make a point—another inductive deduction—that directs your neural networks³⁹ to one or more of the words ‘universal’, ‘universality’ and similar ones. If by quoting *Batman Begins* I seem to be making a mistake, here is my alibi: [The Dark Knight | Issue 73 | Philosophy Now](#). That said, I must concede that *Philosophy Now* is not an **academic source** like an academic **journal**. *Of course*, my betters would reprimand/chide me for quoting non-academic sources and that is a different matter altogether and out of the scope of this writing.

There is, for instance, John Carey, an Oxford professor, who reads many, many novels in a single stretch. Now, take a moment to weigh this evidence. Once you have thought about it deliberately, compare this with the evidence from Henry James’ story *The Figure in the Carpet*, in which there is this character who writes book reviews. For another comparandum⁴⁰, we can consider the case of the writer of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien. The interesting part here is to ask, and this should occur to you as you consider the idea: where can I find this kind of information? You can start with the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Again, this resource, like many others, requires subscription or some other means to access it. And you can use this interactive tool to see for yourself what library access the world over looks like: [Datalab International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions](#). However, there are freely available resources from the [Oxford Dictionary of National Biography](#), like *Life of the Day* featured on the dictionary home page and the ODNB Podcast. Comparing the two pieces of evidence, you would first ask: evidence B (the fictional book reviewer’s reading habits) just cannot qualify as worthy of consideration, especially when pitted against exhibit A (the Oxford professor’s reading habits). And this is where I introduce Phineas Gage’s case, which I must inform you may give you the chills [is this an example of a phrase I am using just because it sounds good even if it is not the best thing I can say here?] the same way *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* does. Gage sustained brain damage that led to significant personality changes. The relevant part for our present discussion is that Gage’s case, before it happened, was not even considered a possibility. This is what fiction does: it operates in a realm of thought where possibilities change so that the space of possible entities is as different as the quantum and the classical physical conceptions of reality. Finally, one minor point I will develop later: Phineas Gage’s case is not one that allows for empirical experimentation (and thus replication) unless one is considering possibilities such as simulating identical or near-identical conditions. Therefore, I have established that a conception of evidence for literary analysis necessitates different ontological and epistemological frameworks [‘frameworks’, is that the right word?] than those for domains such as forensic analysis as manifested in the *Sherlock Holmes* stories and their adaptations. The funny thing with fictional entities is that they are at one’s disposal, be it

³⁷ Who at least Karnad’s narrator in *The Fire and the Rain* seems to think should have been bothered by insects in the forests where they performed their meditation—but there are some memorable things about *Ek Tha Tiger* the way/as there is a place for *Tere Naam* (see Adorno and Horkheimer).

³⁸ This is about Eastern philosophy and I can quote Niall Ferguson for authority.

³⁹ Which is weird thinking, I admit but I must also say that more than whatever Sci-Fi may have to say is happening in research laboratories as we speak. Again, evidence is plenty and of different types: from the domain of imagination, you have *The Hound of the Baskervilles* as shown in Moffat and Gattiss’ *Sherlock*. In fact, it is the other way round: what Sci-Fi features is informed by whatever permeates out of research laboratories, for which see [this open-access index of the Oxford Handbook of Research Ethics](#).

⁴⁰ A fancy word and as of now, there only because of its fanciness.

writer, readers or anyone in between. Compare "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; / They kill us for their sport" (*KL IV.i*). And the rest for later; for now *finis* for this one.

Evidence and source of knowledge (leading to *epistemology*)

“Tell me one last thing,” said Harry. “Is this real? Or has this been happening inside my head?”

Dumbledore beamed at him, and his voice sounded loud and strong in Harry’s ears even though the bright white mist was descending again, obscuring his figure.

“Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?”

—J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*

Example for **knowledge that needs to be protected**: Horcruxes. Cf. *Tantra Vidya*, *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown (in relation to the *Ramayana*, *Padmawati* etc.). A very good example in this relation is that of Bertha Jorkins in the fourth book.

The concept of consilience.

Physical evidence: manuscripts and archaeological evidence included (reconstruction of The Globe in Southwark, London).

Primary, secondary and tertiary sources (interviews as tertiary sources).

Direct correspondence with the author.

Paper trail.

Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) and cryptographically secure documents in our time.

Academic writing conventions

Things that you have to pay attention to when writing in an academic setting are exemplified by the following uses that you have come across in this book so far [as this book is developing in time]:

- a. 'Though' (under ...): the formal version is 'although'.
- b. 'Obtains': this use exemplifies a class that tells you 'this is how it is done in this branch of knowledge' without telling you why. You can find out why but this is less important than the fact that you need to follow the rule. This one is like tradition: you follow it because it is an indispensable part of how you do something in the given branch of knowledge. Here, since we are discussing 'obtains', you are looking at an example of how 'holds true' is expressed in philosophical texts.
- c. 'Quoting non-academic sources': this is not allowed in academic writing because it does not constitute evidence. For instance, you cannot quote hearsay in academic writing the same way you cannot quote hearsay or 'media trials' in a courtroom.
- d. Citations: the present text, as of the second week of September 2026, does not contain appropriate citations. Further, it contains hyperlinks to sources outside this text, which is *not* a substitute for citationing. What needs to be done is to properly reference academic sources by using required format as specified by the citation style followed. MLA 9th Edition is one such citation style and manual for this very purpose. This reference tells you how to cite a wide range of sources in academic writing: from academic sources to webpages. More information on this can be found at <https://style.mla.org/mla-handbook-ninth-edition/>.
- e. Conversational style: although I have the freedom to choose a conversational style here for this book, academic writing will never be found in a conversational style especially if it is research publications we are considering.
- f. Grammatical voice: active voice and passive voice need to be employed appropriately to serve a variety of purposes. Research papers require the authors to use active voice for presenting information on what research they performed and are reporting. Whereas one use of passive voice can be found in the same research paper in its literature review section, e.g., you will not find sentences like "I/We found 23, 482 articles on Shakespeare's contribution to the drama of his time". Instead, it will either be a grammatical construction like "There is/are ...", "X was found (Heminges and Condell, 1650)" or "Heminges and Condell (1650) report X" etc.
- g. Precision: are you using the correct description (attributive or predicative adjectival modifiers are examples)? Notice my use of descriptions in this book. A few examples are "which I must inform you may give you the chills", "erratic response" and "distilled abstraction." The last one is precisely the reason for my wintry discontent right after the sentence in which the expression occurs.
- h. Punctuation: in the previous point, I have included the full stop in the quotations. That is an example of a rule that comes from style guides such as the MLA reference I have mentioned above.
- i. Exactness: Is it a type of some concept or is the concept itself? Is paraphrasing "same meaning in different words" or something more? What would the problem with plagiarism be, for example, if paraphrasing were indeed "same meaning in different

words”? What *exactly* do I mean by “things” above, apart from the obvious fact that it is not formal? Note also that exactness and precision are two distinct ideas.

These ‘things’ can be grouped based on various parameters, e.g., if they belong to sentence structure, meaning, stylistics concerns such as register etc. If you were looking at this from a statistical perspective, you would be using clustering algorithms, like K-means clustering, to segregate sentences into groups based on different parameters (sentence length, passive voice etc.). Clustering algorithms can be of all descriptions and the context tells the experimenter which one to use. This is from statistics—advanced statistics, as in machine learning—and can be skipped. Note my comment on statistics below.

You know what, this is the most science-y discussion in this entire book and I might want to make it more artsy. Yeah, well, if I call it artsy, I will bring in things I may not want to. So, I will call it ‘artsy with a capital A’ but the problem persists. Move elsewhere: the same things that you feel in a certain way about in a tragedy are things you laugh at in a comedy (hopefully, we are not talking about morbidity especially as in Shakespeare’s Greek and Roman plays or Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*). Therefore, the two cannot be compared. AI seems to disagree with the conclusion, though. The thing is, it is hard to accept that there are situations like the opening sequence of *Maqbool* where this henchman is killed by the cops played by Naseeruddin Shah and Om Puri. I can quote other examples but if I quoted everything here, I will have to work more for my next book (cf. Lockhart etc.).

1. What are we writing?

Essays (argumentative, expository etc.), critique, article, review, response etc.

2. How to write: the syntax

Styles: MLA, Harvard, Chicago etc.

Formatting: indentation, line spacing, quotation blocks etc.

Citations: in-text or in-line citations, bibliography, reference, annotated bibliography etc.

3. What to write and what not to write: the semantics

Hedging: say things which are very hard to attack; limit scope and therefore responsibility—e.g., pharmaceutical research will have little or no highlighting of the side-effects or long-term effects of a medicine. Extreme examples are found in World War II history. Have you not heard the phrase “the fine print”? Hedging may be related to **vagueness**, which I will discuss.

Don’ts: **name-dropping** (thinking “out of the box”)

4. Bias: selectivity, researcher bias, e.g., confirmation bias etc.

5. Do/Did you mean to say what you just said? E.g., “Establish” in “repeating the phrase ‘tossed and turned’ after such an interval established that she was writhing...”. Caveat: use figurative language with caution since it is mostly abstractions we write about in the present context.

6. Grammar: present requirements are to the effect of prioritising clarity in the semantics as well as the syntax of writing. There are also considerations that one would assign to the ideological and the political.

7. Vocabulary: think of issues like the one I discuss when analysing 'continuum of ethics': continuum is a mathematical property and applying it to ethics raises unignorable questions.

8. Register: words appropriate to the setting (how formal).

9. Tone: irony cannot be allowed in a research paper. This is one example of how the tone should be.

10. Argumentation: with statistics increasingly used as the basis of arguments, even to the extent of losing sight of meaning altogether, this is the component that is ignored the most these days. This is why it is important to scrutinise research using meta-analysis. What is the equivalent of meta-analytical studies in the arts? Surely, non-science disciplines cannot simply ignore the mathematics or take it for granted if they are using it as the foundational bases of their research. Goes without saying that breakthroughs in mathematics are needed or at least more mathematical oversight must be mandated.

11. Logic

a. It follows that

If Shakespeare travelled on the Thames regularly and there are words in his plays that seamen and people similarly employed used then, it follows that chances are that he picked up this language during his commute on the river.

b. X entails from Y

Shakespeare wrote the porter scene, [Macbeth II.iii](#), a scene often quoted for its content. It is generally true that the playwright lets characters of low social prominence voice ideas that otherwise might be censored. If these observations are true, it entails or necessarily follows that on the Elizabethan stage, characters representing authority could not be presented as going against the official line.

c. P causes Q

In tragedy, critics following classical dramatic theory (open-access entry available at [Oxford Reference](#)) argue that the protagonist causes his own downfall. This is where questions like "What control does the protagonist have over his own fate?" complicate the apparently axiomatic assignment of agency.

d. Therefore: a valid and sound argument using 'therefore' (see [Validity and Soundness | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#))

If all of what went by is true; and what you are saying after 'therefore' is also true; and if all of what went by necessitates the truth of what you are saying after 'therefore', then you can use 'therefore' for this purpose which you believe that you are using it for. It is easier to represent this using symbols:

P represents premise (proposition).

C represents conclusion (proposition that stands constrained by the other propositions in a given set or propositions).

In a given argument, the symbols P1, P2, ... Pn represent all the premises or propositions other than C. The argument is arranged in a relationship diagram (which can be a graph, or network) and this relationship diagram has C as its terminal node.

To illustrate:

Shakespeare was born in 1564. The *Ur Hamlet* was in circulation well before Shakespeare started on the London scene. Therefore, it is highly likely that Shakespeare used the text to compose his *Hamlet* later on.

P1: Shakespeare was born in 1564.

P2: The *Ur Hamlet* was in circulation well before Shakespeare started on the London scene.

C: Therefore, it is highly likely that Shakespeare used the text to compose his *Hamlet* later on.

This can be broken down further, e.g., by treating 'therefore' as a connecting word and therefore not part of the conclusion itself. But for now, this level of detail suffices. I need not add that assuming P is an English sentence, it can take on a variety of roles: it can be an intermediate conclusion, it can be evidence, it can be composite unit, e.g., containing evidence and reason etc.

- e. According to Source X, Author Y etc.,
This shows your effort and that you have some authority to quote instead of just saying you think or believe A etc. Therefore, this is essential.
For the Oedipus Rex example, you can write:
"According to F. Storr, ..." (you can quote something from [Storr's introduction to his tr. of Oedipus Rex.](#))
- f. Inductively, it is clear that ... OR From the examples, situations, cases ... that we have considered so far, it is clear that ...
- g. Because/Since X, I can conclude that ...
Because Shakespeare has been consistently praised by learned scholars and the masses down the ages, notwithstanding Western media, I can conclude that Shakespeare must be worth reading. Appropriation by those who accuse others of appropriation is a different matter (see Bharucha (2004)).
- h. In conclusion OR in sum OR to conclude etc.
Ensure you follow what I have said in the entry for 'therefore' above.
- i. It is established knowledge, fact, expert opinion etc. that ...
This does the same work as 'According to Source X, Authority Y etc.' above.
- j. First ... Secondly ... Thirdly ... Finally ...
You must organise your writing to show clear and connected logical flow of thought.

12. Rhetoric: Learn top 50 from here: [Silva Rhetoricae](#).

Research Directions, or What will you write on?

One direction of **research** is applying the Indian Rasa theory to Western literary works (e.g., *Timon of Athens*, *Titus Andronicus* for Vibhatsa Rasa). It is usually the other way round and at least one related work is by Bharat Gupta, whose doctoral dissertation is on "A Comparison of Greek and Indian Dramatic Theories as Given in the Poetics and the Natyasastra"⁴¹.

Another direction is to work on preserving manuscripts. This is also related to source research. As you are probably aware, there is digitisation of archives happening the world over as of this writing.

Experiments to consider

1. Asch conformity experiments (one student says something is/can be possible while the rest of the class says otherwise).
2. Experiments for multi-modality (can you report what you heard while you were reading a page?)
3. Ambiguity in various ... : meaning (polysemy), 'about a text/in a text', connotation ('arguing' and argumentation) etc.
4. Nth example proposed for the concept of 'analogy' will be a refined one and induction ('writing as we think' ...).
5. Applying what you learnt to the metalanguage you are using to learn, talk about, discuss etc. a subject (literary studies in our case).
6. Slamecka and Graf (1978): Look up cited by for this paper on Google Scholar—there is interesting material. And this is related to not being able to experience too wide a variety of experiences, including undesirable ones. In keeping with my pop cultural references, a related line of thought is present in Sanjay Mishra-starrer *Aakhon Dekhi*. Why I keep doing this is answered by this: it is a matter of taking up the same propositions, testing them and leveraging the finite to infinite generativity of language and the countably infinite possibilities (I will have to cite for this because I am not mathematician of that sort—of any sort, in fact) to sell the non-fungible tokens that are phrases.

⁴¹ [About - Bharat Gupta – Delhi University \(DU\) Professor, Indian classicist, theatre theorist, sitar and surbahar player, musicologist, cultural analyst, and newspaper columnist](#)

Using AI *intelligently*

Google AI Search Response (Google AI Overview) to the prompt “*Continuum of ethics: the equivalent of cambridge analytica in literature and/or philosophy?*”

The equivalent of the [Cambridge Analytica scandal](#) in literature and philosophy is the instrumentalization of human vulnerability: weaponizing trusted cultural or academic mediums (like psychological research or storytelling) to covertly alter human behavior, bypass free will, and commercialize the inner self.

The Philosophical Equivalent: The Frankfurt School & The Culture Industry

In philosophy, the direct parallel is the **Culture Industry** critique formulated by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

The Mechanism: They argued that mass media and commercial art cease to be ways of human expression. Instead, they become a calculated system designed to standardize thought and manage public desire.

The Ethical Breach: Just as [Cambridge Analytica](#) used psychographic profiling to manipulate political choices, Adorno and Horkheimer claimed mass culture uses psychological conditioning to turn autonomous individuals into predictable, passive consumers. [1, 2, 3]

The Core Parallel: Treating human consciousness as an industrial resource to be farmed, predicted, and steered for profit or control.

The Literary Equivalent: The Ministry of Truth & Propaganda Fictions

In literature, the equivalent is found in dystopian satire or the historical reality of state-sponsored narrative engineering, epitomized by George Orwell’s **Ministry of Truth** in 1984.

The Mechanism: Fiction and language are decontextualized and rewritten at scale. Facts are replaced by emotionally resonant, custom-built realities tailored to target demographics.

The Ethical Breach: The betrayal of the sacred contract between author/creator and reader. Literature aims for empathy and truth; the literary “Cambridge Analytica” inverts this, using narrative cadence, deep-faked news, and targeted tropes to hack the reader’s empathy response for behavioral modification.

The Core Parallel: Disguising structural manipulation as organic personal choice—making people feel their manipulated thoughts originated natively within themselves.

Would you like to explore how **modern AI-generated texts and LLMs** fit into this philosophical continuum, or look closer at **historical real-world propaganda campaigns** in literature?

Analysing the exchange

First and foremost, focus on the **communication** happening: when I use the word ‘communication’, I think of Claude Shannon and the entire train of thought or **graph** of concepts, ideas etc. is probably ‘activated’ in my brain—feel free to choose your analogy as

long as it is worthwhile⁴²—that Shannon's name may bring into the **discourse**, and here in discourse I mean to include my brain (or [the language network](#) and memory [network?] in my brain, perhaps to be more precise), the medium (these words that you are reading) and possible **reader(s)**. This is comparable with **monologues**, and it goes without saying, with the process of reading a text (as opposed to watching a play live). Now, the thing with saying all of this is that I must inform you of applicable limits and thus regulate your expectations: I may not necessarily know sufficiently about Shannon to converse with a mathematician who, say, teaches (hopefully with competence) Shannon daily. On the other hand, I have not used 'Shannon' for no other reason than that the name attests to my **ethos** (of the triad [ethos, pathos and logos](#)). Another thing that comes to my mind is along the lines of the HTTP (or HTTPS) protocol, handshake, TCP and things like that⁴³ one encounters in communication on computer networks. I believe this is sufficient for preparing the groundwork and I will now talk about the communication happening in this exchange.

Let us analyse (break apart) my prompt: "Continuum of ethics: the equivalent of Cambridge Analytica in literature and/or philosophy?"

First, there are two things that appear of interest to me more than others:

1. 'Continuum of ethics'
2. 'Equivalent' [style guides like the MLA Handbook will tell you if the starting letter here will be capital]

The first, 'continuum of ethics' is a phrase, a **noun phrase** (a phrase that functions as a noun), whose meaning adds up to that of its constituent parts, that is, a phrase which observes the principle of *compositionality*, provided that we are allowing metaphorical interpretation ('ethics' is abstract and 'continuum' is a geometrical property). A 'continuum' necessitates limitless precision: you can zoom and scale in (out) as much as you wish, **hypothetically assuming** of course that you have the instrumentation⁴⁴. Again, closer to literary studies, one can bring in complex experiences such as epiphany (see the entry [epiphany | Oxford Classical Dictionary](#) and about the importing of the word by Joyce in this open-access book [Collected Epiphanies of James Joyce: A Critical Edition | JSTOR](#)). The reason I am including this example here is that when applied to such an entity as 'subjective experience', the operation of limitless precision *allows* possibilities such as treating noise as signal or apotheosising any text as literary: a novel a shade different from/than/to another may be included simply because of its uniqueness, novelty and other relevant properties even though it is clear that the author is only sufficiently changing a treatment of the same experience (or complex of experiences, narration etc.), say, only to avoid plagiarism. Incidentally, this is precisely what allows the multiplicity and therefore proliferation of works, whether literary or otherwise⁴⁵ and this is one area where the idea of the originality and derivativeness of a work enters the scene. Satire in literature is a response to this kind of

⁴² And trust me, there is hardly anything to romanticise about abstract algebra unless you start treating the whole thing as Tim Burton's films or Lewis Carroll's works.

⁴³ If you do not know about either Shannon or HTTP, continue reading: you do not know about allusions in literary works either and you can pass them without a trace of thought occurring as to their presence.

⁴⁴ To state real contemporary examples: from quarks (subneutronic particles studied in quantum mechanics) to multiverse (Are there more than one universe? Where does the universe end?). This has bearing on subjectivity/objectivity and the conception of 'God'.

⁴⁵ See [As India's retractions surge, NIRF rankings only now begin penalising tainted research - The Hindu](#).

effrontery and to anchor my assertion in authority, I recommend reading relevant parts from Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Another point worth **foregrounding** (see one definition here: [Foregrounding - Oxford Reference](#)): the operation of limitless precision facilitates commodification also, for instance, by creating niches or by selling Shakespeare as the Lambs' Shakespeare or Thomas Bowdler's Shakespeare, and this relates to what I say about free market economies and empiricism above (cf. Bharucha (2004) and Young (2018)). With this, we hopefully agree on the meaning and use here of 'continuum' as it relates to limitless precision.

However, using this of 'ethics' is the more interesting part in the present analysis. We will come to the topic of metaethics later and focus on a consideration of 'ethics' by using examples as you have likely already come across: *Oedipus Rex* and *Life of Pi*. In the former, as I have said above, one needs to be clear as to the gravity of the situation and the ethics under which the situation was considered in its time. In the latter, the question of "Are humans inherently evil?" is taken up. You must note that both the works are about extremities and you will not be able to use the words 'generally', 'normally' and the like when thinking about acts and situations that these works are about. And then there is the fact that tragedies originally were for kings (see [A.C. Bradley's Shakespearean Tragedy to gain an idea of what is involved](#)). Of course, there are present-day examples like the Stanford Prison Experiment, the scene sequence in the *Dark Knight* and older ones from the time of the Second World War (start with [this open-access index of the Oxford Handbook of Research Ethics](#)). However, these examples and the works *Oedipus Rex* and *Life of Pi*, serve as reminders of 'the cruelty of man' as do the many on everyday criminality. And this necessitates that one differentiate the offences: petty crime as opposed to war crimes, for instance. You will appreciate that delivering justice necessitates this differentiation and you need to realise that the scales can change—and do change—from context to context and time to time. My comments on justice are relevant here directly since Oedipus the King has to deliver justice and I am certain that you can recall examples from your own experience (*Paradise Lost*, the *Mahabharata*, Hindi films, legal precedents from the news etc.). Closer to literary studies, cases that involve **intellectual property** and **copyright** matters, like the latest Sony Music & Warner Chappell v. Anthropic (29 August 2026), serve to illustrate for us a different dimension of jurisprudence, or philosophy of law. I close here another **inductive argument**, one meant to analyse the phrase 'continuum of ethics', to proceed to the next term we are analysing.

Now, as to the second term: 'equivalent'. You will recall coming across the concept of analogy from your own experience. To **inductively** lead to an agreement on the same. You have been at various organisations in your life and all of these organisations have had some hierarchy. You implicitly relate the way things work in one organisation with the way they work in another. For instance, if there is a head in a school, there will be an equivalent position in an office. You can immediately see how things will be different and this is why I have used an office instead of a college or university for this illustration. To consolidate the point I am making, you must compare this with what I have said above for 'train of thought' and 'graph of concepts'. Therefore, an analogy can be thought of as a mapping between two collections of entities. That is abstract and let us see why I use 'collections of entities' instead of 'graph of entities' or something else. In a collection, I can have things which are unrelated to others: think of shadow cabinet or flight marshall because these ideas may not apply to schools and offices as readily. To conclude on the second term in our analysis, the

head of the school has an *equivalent* in the head of the office. I would encourage you to supply the missing parts if they are not readily available to you even after re-reading, if that is needed, this paragraph.

Proceeding with our analysis of the exchange, we can now consider the **possibility** of equivalence between the real-world Cambridge Analytica incident and phenomena in the literary and philosophical domains.

*

Google Gemini on “The central axiom of Chomskyan anarchism is that all hierarchy and authority must prove its legitimacy or be dismantled.”

Does this include the institutions of family and marriage?

Yes, Chomsky’s principle applies to all human social structures, explicitly including the family and marriage. Under his framework, any institution that grants one person power or authority over another must continuously justify that power, regardless of whether it exists in a state house, a corporate boardroom, or a private home.

Parental Authority as the Benchmark Example Chomsky frequently uses the parent-child relationship as his primary example to explain what *legitimate* authority looks like:

- **Justified Authority:** If a parent physically stops a small child from running into a busy street, that exercise of coercion is legitimate because its sole purpose is the child’s immediate protection and long-term development toward autonomy.
- **Illegitimate Authority:** If parental power shifts into authoritarian control—demanding blind obedience, enforcing rigid gender roles, or restricting a child’s capacity for independent thought—it fails the burden of proof and becomes an illegitimate hierarchy that should be challenged.

The Anarchist Critique of Traditional Marriage In line with the broader libertarian socialist tradition (including thinkers Chomsky draws on, such as Emma Goldman and Rudolf Rocker), traditional marriage is subjected to strict critique:

- **State and Religious Control:** Anarchism views state-licensed marriage as an artificial, legalistic intrusion into private human relationships, turning personal affection into a legal contract enforced by the state.
- **Patriarchal Hierarchy:** Historically, marriage functioned as an economic arrangement that established male authority over women. Anarchist critique demands the dismantling of these patriarchal power dynamics in favor of completely equal, voluntary partnerships.

Reformation Over Destruction Dismantling illegitimate hierarchies within the family does not mean destroying domestic life or personal commitment. Instead, it means replacing coercive dynamics with **voluntary association**—reimagining marriage and family as egalitarian networks built on mutual respect, shared care, and the goal of nurturing each individual’s autonomy rather than maintaining dominance.

Takeaways

1. The Sherlock Holmes story and adaptations as a case study in analysis/synthesis (cf. oroboros/cycle). More contextual being Shekhar Home (example of allusion: Jaimini Maurya).
2. Reading and writing as complements of each other.
3. *Manufacturing Consent* (1988)

*

Prompt: Rabbo went to Jan's for a week, right?

I do not have access to private personal contexts, specific personal stories, or private events regarding people named "Rabbo" and "Jan," so I cannot confirm if Rabbo went to Jan's for a week.

In Chughtai's story, ...?

*In Ismat Chughtai's famous story "Lihaaf" (The Quilt), Rabbo does not go away for a week; rather, the young narrator is sent to stay at Begum Jaan's house for **a week** (as a punishment for getting into fights), and it is **Rabbo** who occasionally leaves later in the narrative to visit her relatives or her son.*

*

The perils of using AI include the following class of errors made by AI where the AI makes a mistake in 'comprehending' the logic of what was asked, assuming I can use 'comprehend' of AI and all. All the same, assuming that AI is not prone to such systematic errors, I can take a guess or an educated guess (whatever that is) as to the reason why it made this mistake: AI products will be prioritising continuing a conversation over—well, this is embarrassingly hard to defend—actually processing something as simple as the prompt I have shared below? The idea is that even if AI products prioritise continuing a conversation, they cannot make such mistakes as this because this will most likely reduce the chances the user will continue after seeing such an erratic response.

Google AI Overview

Prompt: validate this: Whereas one use of passive voice can be found in the same research paper in its literature review section, e.g., you will not find sentences like "I/We found 23, 482 articles on Shakespeare's contribution to the drama of his time".

The statement you provided is incorrect and self-contradictory in how it defines grammatical voice.

The example sentence given—"I/We found 23,482 articles on Shakespeare's contribution to the drama of his time"—is actually written in the **active voice**, not the passive voice.

Why the Statement is Incorrect

- **The Example is Active Voice:** In the sentence "*I/We found...*", the subjects (*I* or *We*) are actively performing the action (*found*).
- **What Passive Voice Would Look Like:** To make this specific example passive, the object of the action must become the subject of the sentence. For example: "*23,482 articles on Shakespeare's contribution [...] were found (by us).*"

Core Differences

Feature	Active Voice (Your Example)	Passive Voice (Corrected)
Structure	Subject + Action + Object	Object + "To Be" Verb + Past Participle
Focus	Who did the action (<i>I/We</i>)	What received the action (<i>Articles</i>)
Example	"We found the articles."	"The articles were found ."

Context in Research Papers

The statement is likely trying to make a point about academic writing style. Historically, research papers avoided the first-person active voice ("*I found*") to maintain objectivity, opting instead for the passive voice ("*It was found*"). However, many modern journals now encourage active voice because it is more direct.

If you are writing or editing this paper, I can help you rephrase it. Let me know:

- What **point** are you trying to make about the literature review?
- Do you want to **keep the example** but correct the grammar label, or **change the example** to fit the passive voice?

I can tailor the text to perfectly match your target academic style.

Prompt: But if you check again, the text says "you will not find sentences like "*I/We found 23,482 articles on Shakespeare's contribution to the drama of his time*". Did you miss the 'not' or the entire example or what?

You are entirely right, and I apologize for missing that crucial "**not**". I misread the structure of your sentence and completely flipped your point.

Your statement is **fully valid and correct**.

Why Your Statement is Correct

Because you explicitly stated that you will **not** find those active "I/We" sentences, your logic holds up perfectly:

- Academic literature reviews heavily rely on the **passive voice** (e.g., "*23,482 articles were found...*").
- Therefore, a reader will **not** find first-person, **active voice** sentences like the one in your example ("*I/We found...*").

You correctly identified that the absence of the active voice example is proof of the passive voice being used. Thank you for catching that and calling it out directly!

If you are polishing this section for a manuscript or an assignment, would you like me to help you **streamline the phrasing** to make it sound even more academically rigorous, or look over the **rest of the paragraph**?

Prompt: is there use of metonymy (as in "bowler hat") for fudge in the entire harry potter series?

Yes, J.K. Rowling uses metonymy (specifically using his signature hat to refer to him or his actions) when describing Cornelius Fudge. [\[1\]](#), [\[2\]](#)

Examples in the Books

- **Fidgeting with his bowler:** In *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Fudge says, "*Look at it from my point of view... I'm under a lot of pressure,*" while directly "**fidgeting with his bowler.**" Here, the hat represents the man and his physical anxiety as Minister. [\[1\]](#), [\[2\]](#), [\[3\]](#)
- **Turning his bowler in his fingers:** In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Fudge is described as "**turning his bowler rapidly in his fingers**" or "**spinning the bowler hat still faster**" while talking to the Muggle Prime Minister. [\[1\]](#)

Would you like to explore other examples of **metonymy** or **character motifs** used for different officials in the Ministry of Magic?

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The boldfaced and the italicised

Proposition

Foregrounding

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Definition

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Appendix A

“A comparison of the clustering algorithms in scikit-learn”: Table copied from [2.3. Clustering — scikit-learn 1.9.1 documentation](#)

Method name	Parameters	Scalability	Usecase	Geometry (metric used)
K-Means	number of clusters	Very large <code>n_samples</code> , medium <code>n_clusters</code> with MiniBatch code	General-purpose, even cluster size, flat geometry, not too many clusters, inductive	Distances between points
Affinity propagation	damping, sample preference	Not scalable with <code>n_samples</code>	Many clusters, uneven cluster size, non-flat geometry, inductive	Graph distance (e.g. nearest-neighbor graph)
Mean-shift	bandwidth	Not scalable with <code>n_samples</code>	Many clusters, uneven cluster size, non-flat geometry, inductive	Distances between points
Spectral clustering	number of clusters	Medium <code>n_samples</code> , small <code>n_clusters</code>	Few clusters, even cluster size, non-flat geometry, transductive	Graph distance (e.g. nearest-neighbor graph)
Ward hierarchical clustering	number of clusters or distance threshold	Large <code>n_samples</code> and <code>n_clusters</code>	Many clusters, possibly connectivity constraints, transductive	Distances between points
Agglomerative clustering	number of clusters or distance threshold, linkage type, distance	Large <code>n_samples</code> and <code>n_clusters</code>	Many clusters, possibly connectivity constraints, non Euclidean distances, transductive	Any pairwise distance

DBSCAN	neighborhood size	Very large <code>n_samples</code> , medium <code>n_clusters</code>	Non-flat geometry, uneven cluster sizes, outlier removal, transductive	Distances between nearest points
HDBSCAN	minimum cluster membership, minimum point neighbors	large <code>n_samples</code> , medium <code>n_clusters</code>	Non-flat geometry, uneven cluster sizes, outlier removal, transductive, hierarchical, variable cluster density	Distances between nearest points
OPTICS	minimum cluster membership	Very large <code>n_samples</code> , large <code>n_clusters</code>	Non-flat geometry, uneven cluster sizes, variable cluster density, outlier removal, transductive	Distances between points
Gaussian mixtures	many	Not scalable	Flat geometry, good for density estimation, inductive	Mahalanobis distances to centers
BIRCH	branching factor, threshold, optional global clusterer.	Large <code>n_clusters</code> and <code>n_samples</code>	Large dataset, outlier removal, data reduction, inductive	Euclidean distance between points
Bisecting K-Means	number of clusters	Very large <code>n_samples</code> , medium <code>n_clusters</code>	General-purpose, even cluster size, flat geometry, no empty clusters, inductive, hierarchical	Distances between points

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

I have started this book with the mention of M.H. Abrams and I would encourage you to use that book instead of this glossary for material that is common between the two.

Entity: anything to which name can be/may be attached.

Discourse: a finite stream of symbol-based signal(s).

Allusion: indirect reference, e.g., is Melville's mention of orchard thieves a biblical reference?

Ambiguity: *Seven Types of Ambiguity* by William Empson or its parts is a set text in English courses.

Assumption: what is a logical prerequisite that must be true if some statement has to be true.

Statement: You are reading this book. Assumption behind this statement: you want to read this book.

Axiology: "(from Greek *axios*, "worthy"; *logos*, "science"), also called Theory Of Value, the philosophical study of goodness, or [value](#), in the widest sense of these terms." qtd. from [Axiology | Ethics, Morality & Value Theory | Britannica](#)

Cataphora: the **referent** comes first and then the thing referred to.

Concept: abstract notion or idea. Cf. nominalism and universals ("redness" applies to all that is red).

Counter-argument: multiple meanings. One is "an argument against another argument, idea, or suggestion" from [COUNTER-ARGUMENT | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary](#)

Epistemology: the study of how we know what we know.

Hyperbole: exaggeration.

Metaphor: 'transference' and Error 503 Backend fetch failed.

Metonymy: Using a noun phrase which is conceptually related to the noun phrase which you mean to refer to, e.g., using 'bowler hat' for referring to Cornelius Fudge from the Harry Potter novels. If you do not follow, using 'the long nose' for referring to Pinocchio. Cf. Saussure.

Ontology: the study of being. That is, asking "What is X?" as in "What is writing?"

Referent: This is an example of a contranym, i.e., it has opposite meanings. One is the thing referred to in a given utterance and the other is the words used to refer to the thing in the utterance. I have used the word when talking about cataphora.

mathematical proof: “Proofs are stories that convince suitably qualified others that a certain statement is true.” Keith Devlin at [What is a mathematical proof?](#)

sentence structure: for the English language, everything including and around a finite clause.

dream allegory and dream vision: “A popular literary genre in the Middle Ages. In a dream vision, the narrator generally falls asleep at the beginning of the poem and dreams. A guide of some sort is usually encountered during the dream, and the narrator awakens at the poem's close.” from [Harvard Chaucer](#)

“A kind of narrative (usually but not always in verse) in which the narrator falls asleep and dreams the events of the tale. The story is often a kind of allegory, and commonly consists of a tour of some marvellous realm, in which the dreamer is conducted and instructed by a guide, as Dante is led through hell by Virgil in his Divine Comedy (c.1320)—the foremost example of the form. The dream vision was much favoured by medieval poets, most of them influenced by the 13th-century Roman de la rose by the French poets Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung. In English, Chaucer devoted much of his early work to dream visions, including The Parlement of Foules, while Langland wrote the more substantial Piers Plowman; another fine 14th-century example is the anonymous poem Pearl. Some later poets have adopted the conventions of the dream vision, as in Shelley's The Triumph of Life (1824). Significant examples in prose include Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress (1678) and William Morris's vision of socialism in News from Nowhere (1890).” from [Dream vision - Oxford Reference](#)

Style: this is from rhetoric. Focus on rhetoric.

Generalise: inductively arrive at a pattern that is true for every trial you have observed: “If I flip a coin, it will be either a Heads or a Tails, not counting possibilities where the coin does not lie on one of its flat surfaces.” (NCERT Mathematics has ‘trial’).

Inference: cf. theorem, lemma, corollary, law, axiom, hypothesis, problem, paradox etc. These are mathematical concepts.

deduction: If A is true and B is true then I can make the deduction that C must necessarily be true. For example, A stands for “Shakespeare wrote at least 38 plays.” and B stands for “Marlowe worked with Shakespeare on some plays.” then C can be a deduction: “Plays other than the 38 attributed to Shakespeare are the ones that show evidence of other hands”. Note that here I have supplied additional information in C, which is illustrative of how real-world deductions work.

possibility: it is possible that Shakespeare borrowed from other sources in addition to everything on record. It is a matter of discovery of new evidence whether this possibility turns into probability or certainty.

Doxa: consult a greek dictionary of philosophy directly.

Endoxa: consult a greek dictionary of philosophy directly.

Digression: if you are studying literature, you may be aware of famous digressions. A digression is something that is off-topic. Cf. a meandering river can't 'digress', can it?

Particularise: operation changing the level of abstraction. Giving an example is a way to particularise some concept.

surmise: cf. conjecture, theorem, lemma, corollary, law, axiom, hypothesis, problem, paradox etc. These are mathematical concepts.

diegesis: telling (Aristotle).

mimesis: showing (Aristotle).

knowledge domains: the term 'domain' is again a mathematical borrowing (NCERT Mathematics) and even in mathematics, 'domain' can mean different things. But this one is seemingly coming from the Latin *dominium*. Cambridge Dictionary does not have an entry on the phrase nor does the Oxford English Dictionary. Same for Longmans. Macmillan is not available online anymore. Nothing on Collins ('domain knowledge', which is very different is there on this and other sites but this is irrelevant). BNC (no access?). **Conclusion: It does not look like it is a standard phrase and therefore I might have to stop using it in this book.**

Interdisciplinarity: [The Difference Between Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary, and Convergence Research](#)

figures of speech: "Any form of expression in which language is manipulated for rhetorical effect. Around ad 95, Quintilian defined the figure of speech as 'a departure from the simple and straightforward method of expression.' He listed four types of rhetorical deviation (*mutatio*): *adjectio* or addition, *detractio* or omission (see deletion), *transmutatio* or rearrangement (see transposition), and *immutatio* or substitution. In classical rhetoric, figures of speech were traditionally divided into schemes and tropes. Schemes are patterns of expression. They include: alliteration, anaphora, antithesis, asyndeton (see deletion), and climax. Tropes radically transform the meaning of words. These include: allegory, conceit, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, metonymy, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, paradox, personification, pun, rhetorical question, simile, and synecdoche. However, nowadays in many contexts the term trope is synonymous with figure of speech. " from the entry [Figure of speech - Oxford Reference](#)

Rhetoric: "Rhetoric [ῥητορική] is the study of effective speaking and writing. And the art of persuasion. And many other things.

In its long and vigorous history rhetoric has enjoyed many definitions, accommodated differing purposes, and varied widely in what it included. And yet, for most of its history it has maintained its fundamental character as a discipline for training students 1) to perceive how language is at work orally and in writing, and 2) to become proficient in applying the resources of language in their own speaking and writing. (See [rhetorical pedagogy](#))

Discerning how language is working in others' or one's own writing and speaking, one must (artificially) divide form and content, *what* is being said and *how* this is said (see [Content/Form](#)). Because rhetoric examines so attentively the *how* of language, the *methods* and *means* of communication, it has sometimes been discounted as something only concerned with style or appearances, and not with the quality or *content* of communication. For many (such as Plato) rhetoric deals with the superficial at best, the deceptive at worst ("mere rhetoric"), when one might better attend to matters of substance, truth, or reason as attempted in [dialectic](#) or philosophy or religion.

Rhetoric has sometimes lived down to its critics, but as set forth from antiquity, rhetoric was a comprehensive art just as much concerned with *what* one could say as *how* one might say it. Indeed, a basic premise for rhetoric is the indivisibility of means from meaning; *how* one says something conveys meaning as much as *what* one says. Rhetoric studies the effectiveness of language comprehensively, including its emotional impact (see [pathos](#)), as much as its propositional content (see [logos](#)). To see how language and thought worked together, however, it has first been necessary to artificially divide [content and form](#)." from [Silva Rhetoricae](#)

Ethics: Start here [ETHICS at eGyanKosh by IGNOU](#).

argumentative essay: "The argumentative essay is a genre of writing that requires the student to investigate a topic; collect, generate, and evaluate evidence; and establish a position on the topic in a concise manner." From [Argumentative Essays - Purdue OWL](#).

ontological commitment: believing that X exists, where X for our purposes are assertions (like "God exists." as in the footnote on this).

Evidence: Entity that supports the truth of an assertion, e.g., whatever supports the assertion that "God exists?".

logical fallacies: errors made in logic.

academic integrity: 'integrity' is very closely related to 'honesty.'

cognitive abilities: start here: [Cognitive Ability Tests -- US Office of Personnel Management](#).

Translation: transforming discourse in one language to another language.

interpretation: subjective meaning attribution. Confirmed by "*Interpretation in art refers to the attribution of meaning to a work.*" from [Art and Interpretation | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

hermeneutic interpretation: [The Story of Interpretation: From the First Century to the Twenty First](#) but that is not the first time the word was used; 'Hermes' is the word, which is incidentally a reason we still read Ancient Greek and Latin and all that.

Adaptation: transformation of a text or other transformable entity to another that is a derivative work and must acknowledge its common parts with the source work.

Property: characteristic, trait etc. Think of descriptions. Think of the so many names of Ram, Ravan etc.

Quale: Peirce and Lewis coined the term to refer to subjective attribution to entities.

Conditions: constraints.

manipulation:

Ephemera: This post here is demonstrative of how you can use the OED to talk about words contained in the OED: [What Is Ephemera? - Ephemera Society of America](#).

infer: making a deduction (see 'deduction' above).

reasoning: "Any process of drawing a conclusion from a set of premises may be called a process of reasoning." [Reasoning - Oxford Reference](#) and for all my talk about the empirical today (with the computing power, that is) [The Oxford Handbook of Thinking and Reasoning](#).

variorum: Horace Howard Furness' variorum edition of *Macbeth*. Start here: [How to Read Variants | Harvard's Geoffrey Chaucer Website](#). You already have an idea if you have ever flipped the pages of something like an [Arden](#) or a [Norton](#).

End matter

