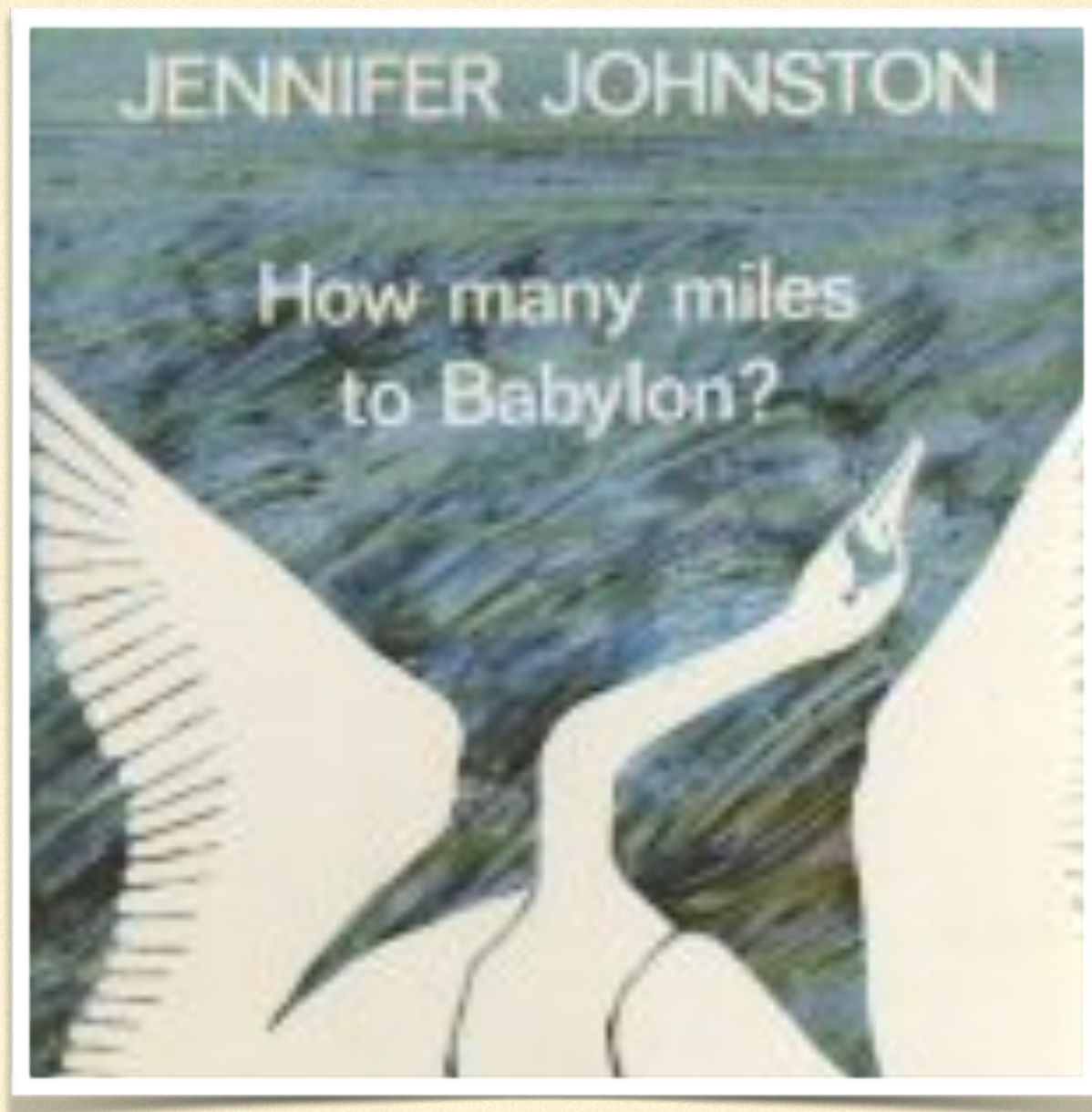

LITERARY GENRE - STRUCTURE

Structure of the text in *How Many Miles to Babylon?*, *Juno and the Paycock* and *I'm Not Scared*
www.aoifesnotes.com

HOW MANY MILES TO BABYLON?



- Circular structure - begins and ends with Alec in his prison cell
 - We know from the outset that there is no hope
 - Flashbacks to his childhood and the series of events which have led to this sorry state draw us even deeper into the story of Alec's life
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- Story is told chronologically once Alec begins to recount his childhood in Wicklow - he focuses on emotional events
 - There are no chapters as the book is a collection of memories rather than a traditional narrative
 - Each attempt to escape the misery of his life ends up with Alec being pulled into a downward spiral
 - His life becomes a whirlpool of misery
 - This idea of a never-ending circle from which there is no escape is reinforced by the circular structure of the book
 - The circle never ends
 - Nobody breaks free
 - There is only death
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QUOTES



- ‘Memories slide up to the surface of the mind, like weeds to the surface of the sea, once you begin to stir the depths where every word, every gesture, every sigh lie hidden.’
 - ‘Perhaps one day I will be able to see the world with clarity, recognise the patterns that seem to weave and unweave themselves endlessly through life and history. Eternal recurrences.’
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JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK



- Unlike 'Babylon', the events in JATP are presented in chronological order
 - Whereas we know from the outset that there is no hope in 'Babylon', we are a little more hopeful for the characters in JATP as we do not know exactly how their stories will unfold
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- In 'Babylon', we are focused on Alec's story because of the first person narrative, but in JATP we follow four different plots
 - Like 'Babylon', in which Alec recounts only those events in his life which have emotional significance for him, so does JATP move through a series of emotional events
 - Although the ending of JATP is far less predictable than that of 'Babylon', still, we have a good idea of the direction the plots will take.
 - Unlike 'Babylon', in which we are told exactly how Alec is to meet his fate, we have only the characters themselves to guide us in JATP
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- The seeds of the ending are sown in the way the characters' natures are presented at the start of the play:
 - Juno and Boyle will inevitably separate as there is no love lost between them and their fragile relationship is unable to stand much strain
 - Mary, with her 'principles' and her desperation to better herself without considering the consequences to herself or others, is bound to come to grief
 - Johnny's cowardice and betrayal of his comrade mean violence will claim him
 - Boyle will lose himself in illusion and alcohol once more
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I'M NOT SCARED



- INS is, like 'Babylon', focused on a single character and a single plot
 - In both INS and the flashback sections of 'Babylon' we see the early events through the eyes of a child, so a relatively simple narrative structure is appropriate
 - Both Alec and Michele are on a journey in which they discover harsh truths about the nature of evil
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- The chronological order of events means that there is great tension from the moment that Michele discovers Filippo
 - The difference here between the three texts is that we know how events will ultimately unfold for Alec, and we are less sympathetic towards several of the characters in JATP than we are towards the boys in INS. We want the innocent Filippo to be freed but we also know that his freedom will probably mean imprisonment for Michele's parents.
 - In all three texts, we see that the mounting complexities mean that a happy ending will not be possible for all
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