TWO KEY TERMS

Meta- A prefix that relates to self-referentiality and self-consciousness

A metapoem is a reflection on the creation of poetry. It is not a narrative poem (which tells a story), a lyrical poem (which expresses emotions), a dramatic poem (a play in verse), but a poem about poetry.

Metatheatere can be a play within a play (as in *Hamlet*) or about dramatic characters who become metaphorical playwrights. An example would be a play in which a father arranges a marriage for his daughter, and the daughter has another suitor in mind. She plots to win the man that she wants and thus becomes a metadramatist.

Metafiction or metanarrative can relate to the type of writing in which the short story or novel seems to have an awareness of its own fictionality, of its own “constructedness.” Often, the lines between fictionality and reality are blurred.
INTERTEXTUALITY

The term *intertextuality* refers to the interrelations among texts and conventions. It presupposes that no text exists in a vacuum. It is a bit different from the idea of sources, in that it is more general. For example, a modern parable or fable will likely have ties—direct or indirect—to Biblical parables or to Aesop’s fables. The title character of Cervantes’s *DON QUIXOTE* reads romances of chivalry and goes mad from some much reading. He decides to become a knight errant and to out into the world. The romances of chivalry, including those named in the narrative, are key intertexts of *DON QUIXOTE*. Ironically, in Part 2 of the novel, Don Quixote gets to see a copy of Part 1, and thus Part 1 becomes an intertext of Part 2.