

Michaelson

Your name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_  
Are you a lit major? Yes/No

### Exercise on literary categories

As you know, I am working on a project that (I hope) will help students make sense of the masses of literary texts they read. In this exercise, the question is, how do you categorize the works of literature that you have read?

Part of expertise is having many *different* ways of categorizing things you know. For example, if you're a "plant person," you might organize plants

- by genera and species (ex, all varieties of oaks)
- by habitat preferences (ex, plants that live in dry climates)
- by flower color (if you're a gardener)
- by whether or not they are edible (if you forage for food)
- by which birds are attracted to them (if you're a bird-watcher)
- by size . . . and so on.

**First question:** Think of all the literary works you have read. Can you think of 5 *different* ways to categorize them? If possible, tell me why that category might be useful.

Example: *by time period* (useful because any historical background you learn about the period will apply to all of the works written then)

OK, now 4 more:

**Second question:** How easy is it for you to apply material from one lit course to another? For example, if you read a novel that referred to Milton (as *Frankenstein* does), would you be able to explain how knowing *Paradise Lost* helps you see new things in that novel? Feel free to give your own examples on the back of this page.