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Linguistics and literature : language in the verbal arts of the world

[Fabb, Nigel](#) (1997) *Linguistics and literature : language in the verbal arts of the world*. Blackwell. ISBN 0631192433

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Abstract

Linguistics and Literature is the first book to offer an overview of how linguistic theory can be applied to the oral and written literatures of the world. Introducing basic concepts in linguistics as it proceeds, the book begins with an account of the types of metrical verse and the phonological bases of metrics. Examples of metrical verse are illustrated from a selection of European, African, and Asian traditions, both familiar and unfamiliar; there is also some discussion of the setting of song texts to music. It then considers the exploitation of linguistic structure as found in many traditions, from ancient Semitic literatures to contemporary Austronesian and Mayan verbal arts. Narratology is presented from the perspective of linguistics, with complete narratives in the original languages with

translations from a variety of traditions. The book concludes by looking at the linguistic aspects of the performance of literature, and the ways in which literature exploits the communicative function of language, in irony and metaphor. The book is illustrated with examples from around a hundred different literary traditions, quoting texts in the original languages, fully translated and explained. Exercises are provided which enable readers to put theoretical issues discussed in the chapters to practical analysis of texts; texts for discussion range from major works of English literature to previously unpublished oral texts from rarely discussed traditions.

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