



THE BELLES-LETTRES  
STYLE

# What is it?

- Belles-lettres is a category of writing, originally meaning beautiful or fine writing. In the modern narrow sense, it is a label for literary works that do not fall into the major categories such as fiction, poetry, or drama. The phrase is sometimes used for writing that focuses on the aesthetic qualities of language rather than its practical application. A writer of belles-lettres is a belletrist.



# The Belles-lettres style has three varieties (sub styles):

- 1. The language of poetry;
- 2. Emotive prose or the language of fiction;
- 3. The language of drama.



# The language of poetry, or verse

The language of poetry is characterized by:

- 1) An orderly form, which is based on the phonetic arrangement of the utterance. Rhythm and rhyme are the properties which make poetry different from emotive prose and the drama.
- 2) Rich imagery.
- 3) Emotional coloring. The emotional element is characteristic of the belles-lettres style in general, but poetry has it in full measure due to the great number of emotionally colored words and the rhythmic arrangement of verse.
- 4) Choice of vocabulary - neutral, poetic, archaic.

# Emotive prose

- 1) Imagery is not as rich as in poetry. The number of words used in their contextual meaning is smaller. There is a combination of the standard language and its colloquial variant, of spoken and written varieties, of monolog and dialog.
- 2) Emotive prose allows the use of elements of other styles with some changes. The above mentioned general features remain in the emotive prose.



# The language of drama

- The language of plays is entirely dialog. The author's speech is almost excluded except for the playwright's remarks and stage directions in brackets. The language of the characters is a mixture of the standard norm and of the colloquial language.
- The language of the plays reveal general tendencies in the literary language and individual peculiarities of the playwright. Plays are aimed at hearing/ being heard, not reading, so the sentences are to be quite compact and rich in information. The sequence of sentences must reflect the sequence of thoughts.



Thank you for your attention!