

Didacticism

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(Redirected from Didactic)

Didacticism is an artistic philosophy that emphasizes instructional and informative qualities in literature and other types of art.

The word "*Didacticism*" finds its origin in the Greek "*didaktikos*" or "*διδακτικός*"; the meaning of the greek word is 'related to education/teaching'.

The primary intention of didactic art is not to entertain, but to teach. Didactic plays, for instance, teach the audience through the use of a moral or a theme. An example of didactic writing is Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), which offers a range of advice about critics and criticism. An example of didacticism in music is the chant *Ut queant laxis*, which was used by Guido of Arezzo to teach solfege syllables.

The term "didactic" is also used as a criticism for work that appears to be overly burdened with instructive, factual, or otherwise educational information, to the detriment of the enjoyment of the reader. Edgar Allan Poe called didacticism the worst of "heresies" in his essay *The Poetic Principle*.

Examples

Some instances of didactic literature include:

- *De Rerum Natura*, by Lucretius Carus (c. 50 BC)
- *Georgics*, by Virgil (c. 30 BC)
- *Ars Poetica* by Horace (c. 18 BC)
- *Ars Amatoria*, by Ovid (1 BC)
- *Remedia Amoris*, by Ovid (AD 1)
- *Medicamina Faciei Femineae*, by Ovid (between 1 BC and AD 8)
- The *Jataka Tales* (Buddhistic literature, 5th century AD)
- *Philosophus Autodidactus* by Ibn Tufail (12th century)
- *Theologus Autodidactus* by Ibn al-Nafis (1270s)
- *The Morall Fabillis of Esope the Phrygian* (1480s)
- *Pilgrim's Progress*, by John Bunyan (1678)
- *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* (anonymous, 1765)
- *The Adventures of Nicholas Experience*, by Ignacy Krasicki (1776)
- *Queen Mab: A Philosophical Poem*, by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1813)
- *Brideshead Revisited*, by Evelyn Waugh (1945)
- *Siddhartha*, by Herman Hesse (1952)
- *Sophie's World*, by Jostein Gaarder (1991)
- *The Sword of Truth*, by Terry Goodkind (1994)

See also

- Art for art's sake
- John Cassell, 19th century publisher of educational magazines and books.
- Autodidacticism

Further reading

- Glaisyer, Natasha & Pennell, Sara. *Didactic literature in England, 1500-1800: Expertise reconstructed* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2003).

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This page was last modified on 18 September 2011 at 01:18.

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