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SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNIT –I – Literary Theory and Criticism –SHS5009

CLASSICAL- NINETEENTH CENTURY

I. INTRODUCTION

Criticism is an overall term for studies concerning with defining, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating works of literature. Theoretical criticism speaks of literary theory. Some such theoretical critics have been Aristotle, Longinus, Horace, Sainte-Beuve, Johnson, Coleridge, Arnold, Poe, Emerson, Richards, Burke and Frye. "Literary criticism" refers to the act of interpreting and studying literature. A literary critic is not someone who merely evaluates the worth or quality of a piece of literature but, rather, is someone who argues on behalf of an interpretation or understanding of the particular meaning(s) of literary texts. The task of a literary critic is to explain and attempt to reach a critical understanding of what literary texts mean in terms of their aesthetic, as well as social, political, and cultural statements and suggestions. A literary critic does more than simply discuss or evaluate the importance of a literary text; rather, a literary critic seeks to reach a logical and reasonable understanding of not only what a text's author intends for it to mean but, also, what different cultures and ideologies render it capable of meaning.

"Literary theory," however, refers to a particular form of literary criticism in which particular academic, scientific, or philosophical approaches are followed in a systematic fashion while analyzing literary texts. For example, a psychoanalytic theorist might examine and interpret a literary text strictly through the theoretical lens of psychoanalysis and psychology and, in turn, offer an interpretation or reading of a text that focuses entirely on the psychological dimensions of it. Traditional literary criticism tends not to focus on a particular aspect of (or approach to) a literary text in quite the same manner that literary theory usually does. Literary theory proposes particular, systematic approaches to literary texts that impose a particular line of intellectual reasoning to it.

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle lived from 384 B.C. to 322 B.C. He was the most distinguished disciple of

Plato. Among his critical treatise, only two are extant- 'Poetics' and 'Rhetoric', the former deals with the art of poetry and the latter with the art of speaking. Aristotle sees that epic poetry, tragedy, comedy, dithyrambic poetry, and music are alike in that they all imitate.

They differ in the medium, objects, and manner of imitation.

THE PLAN OF POETICS

Poetics contains twenty six small chapters. The first four chapters and the twenty fifth are devoted to poetry; the fifth in general way to comedy, epic, and tragedy; the following fourteen exclusively to tragedy; the next three to poetic diction; the next to epic poetry; and the last to a comparison of epic poetry and tragedy. Aristotle's main concern thus appears to be tragedy, which was considered the most developed form of poetry in his day. Poetry, comedy, and epic come in for consideration because a discussion of tragedy would be incomplete without some reference to its parent and sister forms.

ARISTOTLE'S OBSERVATION ON POETRY

1. Its Nature.

Aristotle calls poet an imitator. The poet imitates things 'as they were or are', 'as they are said or thought to be' or 'as they ought to be'. In other words the poet imitates what is past or present, what is commonly believed, and what is ideal. He believes that there is a natural pleasure in imitation. This is an inborn natural instinct. There is also another inborn instinct

i.e. the instinct for harmony and rhythm. This manifests itself in metrical composition. But unlike Plato, Aristotle does not consider the poet's imitations of life as twice removed from reality, but reveal universal truths. To prove this, Aristotle makes a comparison between poetry and history. The poet does not relate what has happened, but what may happen. The historian relates what has happened. Poetry therefore is more philosophical and higher than history. Poetry expresses the universal, history the particular. The pictures of poetry are truths based on facts on the laws of probability or necessity. Thus Aristotle answers Plato's severest charge against poetry.

1. Its functions.

Aristotle considers pleasure as the end of poetry. Poetry springs from the instincts of imitation and rhythm and harmony. They are indulged in for the pleasure they give. Poetry is pleasing both to the poet and to the reader. Aristotle nowhere states that the function of poetry is to teach. However, he considers teaching desirable, if it is incidental to the pleasure it gives. Such a pleasure is regarded as superior to all others, for, it has a dual purpose i.e. teaching as well as pleasing.

2. Its emotional appeal.

Poetry makes an immediate appeal to the emotions. For example, tragedy aroused the emotions of pity and fear- pity at the undeserved suffering and fear for the worst that may befall him. Plato considers them harmful to the healthy growth of mind. Aristotle has no such fear. According to him these emotions are aroused with a view to their purgation or catharsis. Everybody has occasions of fear and pity in life. If they go on accumulating they become harmful to the soul. But in tragedy, the sufferings we witness are not our own and these emotions find a free and full outlet. Thereby they relieve the soul of their excess. We are lifted of ourselves and emerge nobler than before. It is this that pleases in a tragic tale. Thus tragedy transmutes these disturbing emotions into "calm of mind". So the emotional appeal of poetry is not harmful but health-giving.

ARISTOTLE'S OBSERVATION ON TRAGEDY

1. Its origin

Poetry can imitate two kinds of actions- the nobler actions of good men or the mean actions of bad men. Tragedy was born from the former and comedy from the latter. Tragedy has resemblances to epic and comedy to satire. Aristotle considers tragedy superior to epic.

Tragedy has all the epic elements in a shorter compass.

2. Its characteristics.

Aristotle defines tragedy as " an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of certain magnitude, in a language embellished in with each kinds of artistic ornaments, the several kinds being found in the separate part of the play, in the form of action, not of narrative, through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions". By a serious action Aristotle means a tale of suffering exciting the emotions of pity and fear. The action should be complete which means that it must have a proper beginning, middle and end. It should also be arranged sequentially also. In other words it should have an organic unity. The action must be of certain magnitude. i.e. It should have reasonable length. It should be neither too long nor too short. Then only it can be easily remembered. It should have a length enough to unfold the events naturally. By artistic ornament, Aristotle means rhythm, harmony and song. They are all designed to enrich the language of the play. The form of action in tragedy distinguishes it from narrative verse. In tragedy, the tale is told with the help of characters.

Their speeches and actions make the tale. In the narrative the poet is free to speak in his own person. In tragedy, the dramatist is nowhere seen. All is done by his characters. It is meant to be acted as well as read. The narrative, on the other hand is meant to be read only.

3. Its constituent Parts.

Aristotle finds six constituent parts in tragedy. They are: Plot, character, thought, diction, song and spectacle. The Greek equivalents of these terms are: ethos, muthos, dianoia, lexis, melos and opsis. By plot is meant the arrangement of the incidents in the play in a logical and coherent way. Aristotle considers plot as the chef part of the tragedy because tragedy is an imitation not of men but men in action. Aristotle says: "without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character'. The actions themselves issue from characters.

Character, he says, determines men's qualities, but it is by their action that they are happy or sad. It is by their deeds that we know them. So it is these deeds that are woven into plot that matters. Character, is thus next only in importance to plot. Thought refers to what the character thinks or feels. It reveals itself in speech. As plot imitates action, character imitates men, so thought imitates men's mental and emotional reactions to the circumstances in which they find themselves. All these three i.e. plot, character and thought constitutes the poet's objects in imitation in tragedy. To accomplish them, he employs the medium diction. By diction is meant, words embellished with each kind of artistic ornament.

Song is one of them. Spectacle, the last of the six parts, is in fact the work of the stage mechanic. But it constitutes the manner in which the tragedy is presented to the audience.

4. The Structure of the Plot.

The plot is the soul of the tragedy. It should have unity of action. It means that only those actions in the life of the hero which are intimately connected with one another and appear together as one whole forms the plot. If any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjoined. The events comprising the plot will concern only one man. Otherwise there will be no necessary connection between them. By unity of time, Aristotle means the conformity between the time taken by the events of the play and that taken in their representation on the stage. The unity of place means the conformity between the scene of tragic events and the time taken by them to happen. A good tragic plot arouses the feelings of pity and fear in the audience- pity for the undeserved suffering of the hero and fear for the worst that may happen to him. The plot is divisible into two parts- complication and denouement. The former ties the events into a tangle knot, latter untie it. Complication includes all the actions from the beginning to the point where it takes a turn for good or ill.

The denouement extends from the turning point to the end. The first is commonly called the rising action, and the second the falling action.

5. Simple and Complex Plot.

The plot may be simple or complex. In a simple plot there are no puzzling situations such as peripeteia and anagnorisis. Peripeteia is generally explained a 'reversal of the situation' and anagnorisis as 'recognition' or 'discovery'. By reversal of situation is meant reversal of intention (e.g. a move to kill an enemy turning on one's own head, or killing an enemy and later discovering him to be a friend.) The discovery of these false moves is anagnoris. In other words it means a change from ignorance to knowledge. Both peripeteia and anagnorisis please because there is an element of surprise in them. A plot that makes use of them is complex. A perfect tragedy should be arranged not on the simple but on the complex plot.

6. Tragic Hero.

According to Aristotle, the ideal tragic hero should be good but neither too bad not too perfect. He should be a man whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depriving but by some error or frailty. This error is hamartia or the tragic flaw. For example, in 'Hamlet', it is his procrastination or inability to take action that leads to his down-fall. It is not a deliberate vice but flaw of characters and it makes the play tragic one.

6. Aristotle's opinion about Comedy.

Aristotle regards comedy as inferior to tragedy. He traces its roots to satire. Satiric verse originated in phallic songs sung in honour of Dionysus, the god of fertility, as epic originated from hymns to gods and praises of famous men. Consequently tragedy represents men as noble as they can be, and comedy taking its origin from satirical verse, represents men as worse than they are, but satire ridicules personality or rather the "sinner' while comedy ridicules sin or rather human vices. Unlike Plato, Aristotle does not consider the characters in comedy as vicious. According to him they are rendered ludicrous by some defect that is neither painful nor destructive. They are not contemptible also. Like poetry, comedy shows not what has happened, but what may happen. The characters are presented in particular situations in which every human being would have acted in the same way. Thus, general, not individual weakness is displayed in them.

8. Aristotle's opinion about epic.

The epic is earlier in origin than tragedy or comedy. In its nature it resembles tragedy, for it is an imitation of a serious action, whole, with a beginning, middle and an end. The structure also is like that of the tragedy, for the plot has a complication, and denouement, it can be complex, or simple, with or without perepeteia and anagnorisis. Its effect is the same, namely catharsis. But it lacks the song and spectacle found in tragedy. In its form it is different from tragedy, for it is narrative and is much longer than a tragedy. It is meant to be read or recited. While the tragedy presents only one main event, an epic contains several events which add to its variety and grandeur. Thirdly, an epic poet can introduce many improbable but marvelous incidents which presented on the stage may appear absurd, while they remain unnoticed when perceived by the imagination. They add to the pleasure of the poem, and Aristotle recommended probable impossibilities though not improbable possibilities. The supernatural element in the epic is an example of it. Aristotle still considers tragedy superior to epic though the latter appeals to the cultured, refined people and has no need of theatrical aid to achieve its effect. But Aristotle finds that tragedy with its music produced greater pleasure and its limited length attains more unity.

9. Aristotle's observation on Style.

Aristotle lays down clearness and propriety as two essentials of good writing. According to him current words are the best. But writing should aim at dignity and charm. These are best attained by the use of archaic words, foreign words, dialect words and newly coined words. They have an element of surprise in them. Metaphorical use of words is to be preferred to the plain. Aristotle says that a perfect poetic style uses words of all kinds in a judicious combination. Compound words are the most suitable for the lyric, rare or unfamiliar words suit the epic form, and metaphorical use of language is best for drama. In the "Rhetoric" Aristotle comments that common, familiar words are best for prose that deals with everyday subjects. But metaphorical language may be employed to introduce an element of novelty and surprise. Multiplicity of clauses, parenthesis and ambiguity should be avoided in prose.

Words may be arranged in two ways called loose style and periodic style. The former consists of a whole sentence with a beginning and an end. The periodic style is more intelligible and graceful

10. The Value of Aristotle's Criticism.

Aristotle's approach to literature is that of a scientist. Aristotle wanted literature to be an art and not to do the work of morality. He points the difference between politics and poetry.

Politics is a social science, therefore it should be judged by the contribution it makes to social well-being. Poetry, on the other hand, should be judged by its capacity to please the audience. He judges literature by aesthetic standards alone. Unlike Plato, he does not regard poetry as twice removed from reality. Instead, he considers the representations in poetry as true to the facts of human life. He points out its capacity to see the permanent features of life. He suggests

what kind of plot, character and style please men. He finds that perepetiea and anagnorisis, please most in a tragic plot, hamartia in the tragic hero, and metaphor in style.

Tragedy, comedy and epic are all, in this way, considered with reference to the effect on the minds and hearts of their spectators. Poetics deals with the art of poetry and many more problems of literature and has therefore attracted greater attention than any other works of criticism.

Dryden:

John Dryden (9 August 1631 – 1 May 1700) was a prominent English poet, critic, translator, and playwright who dominated the literary life of the Restoration Age; therefore, the age is known as the Age of Dryden. He was a Cambridge Scholar, literary genius and critic, considering his extraordinary literary contribution was credited with the honour of Poet Laureate of England in 1668.

He was a critic of contemporary reality. His critical observation of contemporary reality is reflected in MacFlecknoe(1682). Dryden's mature thoughts of literary criticism on ancient, modern and English Literature, especially on Drama, are presented in dialogue forms in An

Essay on Dramatic Poesy. In An Essay on Dramatic Poesy there are four speakers. Each one argues strongly as to which one is better, "Ancient or Modern, and French or English?"

Dryden as a Critic

Dryden was both a writer and a critic and he had rather a dogmatic bent. Most of his critical interpretations are found in the prefaces to his own works. In Dryden we find an interest in the general issues of criticism rather than in a close reading of particular texts. We call Dryden a neoclassical critic, just as Boileau. Dryden puts emphasis on the neoclassical rules. His best-known critical work, *An Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, partly reflects this tension in Dryden's commitments. Its dialogue form has often been criticized as inconclusive, but actually, as in most dialogues, there is a spokesman weightier than the others. Dryden carried out his critical thoughts effectively, stating his own ideas but leaving some room for difference of opinion. Neander's overall statement on the literary standards is that, the norms can be added to make the work ideal, but the norms will not improve a work which does not contain some degree of perfection. And as Dryden believes, we may find writers like Shakespeare who did not follow the rules but are nevertheless obviously superior to any "regular" writer. Shakespeare disconcerts Dryden; he recognises his superiority but within himself he would feel closer affiliations with Ben Jonson. In Dryden, then, we find a "liberal" neo-classicist, although he is most coherent (a trait of classicism) when he is dealing with that which can be understood and reduced to rule.

Dryden on The Nature of Poetry

Dryden agrees in general terms with Aristotle's definition of poetry as a process of imitation though he has to add some qualifiers to it. The generally accepted view of poetry in Dryden's day was that it had to be a close imitation of facts past or present. While Dryden has no problem with the prevalent neo-classical bias in favour of verisimilitude (likeness/fidelity to reality) he would also allow in more liberties and flexibilities for poetry. In the The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy he makes out a case for double-legged imitation. While the poet is free to imitate "things as they are said or thought to be", he also gives spirited defence of a poet's right to imitate what could be, might be or ought to be. He cites in this context the case of Shakespeare who so deftly exploited elements of the supernatural and elements of popular beliefs and superstitions. Dryden would also regard such exercises as 'imitation' since it is drawing on "other men's fancies".

Dryden on the Function of Poetry:

As we know, Plato wanted poetry to instruct the reader, Aristotle to delight, Horace to do both, and Longinus to transport. Dryden was a bit moderate and considerate in his views and familiar with all of them. He was of the opinion that the final end of poetry is delight and transport rather than instruction. It does not imitate life but presents its own version of it.

According to Dryden, the poet is neither a teacher nor a bare imitator – like a photographer – but a creator, one who, with life or Nature as his raw material, creates new things altogether resembling the original. According to him, poetry is a work of art rather than mere imitation. Dryden felt the necessity of fancy, or what Coleridge later would call "the shaping spirit of imagination".

An Essay on Dramatic Poesy: An Introduction

John Dryden's An Essay on Dramatic Poesy presents a brief discussion on Neo-classical theory of Literature. He defends the classical drama saying that it is an imitation of life and reflects human nature clearly.

An Essay on Dramatic Poesy is written in the form of a dialogue among four gentlemen: Eugenius, Crites, Lisideius and Neander. Neander speaks for Dryden himself. Eugenius favours modern English dramatists by attacking the classical playwrights, who did not themselves always observe the unity of place. But Crites defends the ancients and points out that they invited the principles of dramatic art paved by Aristotle and Horace. Crites opposes rhyme in plays and argues that though the moderns excel in sciences, the ancient age was the true age of poetry. Lisideius defends the French playwrights and attacks the English tendency to mix genres.

Neander speaks in favour of the Moderns and respects the Ancients; he is however critical of the rigid rules of dramas and favours rhyme. Neander who is a spokesperson of Dryden, argues that 'tragic-comedy' (Dryden's phrase for what we now call 'tragi-comedy') is the best form for a play; because it is closer to life in which emotions are heightened by mirth and sadness. He also finds subplots as an integral part to enrich a play. He finds single action in French dramas to be rather inadequate since it so often has a narrowing and cramping effect.

Neander gives his palm to the violation of the three unities because it leads to the variety in the English plays. Dryden thus argues against the neo-classical critics. Since nobody speaks in rhyme in real life, he supports the use of blank verse in drama and says that the use of rhyme in serious plays is justifiable in place of the blank verse.

Definition on Drama: Dryden defines Drama as:

Just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind.

According to the definition, drama is an 'image' of 'human nature', and the image is 'just' and 'lively'. By using the word 'just' Dryden seems to imply that literature imitates (and not merely reproduces) human actions. For Dryden, 'poetic imitation' is different from an exact, servile copy of reality, for, the imitation is not only 'just', it is also 'lively'.

When the group talks about the definition of Drama Lisidieus expresses his views about Drama as "a just and lively Image of Humane Nature." And then each character expresses his views about Drama and they compare French Drama and English Drama and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of French and English Drama. The debate goes on about the comparison between ancient writers and modern writers. They also discuss the importance of "Unity in French Drama". So far as the Unities of Time, Place and Action are concerned French Drama was closer to classical notions of Drama. With the influence of Platonic Dialogues Dryden had designed the group that further discusses the Playwrights such as Ben Jonson, Molière, and

Shakespeare with a deeper insight. Crites offers an objection specifically to the use of rhyme as he privileges the verisimilitude of the scene while citing Aristotle. On the other hand, Neander favours the natural rhyme since that, according to him, adds artistry to the plays. It was Twilight when the four friends had their final speech at the Somerset-Stairs and then the four friends parted along their separate ways.

Violation of the Three Unities

In an age of pseudo- classic criticism, with its precise rules and definitions, Dryden had the boldness to defend the claims of genius to write according to its own convictions, without regard for the prescription and rules which had been laid down for good writing. He cleared the ground for himself by brushing away all the arbitrary bans upon freedom of judgment and refused to be cowed down by the French playwrights and critics.

Dryden's Defence:

Dryden's liberalism, his free critical disposition, is best seen in his justification of the violation of three unities on the part of the English dramatists and in his defense of English tragi-comedies. As regards the unities, his views are as under:

a) The English violation of the three unities lends greater copiousness (existing in large amounts, profuse in speech) and variety to the English plays. The unities have narrowing and cramping effects on the French plays, and they are often betrayed into absurdities from which English plays are free.

b) The English disregard of the unities enables them to present a more 'just' and 'lively' picture of human nature. The French plays may be more regular but they are not as lively, not so pleasant and delightful as that of English. e.g., Shakespeare's plays which are more lively and just images of life and human nature.

c) The English when they do observe the rules as Ben Jonson has done in The Silent Woman, show greater skill and art than the French. It all depends upon the 'genius' or 'skill' of the writer. d) There is no harm in introducing 'sub-plots', for they impart variety, richness, and liveliness to the play. In this way the writer can present a more 'just' and 'lively' picture than the French with their narrow and cramped plays.

e) To the view that observance of the unities is justified on the ground that (i) their violation results in improbability , (ii) that it places too great a strain on the imagination of the spectators , and (iii) that credibility is stretched too for, Dryden replies that it is all a question of 'dramatic illusion'. Lisideius argues that "we cannot so speedily recollect ourselves after a scene of great passion and concernment to pass to another of mirth and humour, and to enjoy it with any relish". Neander questions this assumption and replies to it by saying why should he imagine the soul of man more heavy than his senses? " Does not the eye pass from an unpleasant object to a pleasant in a much shorter time?" – 'gratification of sense is primary, secondary that of soul'. Sensory perception helps in dramatic illusion

Eugenius's Arguments on the Superiority of the Moderns over the Ancients:

Eugenius says that "the moderns have profited by the rules of the ancients" but moderns have "excelled them." He points first to some discrepancies in the applications of the Unities, mentioning that there seem to be four parts in Aristotle's method: the entrance, the intensifying of the plot, the counter-turn, and the catastrophe. But he points out that somewhere along the line, and by way of Horace, plays developed five acts (the Spanish only 3). As regards the action, Eugenius contends that they are transparent, everybody already having known what will happen; that the Romans borrowed from the Greeks; and that the deus ex machina convention is a weak escape. As far as the unity of place is concerned, he suggests that the Ancients were

not the ones to insist on it so much as the French, and that insistence has caused some artificial entrances and exits of characters. The unity of time is often ignored in both. As to the liveliness of language, Eugenius countersfutes Crites by suggesting that even if we do not know all the contexts, good writing is always good, wit is always discernible, if done well. He goes on to say also that while the Ancients portrayed many emotions and actions, they neglected love, "which is the most frequent of all passions" and known to everyone. He mentions Shakespeare and Fletcher as offering "excellent scenes of passion."

Crites's Arguments in favour of the Ancients:

Crites develops the main points in defending the ancients and raises objections to modern plays. The Moderns are still imitating the Ancients and using their forms and subjects, relying on Aristotle and Horace, adding nothing new and yet not following their good advice closely either, especially with respect to the Unities of time, place and action. While the unity of time suggests that all the action should be portrayed within a single day, the English plays attempt to use long periods of time, sometimes years. In terms of place, the setting should be the same from beginning to end with the scenes marked by the entrances and exits of the persons having business within each. The English, on the other hand, try to have all kinds of places, even far off countries, shown within a single play. The third unity, that of action, requires that the play "aim at one great and complete action", but the English have all kinds of sub-plots which destroy the unity of the action.

In anticipating the objection that the Ancients' language is not as vital as the Moderns's, Crites says that we have to remember that we are probably missing a lot of subtleties because the languages are dead and the customs are far removed from this time.

Crites uses Ben Jonson as the example of the best in English drama, saying that he followed the Ancients "in all things" and offered nothing really new in terms of "serious thoughts".

Lisideius's view in favour of the Superiority of the French

Drama over the English Drama:

Lisideius speaks in favour of the French. He agrees with Eugenius that in the last generation the English drama was superior. Then they had their Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher. But English drama has decayed and declined since then. They live in an awful age full of bloodshed and violence, and poetry is an art of peace. In the present age, it flourishes in France and not in England. The French have their Corneille (1606-84), and the English have no dramatist equal to him.

The French are superior to the English for various reasons:

1. They follow the Ancients. They favour the Unity of time and they observe it so carefully. When it comes to the Unity of Place, they are equally careful. In most of their plays, the entire action is limited to one place. And the Unity of Action is even more obvious. Their plays are never over-loaded with sub-plots as is the case with the English plays. The attention of the English playwrights is constantly diverted from one action to the other, and its due effects. This fault of double-action gives rise to another fault till the end. Lisideius therefore concludes: no drama in the world is as absurd as the English tragic-comedy. The French plays also have much variety but they do not provide it in such a bizarre manner. The English are guilty of the folly, while the French are not.

2. The Plots of the French tragedies are based on well-known stories with reference to the theory and practice of the Ancients. But these stories are transformed for dramatic purposes; in this regard they are superior even to the Ancients. So their stories are

mixture of truth with fiction, based on historical invention. They both delight and instruct, at one and the same time. But the English dramatists for example Shakespeare, do not modify and transform their stories for dramatic purpose. In order to satisfy the human soul, the drama must have verisimilitude (likeness to reality). The French plays have it, while the English do not.

3. The French do not burden the play with a fat plot. They represent a story which will be one complete action, and everything which is unnecessary is carefully excluded. But the English burden their plays with actions and incidents which have no logical and natural connection with the main action so much so that an English play is a mere compilation. Hence the French plays are better written than the English ones.

4. The English devote considerable attention to one single character, and the others are merely introduced to set off that principal character. But Lisideius does not support or favour this practice. In the English plays, one character is more important than the others, and quite naturally, the greater part of the action is concerned with him. The English play the character relates to life and therefore, it is proper and reasonable that it should be so also in the drama. But in French plays, the other characters are not neglected. While in the French plays such narrations are made by those who are in some way or the other connected with the main action. Similarly the French are more skilled than the Ancients.

5. Further, the French narrations are better managed and more skilful than those of the English. The narration may be of two kinds. The action of the play which is dull and boring, and is often not listened to by the audience. The narration of things happening during the course of the play. The French are able to avoid the representation of scenes of bloodshed, violence and murder on the stage, such scenes of horror and tumult has disfigured many English plays. In this way, they avoid much that is ridiculous and absurd in the English plays.

6. The major imperfection of English plays is the representation of Death on the stage. All passions can be in a lively manner represented on the stage, only if the actor has the necessary skill, but there are many actions which cannot be successfully represented, and dying is one of them. The French omit the same mistake. Death should better be described or narrated rather than represented.

7. It is wrong to believe that the French represent no part of their action on the stage. Instead, they make proper selection. Cruel actions which are likely to cause hatred, or disbelief by their impossibility, must be avoided or merely narrated. They must not be represented. The French follow this rule in practice and so avoid much of the tumult of the English plays by reducing their plots to reasonable limits. Such narrations are common in the plays of the Ancients and the great English dramatists like Ben Jonson and Fletcher. Therefore, the French must not be blamed for their narration, which are judicious and well managed.

8. The French are superior to the English in other ways, too: Neander's View in Favour of Modern (English) Drama:

Based on the definition of the play, Neander suggests that English playwrights are best at "the lively imitation of nature" (i.e.,human nature). French poesy is beautiful; it is beautiful like a "statue". He even says that the newer French writers are imitating the English playwrights.

One fault he finds in their plots is that the regularity also makes the plays too much alike. He defends the English invention of tragi-comedy by suggesting that the use of mirth with tragedy provides "contraries" that "set each other off" and gives the audience relief from the heaviness of straight tragedy. He suggests that the use of well-ordered sub-plots makes the plays interesting and help the main action. Further, he suggests that English plays are more entertaining and instructive because they offer an element of surprise that the Ancients and the French do not. He brings up the idea of the suspension of disbelief. While the audience may know that none of them are real, why should they think scenes of deaths or battles any less "real" than the rest? Here he credits the English audience with certain robustness in suggesting that they want their battles and "other objects of horror." Ultimately he suggests that it may be there are simply too many rules and often following them creates more absurdities than they prevent.

The Ancients versus Modern Playwrights:

Dryden in his essay, An Essay on Dramatic Poesy, vindicated the Moderns. The case for the 'Ancients' is presented by Crites. In the controversy Dryden takes no extreme position and is sensible enough to give the Ancients their respect. Through his wit and shrewd analysis, he removes the difficulty which had confused the issue. He makes us see the achievement of the Ancients and the gratitude of the Moderns to them. Thus, he presents the comparative merits and demerits of each in a clearer way.

Crites Favours the Ancients:

i. The superiority of the Ancients is established by the very fact that the Moderns simply imitate them, and build on the foundations laid by them. The Ancients are the acknowledged models of the Moderns.

ii. The Ancients had a special genius for drama, and in their particular branch of poetry they could reach perfection. Just as they excel them in drama.

iii. Thirdly, in ancient Greece and Rome poetry was more honoured than any other branch of knowledge. Poets were encouraged to excel in this field through frequent competitions, judges were appointed and the dramatists were rewarded according to their merits. But in modern times there is no such spirit of healthy rivalry and competition. Poets are neither suitably honoured nor are they rewarded.

iv. The Ancient drama is superior because the Ancients closely observed Nature and faithfully represented her in their work. The Moderns do not observe and study Nature carefully and so they distort and disfigure her in their plays.

v. The rules of Dramatic Composition which the Moderns now follow have come down to them from the Ancients.

vi. Crites makes special mention of the Unities, of Time, Place, and Action. The Ancients

vii. followed these rules and the effect is satisfying and pleasing. But in Modern plays the Unity of Time is violated and often of the Action of a play covers whole ages.

viii. The Ancients could organize their plays well. We are unable to appreciate the art and beauty of their language, only because many of their customs, stories, etc, are not known to us. There is much that is highly proper and elegant in their language but we fail to appreciate it because their language is dead, and remains only in books.

Eugenius' Case for the Moderns:

Eugenius then replies to Crites and speaks in favour of the Moderns.

In the very beginning, he acknowledges that the Moderns have learnt much from the Ancients. But he adds that by their own labour the Moderns have added to what they have gained from them, with the result that they now excel them in many ways. The Moderns have not blindly imitated them. Had they done so, they would have lost the old perfection, and would not achieve any new excellences. Eugenius proceeds to bring out some defects of the Ancients, and some excellences of the Moderns.

i. The Moderns have perfected the division of plays and divided their plays not only into Acts but also into scenes. The Spaniards and the Italians have some excellent plays to their credit, and they divided them into three Acts and not into five. They wrote without any definite plan and when they could write a good play their success was more a matter of chance and good fortune than of ability. In the characterization they no doubt, imitate nature, but their imitation is only narrow and partial – as if they imitated only an eye or a hand and did not dare to venture on the lines of a face, or the proportion of the body. They are inferior to the (English) Moderns in all these respects.

ii. Even the Ancients' observance of the three unities is not perfect. The Ancient critics, like Horace and Aristotle, did not make mention of the Unity of Place. Even the Ancients did not always observe the Unity of Time. Euripides, a great dramatist, no doubt, confines his action to one day, but, then, he commits many absurdities.

iii. There is too much of narration at the cost of Action. Instead of providing the necessary information to the audience through dialogues the Ancients often do so through monologues. The result is, their play becomes monotonous and tiresome.

iv. Their plays do not perform one of the functions of drama, that of giving delight as well as instruction. There is no poetic justice in their plays. Instead of punishing vice and rewarding virtue, they have often shown a prosperous wickedness, and an unhappy piety.

v. Eugenius agrees with Crites that they are not competent to judge the language of the Ancients since it is dead, and many of their stories, customs, habits, etc., have been lost to them. However, they have certain glaring faults which cannot be denied. They are often too bold in their metaphors and in their coinages. As far as possible, only such words should be used as are in common use, and new words should be coined only when absolutely necessary. Horace himself has recommended this rule, but the Ancients violated it frequently.

vi. Ancient themes are equally defective. The proper end of Tragedy is to arouse "admiration and concernment (pity)". But their themes are lust, cruelty, murder, and bloodshed, which instead of arousing admiration and pity arouse "horror and terror".

vii. The horror of such themes can be softened a little by the introduction of love scenes, but in the treatment of this passion they are much inferior to such Moderns as Shakespeare and Fletcher. In their comedies, no doubt they introduce a few scenes of tenderness but, then, their lovers talk very little.

Mixture of Tragedy and Comedy

Dryden is more considerate in his attitude towards the mingling of the tragic and the comic elements and emotions in the plays. He vindicates tragi-comedy on the following grounds:

i. Contrasts, when placed near, set off each other.

ii. Continued gravity depresses the spirit, a scene of mirth thrown in between refreshes. It has the same effect on us as music. In other words, comic scene produces relief, though Dryden does not explicitly say so.

iii. Mirth does not destroy compassion and thus the serious effect which tragedy aims at is not disturbed by mingling of tragic and comic.

iv. Just as the eye can pass from an unpleasant object to a pleasant one, so also the soul can move from the tragic to the comic. And it can do so much more swiftly.

v. The English have perfected a new way of writing not known to the Ancients. If they had tragic-comedies, perhaps Aristotle would have revised his rules.

vi. It is all a question of progress with the change of taste. The Ancients cannot be a model for all times and countries, "What pleased the Greeks would not satisfy an English audience". Had Aristotle seen the English plays "He might have changed his mind". The real test of excellence is not strict adherence to rules or conventions, but whether the aims of dramas have been achieved. They are achieved by the English drama.

Dryden's view on Tragi-comedy (Dryden's own phrase is 'Tragic-comedy') clearly brings out his liberal classicism, greatness and shrewdness as a critic. Dryden is of the view that mingling of the tragic and the comic provides dramatic relief.

Advocacy of writing plays in Rhymed Verse Rhymed

Verse versus Blank Verse Controversy:

In the Restoration era rhymed verse or Heroic Couplet was generally used as the medium of expression for Heroic Tragedy, while the great Elizabethan dramatists had used blank verse for their plays. Dryden himself used rhyme for his plays upto 'Aurangzebe'. But in the Preface to this play he bids farewell to his 'mistress rhyme', and express his intention of turning to blank verse. However, in the Essay, he has expressed himself strongly in favour of rhyme through the mouth of Neander.

Crites's attack on Rhyme occurs towards the end of the Essay, the discussion turns on rhyme and blank verse, and Crites attacks rhyme violently on the following grounds:

Rhyme is not to be allowed in serious plays, though it may be allowed in comedies.

Rhyme is unnatural in a play, for a play is in dialogues, and no man without premeditation speaks in rhyme.

- Blank Verse is also unnatural for no man speaks in verse either, but it is nearer to prose and Aristotle has laid down that tragedy should be written in a verse form which is nearer to prose
- "Aristotle, 'Tis best to write Tragedy in that kind of Verse which is the least such, or which is nearest Prose: and this amongst the Ancients was the Iambique, and with us is blank verse." (……)

- Drama is a 'just' representation of Nature, and rhyme is unnatural, for nobody in Nature expresses himself in rhyme. It is artificial and the art is too apparent, while true art consists in hiding art.
- It is said that rhyme helps the poet to control his fancy. But one who has not the judgment to control his fancy in blank verse will not be able to control it in rhyme either. Artistic control is a matter of judgment and not of rhyme or verse.

Neander's defence:

- The choice and the placing of the word should be natural in a natural order – that makes the language natural, whether it is verse or rhyme that is used.
- Rhyme itself may be made to look natural by the use of run-on lines, and variety, and variety resulting from the use of hemistich, manipulation of pauses and stresses, and the change of metre. • Blank Verse is no verse at all. It is simply poetic prose and so fit only for comedies. Rhymed verse alone, made natural or near to prose, is suitable for tragedy. This would satisfy Aristotle's dictum. • Rhyme is justified by its universal use among all the civilized nations of the world.
- The Elizabethans achieved perfection in the use of blank verse and they, the Moderns, cannot excel; them, or achieve anything significant or better in the use of blank verse. Hence they must perforce use rhyme, which suits the genius of their age.
- Tragedy is a serious play representing nature exalted to its highest pitch; rhyme being the noblest kind of verse is suited to it, and not to comedy.

At the end of the Essay, Dryden gives one more reason in favour of rhyme i.e. rhyme adds to the pleasure of poetry. Rhyme helps the judgment and thus makes it easier to control the free flights of the fancy. The primary function of poetry is to give 'delight', and rhyme enables the poet to perform this function well.

Let's sum up

In a nutshell, John Dryden in his essay, An Essay on Dramatic Poesy, gives an account of the Neo-classical theory. He defends the classical drama saying that it is an imitation of life, and reflects human nature clearly. He also discusses the three unities, rules that require a play to take place in one place, during one day, and that it develops one single action or plot.

The Essay is written in the form of a dialogue concerned to four gentlemen: Eugenius, Crites, Lisideius and Neander. Neander seems to speak for Dryden himself.Eugenius takes the side of the modern English dramatists by criticizing the faults of the classical playwrights who did not themselves observe the unity of place. But Crites defends the ancient and pointed out that they invited the principles of dramatic art enunciated by Aristotle and Horace. Crites opposes rhyme in plays and argues that through the moderns excel in science; the ancient age was the true age of poetry. Lesideius defends the French playwrights and attacks the English tendency to mix genres. He defines a play as a just and lively image of human and the change of fortune to which it is subject for the delight and instruction of mankind.

Neander favours the Moderns, respects the Ancients, critical to rigid rules of dramas and he favours rhyme if it is in proper place like in grand subject matter. Neander a spokesperson of Dryden argues that tragic comedy is the best form for a play; because it is the closest to life in which emotions are heightened by both mirth and sadness. He also finds subplots as an integral part to enrich a play. He finds the French drama, with its single action.

Neander favours the violation of the unities because it leads to the variety in the English plays. The unities have a narrowing and crumpling effect on the French plays, which are often betrayed into absurdities from which the English plays are free. The violation of unities helps the English playwright to present a mere, just and lively image of human nature.

In his comparison of French and English drama, Neander characterizes the best proofs of the Elizabethan playwrights. He praises Shakespeare, ancients and moderns.Neander comes to the end for the superiority of the Elizabethans with a close examination of a play by Jonson which Neander believes a perfect demonstration that the English were capable of following the classical rules. In this way, Dryden's commitment to the neoclassical tradition is displayed.

Wordsworth (1770-1856): If Johnson wrote of man in as certain class of society, Wordsworth wrote of man as himself, after the French Revolution shattered the old way of life. He writes in *Lyrical Ballads*

"The principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain coloring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect, and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though no ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature.

This view of poetry as a meditated craft is elaborated in Wordsworth's other renowned comment in the *Preface* concerning poetic composition. After repeating his original statement that

> …Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,' he adds that poetry, 'takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of re-action, the tranquility gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins.

F.W. Bateson observes, "The issue of poetic diction had been growing upon the English literary consciousness steadily since about the time of Chaucer, that is, since the beginning of

Renaissance English literature, and with special intensity since the time of Spenser. A new linguistic consciousness, the new linguistic expansiveness of the Renaissance nation, promoted the learned enrichment of vernacular expression and produced a plethora of words."

Dante insisted on the use of polished language, but Wordsworth used the common man's language. He does not believe in the ways of the city folk. Man in nature is better than man in the city. Wordsworth puts stress on the individualism of the poet. And what is the purpose of poetry? To teach, said Horace, Scaliger, and Boileau. No, says Wordsworth. The only restriction the poet writes under is the 'necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a man. Poetry for Wordsworth is not merely another social or intellectual activity. It is 'the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge'; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science.

Summary of Preface to Lyrical Ballads with important Prose Passages

(a) The Occasion and Limitations of his Critical Work:

Wordsworth was dragged into criticism in spite of himself. For neither by temperament nor by training was he qualified to be a critic. Nor was his upbringing in the beloved lap of Nature, that bred an indifference to books, at all conducive to a critical frame of mind. Had his share of the Lyrical Ballads, published by him and his friend Coleridge in 1798, not been violently attacked by the neo-classical critics of the Edinburgh and the Quarterly Reviews, it is doubtful whether he would have penned a single line of criticism. As it is, he had to take the field in sheer self-defense where, however, he not only made the issue more confounded but, unwittingly, proved the opponents' point more than his own. The chief of his critical papers is the preface to the second edition of the Lyrical Ballads dated 1800, which was revised and enlarged in the subsequent editions of 1802 and 1815. The revision and enlargement also included an Appendix to the edition of 1802 and an Essay Supplementary to the Preface to the edition of 1815. In all of them Wordsworth's subject is poetic diction and his view of poetry, which from their original enunciation in the others. The work, it appears, was originally to have been eventually left to Wordsworth who incorporated some of those notes into its.

(b) Neo-classical Poetic Diction

The question of poetic diction or the language fit for poetry, which chiefly compelled Wordsworth to write his Preface, had also engaged the attention of the neo-classical and earlier writers. Spenser, thus, had preferred the archaic language to that in vogue in his day. Milton had, similarly, a predilection for the uncommon in word and phrase in his great rule- loving critics of the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to substitute this caprice or chance in the selection of poetic language by system. The great Roman orator Cicero had divided style into three categories: the low, used to prove; the middle, used to please; and the high or lofty, used to move. Although the categorization originally applied to oratory, it proved no less useful in distinguishing the 'kinds' of poetry by their style. The elegiac, thus, used the low style, the pastoral the middle, and the epic the lofty. The eighteenth century reduced these three categories to only two: the low and the lofty. It summarily rejected low words and phrases as unfit for poetic use, those, that is to say, which being in everyday use became too familiar to the ear and so lost all their power to impress. There was another variety of words not covered by any of these categories which also Dr. Johnson found unfit for poetic use- the technical ones which, though

uncommon and therefore perhaps high, are too much so to be intelligible to any but the professions concerned. With these two exceptions therefore, the low and the technical, poets were free to use any language they liked. This, according to him and to the neo-classical critics in general, was the true poetic diction – a 'system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestic use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular art'. It difference from the diction of prose by its 'happy combinations of words' or 'flowers of speech', plucked from the bramble of current forms of expression. Employed judiciously by gifted writers, it served its purpose well enough, but falling into the hands, of mere versifiers, it soon degenerated into artifice. In their verses the devices employed to turn the commonplace into the grand- personification, periphrasis, inversion, antithesis, Latinisms – appear bereft of all the graces found in those of the former. To illustrate the use of periphrasis only, the device most commonly resorted to, they turned shepherds into 'the rural race', a bright expanse of flowers in the fields into ' their' flowery carpet', singing birds into 'gay songsters of the feather's train'. In this ay poetry drifted away from natural expression altogether.

(c) Wordsworth's Concept of Poetic Diction

It was rather this abuse of poetic diction than perhaps poetic diction itself which Wordsworth originally disapproved. For in the Advertisement of the Lyrical Ballads of 1798 he stated that his object in adopting a simpler diction for his poems was merely ' to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society was adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure'. But when in spite 3 of this modest apologia they were attached mercilessly by conservative opinion, his tentative experiment turned into a definite concept. The publication of a second edition of the Lyrical Ballads in 1800 provided his with the occasion to explain it. His principal object in these poems, he says, ' was to choose incidents and situations from common lfie, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect.' Explaining why only low and rustic life was chosen for this purpose, he says that in that condition, free from all outside influences, men speak from their own personal experience and 'convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions'. Such a language, therefore, 'is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression in order to furnish food for fickle tastes and fickle appetites of their own creation.'

From this he is led to attaché the diction of the day. 'The reader,' he says, ' will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language ….There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it….to bring my language near to the language of men.' In poetic diction, besides the use of personification, Wordsworth includes 'phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of poets' – periphrasis, inversion, antithesis, and other devices – and even those expressions, 'in themselves

proper and beautiful', which were so frequently repeated by bad poets that they began to arouse disgust rather than pleasure.

Finally, Wordsworth points out that as a natural corollary to his concept of poetic style the language of poetry cannot differ materially from that of prose: 'that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose; but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose, when prose is well written.' As an instance, he cites some lines, the only ones he considers valuable, from Gray's sonnet. On the Death of Richard West which, in spite of that pot's insistence on the difference between the language of poetry and prose, are hardly difference from what they would be in prose; such as the concluding two:

I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear, And

weep the more because I weep in vain.

Whence Wordsworth is led to conclude, 'that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.' To the possible objection that metre itself constitutes a distinction between the two and that therefore there are other distinctions equally valid, such as those of diction, Wordsworth replies that he is only recommending 'a selection of the language really spoken by men' and 'that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feelings, will of itself form a distinction far greater than composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and if metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude (i.e. distinction) will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind.' It is as much as to admit that there is a distinction between the language 4 of poetry and that of prose or 'the very language of men', which was wordsworth's original object, and that the distinction lies not only in metre but also in the choice of words and phrases, which in the case of poetry must be made 'with true taste and feeling'.

Not only this: Wordsworth even admits the possibility of what Johnson called 'flowers of speech' arising in the process:' for, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures.' How, then, with the vulgarity of common speech refined by taste, anddignity and variety added to it by metaphors and figures, is Wordsworth's concept of protests? Is not the prodigal son back home, again after all his wanderings? 'Wordsworth,' as Rene Wellek says, 'actually ends in good neo-classicism.

His poetic practice 'doth the same tale repeat'. His greatest poems – Tintern Abbey, The Immortality Ode, The Solitary Reaper, and others too numerous to mention – are not written ' in a selection of language really used by men.' But this is ot to deny that a good part of Wordsworth's poetry, of 'incidents and situations from common life,' does succeed nobly in the language advocated in the Advertisement of 1798. Which all comes to this: that there is a class of poetry for which such language is certainly suited, and that neo-classical opinion only showed its inherent narrow mindedness in not judging it on its merits. And from this initial mistake on its part Wordsworth, as uncritical as his assailants, was led to overstate the possibilities of his own concept of poetic diction.

(d) His Concept of Poetry

From a consideration of the language of poetry Wordsworth is led to a consideration of the poetic art itself. But here, too he is not quite clear in his assertions. To begin with, he defines good poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', in which case there is no difference between it and the song of Shelley's Skylark that also pours his full heart in profuse strains of an unpremeditated art.

But if it is only this, how is it that it comes to be clothed 'in selection of language really used by men', with metre superadded thereto, for no sudden rush of emotions can leave a poet any leisure for these? Wordsworth makes no attempt the explain the anomaly but modifies the statement later in the Preface in this way: 'I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected In tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction ,the tranquility gradually disappear and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does its actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on.' It will be noticed here that though ' the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' and 'emotion recollected tranquility' are the very opposite of each other – the one coming on a sudden, the other deliberately recalled to memory – Wordsworth makes no difference between the two and endeavors to explain the one by the other. Did he mean the same things by the two? If he did, as appears from this elucidation of the first statement by the second, his meaning in the first seems to have been that poetry 'is the final product' of the 'unforced' overflow of powerful feelings. For it is only by some such interpretation that these two opposed statements can be reconciled. That his second statement is the more considered one and explains his meaning more truly is plain enough. For his own great poems were composed in the way therein set forth. A moving sight – say the solitary reaper or the daffodils – was seen during a walk, stored in the memory, and recalled in moments of calm contemplation to be bodied forth into a poem. In this process the emotion originally aroused by the sight was re-created in contemplation as nearly as possible till it overpowered the mind completely, driving contemplation thence. So this is how poetry originates in emotion recollected in tranquility and is therefore, ultimately, the product of the original free flow of that emotion. Had no emotion been aroused of itself in the beginning, there would have been no recollection of it in tranquility and so no expression of it in poetry. The first stage in the poetic process is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,' the next their recollection in tranquility, and the last their expression in poetry. That by spontaneity in poetry Wordsworth did not simply a complete rejection of workmanship, or artlessness, is poems with the greatest care, not trusting his first expression which he often found detestable. 'It is frequently true of second words as of second thoughts,' he wrote to Gillis, 'that they are best. Nor is the principle of spontaneity in poetic composition advocated anywhere else in the Preface except in that solitary phrase. Here, too, therefore Wordsworth is not so revolutionary in his concept as he appears.

He also considered the function of poetry. It is not sheer self-expression, as its 'spontaneous overflow' might suggest. It stands or falls by its effect on the reader. For the poet 'is a man speaking to men': apart from them his song is a mere voice in the wilderness. His over-all object is, no doubt, pleasure but it is pleasure in which the moral gain far outweighs the aesthetic.

The latter chiefly arises from the port's way of saying things and from his use of metre or rhme which with their pleasurable recurrence, make even pathetic situations and sentiments painless. The moral consists partly in the refinement of feelings which true poetry effects, partly in the

knowledge of 'Man, Nature, and Human Life' which it conveys, and partly in its emphasis on whatever makes life richer and fuller: 'Truth, Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope – And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith', As the poet is possessed of a greater power to feel and to express his feelings than other men, he has a ready access to the reader's heart; and as his feelings are saner, purer, and more permanent than can be aroused by the same objects in other men, the reader is induced to feel the poet's way in the same situation and even in others. He emerges saner and purer than before. Next, poetry is the pursuit of truth- of man's knowledge of himself and the world around him. Science is engaged in the same pursuit, too, but while the truths it discovers benefits us only materially, the truths of poetry 'cleave to us as a necessary part of our existence', for they concern man's relation to man, on the one hand, and his relation to the external world of nature, on the other, both illustrated in 'incidents and situation from common life', as in the Lines Written in Early Spring where while man harms man, the world of Nature ,where everything is happy, caters for his hourly delight. It is an instance of unpleasant truth, no doubt, but in the context of its' overbalance of pleasure' in Nature, its sum total is pleasure. While the pursuit of science pleaes the ceintist, there is nothing in its truths that can equally please the common man.

They must remain the pleasure of the few who know science. Nor, being purely the product of the'meddling intellect', are they 'felt in the blood, and felt along the heart', as the truths of poetry are. 'Poetry (therefore) is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science'.

Finally, poetry is a greater force for good. Wordsworth's own object in writing poetry was 'to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier, to each the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous.' From this he drew the general conclusion that every great poet is a teacher; I wish either to be considered as a teacher or as nothing.' This is also what Plato, with whom Wordsworth has much in common, wanted poetry to the but as the latter everywhere insists on pleasure as being a necessary condition of poetic teaching, he may be said to follow Horace more than Plato. But so far as teaching alone is concerned, Wordsworth, in a famous passage concerning his own poems, seems to echo the very sentiments of Plato: they will cooperate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, and will, in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier.' In the preface these benign tendencies are defined as 'relationship and love' which it is the great function of poetry to promote. But they are to be induced through a purgation of feelings rather than through a mere appeal to the intellect or good sense. This is what distinguishes Wordsworth's concept of teaching from that of his neo-classical predecessors.

(e) The Value of his Criticism

Whether in his attack on poetic diction or in his judgment of poetry by its appeal to the emotions, Wordsworth opposed the neo-classical practice of judging a work of art by the application of tests based on ancient models. These tests could at the most judge the external qualities of the work – its structure, diction, metre, and the like. A work might be flawless in all these and yet fail 'to please always and please all'. It may please the critic intent on looking for these niceties in its extent to which it moves him? Wordsworth applied himself to this great question – the ultimate test of literary excellence – and came to the conclusion

that it lay neither in a particular diction nor in a particular mode writing. It lay rather in the hearlthy pleasure it afforded to the reader; and this may arise as much from the use of common language as from the customary language of poetry, and as much from the writer's individual mode of writing as from that laid down by new classicism. What Wordsworth says in this connection of the style of his Lyrical Ballads applies equally to his generally poetic practice: 'I am well aware that others who pursue different track may interest him likewise; I do not interfere with their claim, I only wish to prefer a difference claim of my own.' This is actually all that he meant in the Preface and all that Romanticism means too. It is an application of the common principle of 'live and let live' in the sphere of letters.

Wordsworth also saw that neo-classicism made no provision for originality of genius and seldom judged it on its merit. It stood all for the beaten track. So consciously or unconsciously it often proved a hindrance to writers who followed their own path. From the attacks made on his own works therefore the conclusion was forced upon him 'that every author, as far as he is great and at the same time original, has had the task of creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed; so has it been, so will it continue to be.' For what he has in common with his predecessors (i.e. with the older school) his path has already been smoothed by them, 'but for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road: he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.' This, too, his Preface sought to do: to wean the reader away from the old mode of writing and to accustom him to his own. This, in spite of opposition, he succeeded in doing. His critical writings therefore mark the end of the old school and the beginning of a new or rather the revival of an older one – the Romantic school of the Elizabethans.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Coleridge intended *Biographia Literaria* to be a short preface to a collection of his poems, *Sibylline Leaves* (1817). However, it quickly expanded into a two-volume autobiography, mixing memoir, philosophy, religion and literary theory, and was heavily influenced by German criticism, the evaluation and interpretation of literature. Coleridge himself described *Biographia Literaria* as an 'immethodical miscellany' of 'life and opinions'. In 1906, the poet Arthur Symons called the work 'the greatest book of criticism in English, and one of the most annoying books in any language'.

Coleridge (1770-1856) takes the trouble to examine and correct Wordsworth's views on language and meter. He does it seventeen years later in his *Biographia Literaria.* Coleridge acutely remarks that Wordsworth's own theory of language is based on a selection of the language of rustics. Now, Coleridge says, if you remove the provincial terms of speech from a peasant's language you no longer have rustic language at all. You have the language that any man speaks. Thus he denies Wordsworth's main assertion that a special virtue is in the speech of those in close communication with nature. Yet though he will not accept Wordsworth's theory, he is in complete agreement with him as to the falseness and artificiality of much of the verse of the preceding generation. Writing later than Wordsworth, at a time when the Romantic movement has more partisans, he can be more reasonable and less polemical than Wordsworth. Coleridge's ideas about fancy and imagination, and his Shakespeare criticism are much useful for us.

Coleridge writes of his ideas of imagination and fancy;"The IMAGINATION then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

FANCY, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites.

The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; and blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory must receive all its materials ready made from the laws of association. Murray Budny observes, ''During the 17th century the terms imagination and fancy had often enough been used in a vaguel synonymous way to refer to the realm of fairy tale or make-believe. Yet here and there (as in the opening of Hobbes's *Leviathan*) the term 'imagination' had tended to distinguish itself from 'fancy' and settle toward a meaning centered in the sober literalism of sense impressions and the survival of these in memory. This was in accord with medieval and Renaissance tradition, where *imagination* and *phantasia* had all along been fairly close together, but where, so far as a distinction of this kind had been made, it was *phantasia* which meant the lighter and less responsible kind of imaging."

Poetic theory in Biographia Literaria

Biographia Literaria includes some of the most important English writing on poetic theory. Some of it is a response to ideas of poetry advanced by his close friend and collaborator William Wordsworth, first in the 1800 preface to their joint publication Lyrical Ballads and then in the preface to Wordsworth's Collected Poems (1815). Referring to the latter, Coleridge says he wants in Biographia Literaria to make clear 'on what points I coincide with the opinions in that preface, and in what points I altogether differ'.

Imagination and the suspension of disbelief

In one of the most famous passages in *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge offers a theory of creativity (pp. 95-96). He divides imagination into primary and secondary. Primary imagination is common to all humans: it enables us to perceive and make sense of the world. It is a creative function and thereby repeats the divine act of creation. The secondary imagination enables individuals to transcend the primary imagination – not merely to perceive connections but to make them. It is the creative impulse that enables poetry and other art.

Biographia Literaria contains the first instance of the phrase 'suspension of disbelief'. Writing about his contributions to the *Lyrical Ballads*, which includes *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge says that although his characters were 'supernatural, or at least romantic', he tried to give them a 'human interest and a semblance of disbelief' that would prompt readers to the 'willing suspension of disbelief… which constitutes poetic faith'.

The Transformative Power of the Imagination

Coleridge believed that a strong, active imagination could become a vehicle for transcending unpleasant circumstances. Many of his poems are powered exclusively by imaginative flights, wherein the **speaker** temporarily abandons his immediate surroundings, exchanging them for an entirely new and completely fabricated experience. Using the imagination in this way is both empowering and surprising because it encourages a total and complete disrespect for the confines of time and place. These mental and emotional jumps are often well rewarded. Perhaps Coleridge's most famous use of imagination occurs in "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" (1797), in which the speaker employs a keen poetic mind that allows him to take part in a journey that he cannot physically make. When he "returns" to the bower, after having imagined himself on a fantastic stroll through the countryside, the speaker discovers, as a reward, plenty of things to enjoy from inside the bower itself, including the leaves, the trees, and the shadows. The power of imagination transforms the prison into a perfectly pleasant spot.

The Interplay of Philosophy, Piety, and Poetry

Coleridge used his poetry to explore conflicting issues in philosophy and religious piety. Some critics argue that Coleridge's interest in philosophy was simply his attempt to understand the imaginative and intellectual impulses that fueled his poetry. To support the claim that his imaginative and intellectual forces were, in fact, organic and derived from the natural world, Coleridge linked them to God, spirituality, and worship. In his work, however, poetry, philosophy, and piety clashed, creating friction and disorder for Coleridge, both on and off the page. In "The Eolian Harp" (1795), Coleridge struggles to reconcile the three forces. Here, the speaker's philosophical tendencies, particularly the belief that an "intellectual breeze" (47) brushes by and inhabits all living things with consciousness, collide with those of his orthodox wife, who disapproves of his unconventional ideas and urges him to Christ. While his wife lies untroubled, the speaker agonizes over his spiritual conflict, caught between Christianity and a unique, individual spirituality that equates nature with God. The poem ends by discounting the pantheist spirit, and the speaker concludes by privileging God and Christ over nature and praising them for having healed him from the spiritual wounds inflicted by these unorthodox views.

Nature and the Development of the Individual

Coleridge, Wordsworth, and other romantic poets praised the unencumbered, imaginative soul of youth, finding images in nature with which to describe it. According to their formulation, experiencing nature was an integral part of the development of a complete soul and sense of personhood. The death of his father forced Coleridge to attend school in London, far away from the rural idylls of his youth, and he lamented the missed opportunities of his sheltered, city-bound adolescence in many poems, including "Frost at Midnight" (1798). Here, the speaker sits quietly by a fire, musing on his life, while his infant son sleeps nearby. He recalls his boarding school days, during which he would both daydream and lull himself to sleep by remembering his home far away from the city, and he tells his son that he shall never be removed from nature, the way the speaker once was. Unlike the speaker, the son shall experience the seasons and shall learn about God by discovering the beauty and bounty of the natural world. The son shall be given the opportunity to develop a relationship with God and with nature, an opportunity denied to both the speaker and Coleridge himself. For Coleridge, nature had the capacity to teach joy, love, freedom, and piety, crucial characteristics for a worthy, developed individual.

Conversation Poems

Coleridge wanted to mimic the patterns and cadences of everyday speech in his poetry. Many of his poems openly address a single figure—the speaker's wife, son, friend, and so on—who listens silently to the simple, straightforward language of the speaker. Unlike the descriptive, long, digressive poems of Coleridge's classicist predecessors, Coleridge's so-called conversation poems are short, self-contained, and often without a discernable poetic form.

Colloquial, spontaneous, and friendly, Coleridge's conversation poetry is also highly personal, frequently incorporating events and details of his domestic life in an effort to widen the scope of possible poetic content. Although he sometimes wrote in **blank verse**, unrhymed **iambic pentameter**, he adapted this metrical form to suit a more colloquial rhythm. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge believed that everyday language and speech rhythms would help broaden poetry's audience to include the middle and lower classes, who might have felt excluded or put off by the form and content of neoclassicists, such as Alexander Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and John Dryden.

Delight in the Natural World

Like the other romantics, Coleridge worshiped nature and recognized poetry's capacity to describe the beauty of the natural world. Nearly all of Coleridge's poems express a respect for and delight in natural beauty. Close observation, great attention to detail, and precise descriptions of color aptly demonstrate Coleridge's respect and delight. Some poems, such as "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," "Youth and Age" (1834), and "Frost at Midnight," mourn the speakers' physical isolation from the outside world. Others, including "The Eolian Harp," use images of nature to explore philosophical and analytical ideas.

Still other poems, including "The Nightingale" (ca. 1798), simply praise nature's beauty. Even poems that don't directly deal with nature, including "Kubla Khan" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," derive some symbols and images from nature. Nevertheless, Coleridge guarded against the **pathetic fallacy**, or the attribution of human feeling to the natural world. To Coleridge, nature contained an innate, constant joyousness wholly separate from the ups and downs of human experience.

Prayer

Although Coleridge's prose reveals more of his religious philosophizing than his poetry, God, Christianity, and the act of prayer appear in some form in nearly all of his poems. The son of an Anglican vicar, Coleridge vacillated from supporting to criticizing Christian tenets and the Church of England. Despite his criticisms, Coleridge remained defiantly supportive of prayer, praising it in his notebooks and repeatedly referencing it in his poems. He once told the novelist Thomas de Quincey that prayer demanded such close attention that it was the one of the hardest actions of which human hearts were capable. In the sad poem, "Epitaph" (1833), Coleridge composes an epitaph for himself, which urges people to pray for him after he dies. Rather than recommend a manner or method of prayer, Coleridge's poems reflect a wide variety, which emphasizes his belief in the importance of individuality.

Symbols

The Sun

the first phase of the mariner's punishment to the sun, as it dehydrates the crew. All told, this poem contains eleven references to the sun, many of which signify the Christian conception of a wrathful, vengeful God. Bad, troubling things happen to the crew during the day, while smooth sailing and calm weather occur at night, by the light of the moon. Frequently, the sun stands in for God's influence and power, as well as a symbol of his authority. The setting sun spurs philosophical musings, as in "The Eolian Harp," and the dancing rays of sunlight represent a pinnacle of nature's beauty, as in "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison."

The Moon

Like the sun, the moon often symbolizes God, but the moon has more positive connotations than the sun. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," the sun and the moon represent two sides of the Christian God: the sun represents the angry, wrathful God, whereas the moon represents the benevolent, repentant God. All told, the moon appears fourteen times in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and generally favorable things occur during night, in contrast to the horrors that occur during the day. For example, the mariner's curse lifts and he returns home by moonlight. "Dejection: An Ode" (1802) begins with an epitaph about the new moon and goes on to describe the beauty of a moonlit night, contrasting its beauty with the speaker's sorrowful soul. Similarly, "Frost at Midnight" also praises the moon as it illuminates icicles on a winter evening and spurs the speaker to great thought.

Dreams and Dreaming

Coleridge explores dreams and dreaming in his poetry to communicate the power of the imagination, as well as the inaccessible clarity of vision. "Kubla Khan" is subtitled "A Vision in a Dream." According to Coleridge, he fell asleep while reading and dreamed of a marvelous pleasure palace for the next few hours. Upon awakening, he began transcribing the dream-vision but was soon called away; when he returned, he wrote out the fragments that now comprise

"Kubla Khan." Some critics doubt Coleridge's story, attributing it to an attempt at increasing the poem's dramatic effect. Nevertheless, the poem speaks to the imaginative possibilities of the subconscious. Dreams usually have a pleasurable connotation, as in "Frost at Midnight." There, the speaker, lonely and insomniac as a child at boarding school, comforts himself by imagining and then dreaming of his rural home. In his real life, however, Coleridge suffered from nightmares so terrible that sometimes his own screams would wake him, a phenomenon he details in "The Pains of Sleep." Opium probably gave Coleridge a sense of well-being that allowed him to sleep without the threat of nightmares.

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UNIT –II – Literary Theory and Criticism –SHS5009

Criticism is an overall term for studies concerning with defining, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating works of literature. Theoretical criticism speaks of literary theory. Some such theoretical critics have been Aristotle, Longinus, Horace, Boileau, Sainte-Beuve, Goethe, Johnson, Coleridge, Arnold, Poe, Emerson, Richards, Burke and Frye. Practical criticism or applied criticism concerns with particular works and writers. Here the theoretical principles are implicit, not explicit. The literary essays of Dryden, Johnson, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Arnold, Richards, Eliot, Woolf, Leavis, Trilling and Brooks are good examples. The types of traditional critical theories and of applied criticism are as follows: mimetic criticism, pragmatic criticism, expressive criticism, objective criticism, and the like. Criticism of any type and nature aims at establishing a valid text for a literary work. These types bear upon literature various areas of knowledge. Accordingly we have historical criticism, biographical criticism, sociological criticism, psychological criticism, and myth criticism.

According to Griffith, before 20th century, there was little systematic attempt to interpret works of literature, to probe their meanings. Gerald Graff, in *Professing Literature* (1987), his book on the history of literary studies in higher education, noted that before then there was a widespread "assumption that great literature was essentially self-interpreting and needed no elaborate interpretation." But as knowledge increases, there was a shift in attitude to the methods of literary theorizing. In fact, by the end of the 19th century, universities began to include courses in modern literature, and teachers and writers began to give serious attention to interpreting literature.

In *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (1999), Jonathan Culler defines literary theory generally as "the systematic account of the nature of literature and of the methods for analysing it." Culler further says that:
One of the most dismaying features of theory today is that it is endless. It is not something that you could learn so as to 'know theory.' It is an unbounded corpus of writings which is always being augmented as the young and the restless, in critiques of the guiding conceptions of their elders, promote the contributions to theory of new thinkers and rediscover the work of older, neglected ones.
Generally, a theory is a body of rules or principles used to appraise works of literature. And on the other hand, literary theory (critical theory), tries to explain the assumptions and values upon which various forms of literary criticism rest.
Distinction between literary theory and literary criticism: Theory as a body of rules or principles used to appraise works of literature, while literary theory (critical theory), on its own, tries to explain the assumptions and values upon which various forms of literary criticism rest. When we interpret a literary text, we are doing literary criticism, but when we examine the criteria upon which our interpretation of a text rests, we are applying literary theory.

Matthew Arnold
Introduction: Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), the Victorian poet and critic, was 'the first modern critic' , and could be called 'the critic's critic', being a champion not only of great poetry, but of literary criticism itself. The purpose of literary criticism, in his view, was 'to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas', and he has influenced a whole school of critics including new critics such as T. S. Eliot,
F. R. Leavis, and Allen Tate. He was the founder of the sociological school of criticism, and through his touchstone method introduced scientific objectivity to critical evaluation by providing comparison and analysis as the two primary tools of criticism.

Arnold's evaluations of the Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Keats are landmarks in descriptive criticism, and as a poet-critic he occupies an eminent position in the rich galaxy of poet-critics of English literature. T. S. Eliot praised Arnold's objective approach to critical evaluation, particularly his tools of comparison and analysis, and Allen Tate in his essay *Tension in Poetry* imitates Arnold's touchstone method to discover 'tension', or the proper balance between connotation and denotation, in poetry. These new critics have come a long way from the Romantic approach to poetry, and this change in attitude could be attributed to Arnold, who comes midway between the two schools.

The social role of poetry and criticism

To Arnold a critic is a social benefactor. In his view the creative artist, no matter how much of a genius, would cut a sorry figure without the critic to come to his aid. Before Arnold a literary critic cared only for the beauties and defects of works of art, but Arnold the critic chose to be the educator and guardian of public opinion and propagator of the best ideas.

Cultural and critical values seem to be synonymous for Arnold. Scott James, comparing him to Aristotle, says that where Aristotle analyses the work of art, Arnold analyses the role of the critic. The one gives us the principles which govern the making of a poem, the other the principles by which the best poems should be selected and made known. Aristotle's critic owes allegiance to the artist, but Arnold's critic has a duty to society.

To Arnold poetry itself was the criticism of life: 'The criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty', and in his seminal essay *The Study of Poetry'* 1888) he says that poetry alone can be our sustenance and stay in an era where religious beliefs are fast losing their hold. He claims that poetry is superior to philosophy, science, and religion. Religion attaches its emotion to supposed facts, and the supposed facts are failing it, but poetry attaches its emotion to ideas and ideas are infallible. And science, in his view is incomplete without poetry. He endorses Wordsworth's view that ‘poetry is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science', adding ‘What is a countenance without its expression?’ and calls poetry 'the breath and finer spirit of knowledge'.

It was Matthew Arnold, the great Victorian poet, who stated that, poetry would replace religion, when faith would be abolished from the world.

Through poetry, he says, life can be criticized, and these poems must be high poetry. The poems should be elevated, must possess grandeur in style and content. Morality should prevail there so that they can teach humans almost like religion. Any morally depraved things are disallowed in poetry according to Arnold. On the basis of high poetry, life can be interpreted, and criticized.

In many of his famous poems like "Dover Beach", "The Scholar Gipsy", "Thyrsis" and "Morality", he has directly transformed his expressions into words, and portrayed the picture of the contemporary human world. He has brilliantly depicted the lives of human and becomes critical about them in his poems. For example, "Dover Beach", at a time mourns for the lost traditions and faith, and criticizes modern human life comparing them with soldiers fighting each other in deep darkness without any purpose or reason. Thus, Arnold has successfully criticized life via poetry, and opines that, "poetry is criticism of life" which can be a sort of substitute of religion.

A moralist

As a critic Arnold is essentially a moralist, and has very definite ideas about what poetry should and should not be. A poetry of revolt against moral ideas, he says, is a poetry of revolt against life, and a poetry of indifference to moral ideas is a poetry of indifference to life.

Arnold even censored his own collection on moral grounds. He omitted the poem *Empedocles on Etna* from his volume of 1853, whereas he had included it in his collection of 1852. The reason he advances, in the Preface to his Poems of 1853 is not that the poem is too subjective, with its Hamlet- like introspection, or that it was a deviation from his classical ideals, but that the poem is too depressing in its subject matter, and would leave the reader hopeless and crushed. There is nothing in it in the way of hope or optimism, and such a poem could prove to be neither instructive nor of any delight to the reader.

Aristotle says that poetry is superior to History since it bears the stamp of high seriousness and truth. If truth and seriousness are wanting in the subject matter of a poem, so will the true poetic stamp of diction and movement be found wanting in its style and manner. Hence the two, the nobility of subject matter, and the superiority of style and manner, are proportional and cannot occur independently.

Arnold took up Aristotle's view, asserting that true greatness in poetry is given by the truth and seriousness of its subject matter, and by the high diction and movement in its style and manner, and although indebted to Joshua Reynolds for the expression 'grand style', Arnold gave it a new meaning when he used it in his lecture *On Translating Homer* (1861):
I think it will be found that that the grand style arises in poetry when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with a severity a serious subject.
According to Arnold, Homer is the best model of a simple grand style, while Milton is the best model of severe grand style. Dante, however, is an example of both. Even Chaucer, in Arnold's view, in spite of his virtues such as benignity, largeness, and spontaneity, lacks seriousness. Burns too lacks sufficient seriousness, because he was hypocritical in that while he adopted a moral stance in some of his poems, in his private life he flouted morality.

Return to Classical values
Arnold believed that a modern writer should be aware that contemporary literature is built on the foundations of the past, and should contribute to the future by continuing a firm tradition. Quoting Goethe and Niebuhr in support of his view, he asserts that his age suffers from spiritual weakness because it thrives on self-interest and scientific materialism, and therefore cannot provide noble characters such as those found in Classical literature.

He urged modern poets to look to the ancients and their great characters and themes for guidance and inspiration. Classical literature, in his view, possess pathos, moral profundity and noble simplicity, while modern themes, arising from an age of spiritual weakness, are suitable for only comic and lighter kinds of poetry, and don't possess the loftiness to support epic or heroic poetry.

Arnold turns his back on the prevailing Romantic view of poetry and seeks to revive the Classical values of objectivity, urbanity, and architectonics. He denounces the Romantics for ignoring the Classical writers for the sake of novelty, and for their allusive (Arnold uses the word 'suggestive') writing which defies easy comprehension.

Preface to Poems of 1853

In the preface to his *Poems* (1853) Arnold asserts the importance of architectonics; ('that power of execution, which creates, forms, and constitutes') in poetry - the necessity of achieving unity by subordinating the parts to the whole, and the expression of ideas to the depiction of human action, and condemns poems which exist for the sake of single lines or passages, stray metaphors, images, and fancy expressions. Scattered images and happy turns of phrase, in his view, can only provide partial effects, and not contribute to unity. He also, continuing his anti-Romantic theme, urges, modern poets to shun allusiveness and not fall into the temptation of subjectivity.

He says that even the imitation of Shakespeare is risky for a young writer, who should imitate only his excellences, and avoid his attractive accessories, tricks of style, such as quibble, conceit, circumlocution and allusiveness, which will lead him astray.

Arnold commends Shakespeare's use of great plots from the past. He had what Goethe called the architectonic quality, that is his expression was matched to the action (or the subject). But at the same time Arnold quotes Hallam to show that Shakespeare's style was complex even where the press of action demanded simplicity and directness, and hence his style could not be taken as a model by young writers. Elsewhere he says that Shakespeare's 'expression tends to become a little sensuous and simple, too much intellectualised'.

Shakespeare's excellences are 1)The architectonic quality of his style; the harmony between action and expression. 2) His reliance on the ancients for his themes. 3) Accurate construction of action. 4) His strong conception of action and accurate portrayal of his subject matter. 5) His intense feeling for the subjects he dramatises.

His attractive accessories (or tricks of style) which a young writer should handle carefully are 1) His fondness for quibble, fancy, conceit. 2) His excessive use of imagery. 3) Circumlocution, even where the press of action demands directness. 4) His lack of simplicity (according to Hallam and Guizot). 5)
His allusiveness.

As an example of the danger of imitating Shakespeare he gives Keats's imitation of Shakespeare in his *Isabella or the Pot of Basil*. Keats uses felicitous phrases and single happy turns of phrase, yet the action is handled vaguely and so the poem does not have unity. By way of contrast, he says the Italian writer Boccaccio handled the same theme successfully in his *Decameron*, because he rightly subordinated expression to action. Hence Boccaccio's poem is a poetic success where Keats's is a failure.

Arnold also wants the modern writer to take models from the past because they depict human actions which touch on 'the great primary human affections: to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and which are independent of time'. Characters such as Agamemnon, Dido, Aeneas, Orestes, Merope, Alcmeon, and Clytemnestra, leave a permanent impression on our minds. Compare 'The Iliad' or 'The Aeneid' with 'The Childe Harold' or 'The Excursion' and you see the difference. A modern writer might complain that ancient subjects pose problems with regard to ancient culture, customs, manners, dress and so on which are not familiar to contemporary readers.
But Arnold is of the view that a writer should not concern himself with the externals, but with

the 'inward man'. The inward man is the same irrespective of clime or time.

The Function of Criticism

It is in his *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time* (1864) that Arnold says that criticism should be a 'dissemination of ideas, a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world'. He says that when evaluating a work the aim is 'to see the object as in itself it really is'. Psychological, historical and sociological background are irrelevant, and to dwell on such aspects is mere dilettantism. This stance was very influential with later critics. Arnold also believed that in his quest for the best a critic should not confine himself to the literature of his own country, but should draw substantially on foreign literature and ideas, because the propagation of ideas should be an objective endeavour.

The Study of Poetry

In *The Study of Poetry*, (1888) which opens his *Essays in Criticism: Second series*, in support of his plea for nobility in poetry, Arnold recalls Sainte-Beuve's reply to Napoleon, when latter said that charlatanism is found in everything. Sainte-Beuve replied that charlatanism might be found everywhere else, but not in the field of poetry, because in poetry the distinction between sound and unsound, or only half-sound, truth and untruth, or only half-truth, between the excellent and the inferior, is of paramount importance.

For Arnold there is no place for charlatanism in poetry. To him poetry is the criticism of life, governed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. It is in the criticism of life that the spirit of our race will find its stay and consolation. The extent to which the spirit of mankind finds its stay and consolation is proportional to the power of a poem's criticism of life, and the power of the criticism of life is in direct proportion to the extent to which the poem is genuine and free from charlatanism.

In *The Study of Poetry* he also cautions the critic that in forming a genuine and disinterested estimate of the poet under consideration he should not be influenced by historical or personal judgements, historical judgements being fallacious because we regard ancient poets with excessive veneration, and personal judgements being fallacious when we are biased towards a contemporary poet. If a poet is a 'dubious classic, let us sift him; if he is a false classic, let us explode him. But if he is a real classic, if his work belongs to the class of the very best . . . enjoy his work'.

As examples of erroneous judgements he says that the 17th century court tragedies of the French were spoken of with exaggerated praise, until Pellisson reproached them for want of the true poetic stamp, and another critic, Charles d' Héricault, said that 17th century French poetry had received undue and undeserving veneration. Arnold says the critics seem to substitute 'a halo for physiognomy and a statue in the place where there was once a man. They give us a human personage no larger than God seated amidst his perfect work, like Jupiter on Olympus.'

He also condemns the French critic Vitet, who had eloquent words of praise for the epic poem *Chanson de Roland* by Turoldus, (which was sung by a jester, Taillefer, in William the Conqueror's army), saying that it was superior to Homer's *Iliad*. Arnold's view is that this poem can never be compared to Homer's work, and that we only have to compare the description of dying Roland to Helen's words about her wounded brothers Pollux and Castor

and its inferiority will be clearly revealed.

The Study of Poetry: a shift in position - the touchstone method

Arnold's criticism of Vitet above illustrates his 'touchstone method'; his theory that in order to judge a poet's work properly, a critic should compare it to passages taken from works of great masters of poetry, and that these passages should be applied as touchstones to other poetry. Even a single line or selected quotation will serve the purpose.

From this we see that he has shifted his position from that expressed in the preface to his *Poems* of 1853. In *The Study of Poetry* he no longer uses the acid test of action and architectonics. He became an advocate of 'touchstones'. 'Short passages even single lines,' he said, 'will serve our turn quite sufficiently'.

Some of Arnold's touchstone passages are: Helen's words about her wounded brother, Zeus addressing the horses of Peleus, suppliant Achilles' words to Priam, and from Dante; Ugolino's brave words, and Beatrice's loving words to Virgil.

From non-Classical writers he selects from *Henry IV Part II* (III, i), Henry's expostulation with sleep
- 'Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast . . . '. From *Hamlet* (V, ii) 'Absent thee from felicity awhile
. . . '. From Milton's *Paradise Lost* Book 1, 'Care sat on his faded cheek . . .', and 'What is else not to be overcome . . . '

The Study of Poetry: on Chaucer

The French Romance poetry of the 13th century langue d'oc and langue d'oil was extremely popular in Europe and Italy, but soon lost its popularity and now it is important only in terms of historical study. But Chaucer, who was nourished by the romance poetry of the French, and influenced by the Italian Royal rhyme stanza, still holds enduring fascination. There is an excellence of style and subject in his poetry, which is the quality the French poetry lacks. Dryden says of
Chaucer's *Prologue* 'Here is God's plenty!' and that 'he is a perpetual fountain of good sense'. There is largeness, benignity, freedom and spontaneity in Chaucer's writings. 'He is the well of English undefiled'. He has divine fluidity of movement, divine liquidness of diction. He has created an epoch and founded a tradition.

Some say that the fluidity of Chaucer's verse is due to licence in the use of the language, a liberty which Burns enjoyed much later. But Arnold says that the excellence of Chaucer's poetry is due to his sheer poetic talent. This liberty in the use of language was enjoyed by many poets, but we do not find the same kind of fluidity in others. Only in Shakespeare and Keats do we find the same kind of fluidity, though they wrote without the same liberty in the use of language.

Arnold praises Chaucer's excellent style and manner, but says that Chaucer cannot be called a classic since, unlike Homer, Virgil and Shakespeare, his poetry does not have the high poetic seriousness which Aristotle regards as a mark of its superiority over the other arts.

The Study of Poetry: on the age of Dryden and Pope

The age of Dryden is regarded as superior to that of the others for 'sweetness of poetry'. Arnold asks whether Dryden and Pope, poets of great merit, are truly the poetical classics of the 18th century. He says Dryden's post-script to the readers in his translation of *The Aeneid* reveals the fact that in prose writing he is even better than Milton and Chapman.

Just as the laxity in religious matters during the Restoration period was a direct outcome of the strict discipline of the Puritans, in the same way in order to control the dangerous sway of imagination found in the poetry of the Metaphysicals, to counteract 'the dangerous prevalence of imagination', the poets of the 18th century introduced certain regulations. The restrictions that were imposed on the poets were uniformity, regularity, precision, and balance. These restrictions curbed the growth of poetry, and encouraged the growth of prose.

Hence we can regard Dryden as the glorious founder, and Pope as the splendid high priest, of the age of prose and reason, our indispensable 18th century. Their poetry was that of the builders of an age of prose and reason. Arnold says that Pope and Dryden are not poet classics, but the 'prose classics' of the 18th century.

As for poetry, he considers Gray to be the only classic of the 18th century. Gray constantly studied and enjoyed Greek poetry and thus inherited their poetic point of view and their application of poetry to life. But he is the 'scantiest, frailest classic' since his output was small.

The Study of Poetry: on Burns

Although Burns lived close to the 19th century his poetry breathes the spirit of 18th Century life. Burns is most at home in his native language. His poems deal with Scottish dress, Scottish manner, and Scottish religion. This Scottish world is not a beautiful one, and it is an advantage if a poet deals with a beautiful world. But Burns shines whenever he triumphs over his sordid, repulsive and dull world with his poetry.

Perhaps we find the true Burns only in his bacchanalian poetry, though occasionally his bacchanalian attitude was affected. For example in his *Holy Fair*, the lines 'Leeze me on drink! it gies us mair/ Than either school or college', may represent the bacchanalian attitude, but they are not truly bacchanalian in spirit. There is something insincere about it, smacking of bravado.

When Burns moralises in some of his poems it also sounds insincere, coming from a man who disregarded morality in actual life. And sometimes his pathos is intolerable, as in *Auld Lang Syne*.

We see the real Burns (wherein he is unsurpassable) in lines such as, 'To make a happy fire-side clime/ to weans and wife/ That's the true pathos and sublime/ Of human life' (*Ae Fond Kiss*). Here we see the genius of Burns.

But, like Chaucer, Burns lacks high poetic seriousness, though his poems have poetic truth in diction and movement. Sometimes his poems are profound and heart-rending, such as in the lines, 'Had we never loved sae kindly/ had we never loved sae blindly/ never met or never parted/ we had ne'er been broken-hearted'.

Also like Chaucer, Burns possesses largeness, benignity, freedom and spontaneity. But instead

of Chaucer's fluidity, we find in Burns a springing bounding energy. Chaucer's benignity deepens in Burns into a sense of sympathy for both human as well as non-human things, but Chaucer's world is richer and fairer than that of Burns.

Sometimes Burns's poetic genius is unmatched by anyone. He is even better than Goethe at times and he is unrivalled by anyone except Shakespeare. He has written excellent poems such as *Tam O'Shanter, Whistle and I'll come to you my Lad*, and *Auld Lang Syne*.

When we compare Shelley's 'Pinnacled dim in the of intense inane' (*Prometheus Unbound* III, iv) with Burns's, 'They flatter, she says, to deceive me' (*Tam Glen*), the latter is salutary.

Arnold on Shakespeare

Praising Shakespeare, Arnold says 'In England there needs a miracle of genius like Shakespeare's to produce a balance of mind'. This is not bardolatory, but praise tempered by a critical sense. In a letter he writes. 'I keep saying Shakespeare, you are as obscure as life is'.

In his sonnet *On Shakespeare* he says; 'Others abide our question. Thou are free./ We ask and ask - Thou smilest and art still,/ Out-topping knowledge'.

Arnold's limitations

For all his championing of disinterestedness, Arnold was unable to practise disinterestedness in all his essays. In his essay on Shelley particularly he displayed a lamentable lack of disinterestedness.
Shelley's moral views were too much for the Victorian Arnold. In his essay on Keats too Arnold failed to be disinterested. The sentimental letters of Keats to Fanny Brawne were too much for him.

Arnold sometimes became a satirist, and as a satirical critic saw things too quickly, too summarily. In spite of their charm, the essays are characterised by egotism and, as Tilotson says, 'the attention is directed, not on his object but on himself and his objects together'.

Arnold makes clear his disapproval of the vagaries of some of the Romantic poets. Perhaps he would have agreed with Goethe, who saw Romanticism as disease and Classicism as health. But Arnold occasionally looked at things with jaundiced eyes, and he overlooked the positive features of Romanticism which posterity will not willingly let die, such as its humanitarianism, love of nature, love of childhood, a sense of mysticism, faith in man with all his imperfections, and faith in man's unconquerable mind.

Arnold's inordinate love of classicism made him blind to the beauty of lyricism. He ignored the importance of lyrical poems, which are subjective and which express the sentiments and the personality of the poet. Judged by Arnold's standards, a large number of poets both ancient and modern are dismissed because they sang with 'Profuse strains of unpremeditated art'.

It was also unfair of Arnold to compare the classical works in which figure the classical quartet, namely Achilles, Prometheus, Clytemnestra and Dido with Heamann and Dorothea, Childe Harold, Jocelyn, and 'The Excursion'. Even the strongest advocates of Arnold would agree that it is not always profitable for poets to draw upon the past. Literature expresses the

zeitgeist, the spirit of the contemporary age. Writers must choose subjects from the world of their own experience. What is ancient Greece to many of us? Historians and archaeologists are familiar with it, but the common readers delight justifiably in modern themes. To be in the company of Achilles, Prometheus, Clytemnestra and Dido is not always a pleasant experience. What a reader wants is variety, which classical mythology with all its tradition and richness cannot provide. An excessive fondness for Greek and Latin classics produces a literary diet without variety, while modern poetry and drama have branched out in innumerable directions.

As we have seen, as a classicist Arnold upheld the supreme importance of the architectonic faculty, then later shifted his ground. In the lectures *On Translating Homer, On the Study of Celtic Literature,* and *The Study of Poetry,* he himself tested the greatness of poetry by single lines. Arnold the classicist presumably realised towards the end of his life that classicism was not the last word in literature.

Arnold's lack of historic sense was another major failing. While he spoke authoritatively on his own century, he was sometimes groping in the dark in his assessment of earlier centuries. He used to speak at times as if ex cathedra, and this pontifical solemnity vitiated his criticism.

As we have seen, later critics praise Arnold, but it is only a qualified praise. Oliver Elton calls him a 'bad great critic'. T. S. Eliot said that Arnold is a 'Propagandist and not a creator of ideas'. According to Walter Raleigh, Arnold's method is like that of a man who took a brick to the market to give the buyers an impression of the building.

Arnold's legacy

In spite of his faults, Arnold's position as an eminent critic is secure. Douglas Bush says that the breadth and depth of Arnold's influence cannot be measured or even guessed at because, from his own time onward, so much of his thought and outlook became part of the general educated consciousness. He was one of those critics who, as Eliot said, arrive from time to time to set the literary house in order. Eliot named Dryden, Johnson and Arnold as some of the greatest critics of the English language.

Arnold united active independent insight with the authority of the humanistic tradition. He carried on, in his more sophisticated way, the Renaissance humanistic faith in good letters as the teachers of wisdom, and in the virtue of great literature, and above all, great poetry. He saw poetry as a supremely illuminating, animating, and fortifying aid in the difficult endeavour to become or remain fully human.

Arnold's method of criticism is comparative. Steeped in classical poetry, and thoroughly acquainted with continental literature, he compares English literature to French and German literature, adopting the disinterested approach he had learned from Sainte-Beuve.

Arnold's objective approach to criticism and his view that historical and biographical study are unnecessary was very influential on the new criticism. His emphasis on the importance of tradition also influenced F. R. Leavis, and T. S. Eliot.

Eliot is also indebted to Arnold for his classicism, and for his objective approach which paved the way for Eliot to say that poetry is not an expression of personality but an escape from personality, because it is not an expression of emotions but an escape from emotions.

Although Arnold disapproved of the Romantics' approach to poetry, their propensity for allusiveness and symbolism, he also shows his appreciation the Romantics in his *Essays in Criticism*. He praises Wordsworth thus: 'Nature herself took the pen out of his hand and wrote with a bare, sheer penetrating power'. Arnold also valued poetry for its strong ideas, which he found to be the chief merit of Wordsworth's poetry. About Shelley he says that Shelley is 'A beautiful but ineffectual angel beating in a void his luminous wings in vain'.

In an age when cheap literature caters to the taste of the common man, one might fear that the classics will fade into insignificance. But Arnold is sure that the currency and the supremacy of the classics will be preserved in the modern age, not because of conscious effort on the part of the readers, but because of the human instinct of self-preservation.

In the present day with the literary tradition over-burdened with imagery, myth, symbol and abstract jargon, it is refreshing to come back to Arnold and his like to encounter central questions about literature and life as they are perceived by a mature and civilised mind.

T S Eliot

Thomas Stearns Eliot is perhaps the greatest English poet, critic and dramatist of the century. He was also the editor of the Criterion one of the most influential literary reviews of this century. He became a naturalized British citizen in 1927 (Born in St. Louis-Missouri, USA). Ezra pound and F. H. Bradley were profound influence on him while he studied at Harvard and Oxford. As a playwright experiments in the revival of poetic drama ushered in age of poetic drama. His “Murder in the Cathedral” is perhaps the most admired play.

Eliot as a critic comes in the tradition of Philip Sidney, Dryden, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Arnold. His criticism in linked with influence as a poet. His most significant work came in 1920 between two volumes of poetry. The most significant of critical essays are anthologized in selected Essays Edited by Frank Kermode. His earlier essays, (prescribed for study) are known for their Motive power to attempt to fuse poetic and critical production. They are the uses of poetry (1933) and on poetry and poets (1957). He also has famous works written by him as a critic of society and civilization, they are After Strange Gods and Notes towards the Definition of Culture. In a close study of his essays one can understand the poet-critic’s views about poetry and also examine them in relation to his own practice of poetry. A careful study of his famous poem *The Wasteland* and his advanced theory of poetry called Imagism also details the same.

TRADITION AND THE INDIVIDUAL TALENT

This is one of the seminal essays in the Literary criticism of the 20th century. Eliot makes as attempt to relate the art of an individual artist to the tradition of the whole of European Literature. He describes British tendency of using the term tradition it its deploring sense or as a “phrase of censure” He is angry with those who indulge in pretending “to find what is individual what is the peculiar essence of the man” He says that the general tendency is to examine to find “the poet’s difference from his predecessors, his immediate predecessors”. While attacking contemporary critics for isolating those parts of a creative writer’s work that are idiosyncratic for praise he argues that those very parts of his work may be most derivative of other earlier writer.

Eliot begins the essay by pointing out that the word 'tradition' is generally regarded as a

word of censure. It is a word disagreeable to the English ears. When the English praise a poet, they praise him for those aspects of his work which are 'individual' and original. It is supposed that his chief merit lies in such parts. This undue stress on individuality shows that the English have an uncritical turn of mind. They praise the poet for the wrong thing. If they examine the matter critically with an unprejudiced mind, they will realize that the best and the most individual part of a poet's work is that which shows the maximum influence of the writers of the past. To quote his own words: "Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice, we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual part of his work maybe those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously."

The experience, you will notice, the elements which enter the presence of the transforming catalyst, are of two kinds: emotions and feelings. The effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art. It may be formed out of one emotion, or may be a combination of several; and various feelings, inhering for the writer in particular words or phrases or images, may be added to compose the final result. Or great poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever: composed out of feelings solely if you compare several representative passages of the greatest poetry you see how great is the variety of types of combination, and also how completely any semi-ethical criterion of "sublimity" misses the mark.

For it is not the "greatness," the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts. The episode of Paolo and Francesca employs a definite emotion, but the intensity of the poetry is something quite different from whatever intensity in the supposed experience it may give the impression of. It is no more intense, furthermore than the murder of Agamemnon, or the agony of Othello, gives an artistic effect apparently closer to a possible original than the scenes from Dante. In the Agamemnon, the artistic emotion approximates to the emotion of an actual spectator; in Othello to the emotion of the protagonist himself. But the difference between art and the event is always absolute; the combination which is the murder of Agamemnon is probably as complex as that which is the voyage of Ulysses. In either case there has been a fusion of elements. The *ode of Keats* contains a number of feelings which have nothing particular to do with the nightingale, but which the nightingale, partly, perhaps, because of its attractive name, and partly because of its reputation, served to bring together.

In fact the heart of the essay is his definition of tradition which in his opinion cannot be inherited; one has to strive in order to acquire a sense of tradition. Then he says it involves Historical sense; Eliot argues. "the historical sense involves perception not only of the pastness of the past, but its presence, the historical sense compels a man to write not merrily with his generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order." This is Eliot's concept of seeing literature as an organic whole. It involves a "sense of the timeless as well as the temporal" which he asserts makes a writer truly traditional.

That is, Eliot insists that an Individual writer will have no meaning "alone", i.e, "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone". He insists on an evaluation of a work of art by constructing the same with the works of his dead ancestor's works. He argues that a really new work of alters and change the "order" formed by existing works and consequently necessitates alteration and readjustment i.e. "past should be altered by the

preset as much as the present is directed by the past".

Eliot warns that a new writer should not consider past as a limp or an indiscriminate bolus. He says that a critic must be aware "of the obvious fact that art never improves, but the material of art is never the same. He must be aware that the mind of Europe the mind of his own country a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing en route, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare or Homer……." Based on this argument he comes to his assertion that. "The difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of t he past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show"

Eliot insists on a poet procuring the consciousness of the past and his endeavour to continue to develop this consciousness throughout his carrier. After all the coming up of a work of art becomes meaningful only when the work is perceived against a literary tradition, i.e. in relation to writers of the past. Eliot's argument is that "it is a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written. Notice how Eliot builds up a dialectic between the poetry of the present and the past, this also explains how genuinely good work of art causes revolution in terms of new alteration and changes in the existing order of works and vice-versa. This naturally demands that any practitioner of poetry should strive to develop a great amount of erudition; one wonders if that is an acceptable statement. Can't there be great poetry without any erudition whatever. Then, how would you accept Keat's " AH, for a life of sensations" and his view that if poetry does not come as naturally as leaves come to a tree let it not come at all. Yet one can see the point of relevance when Eliot underlines the need to develop a "historical consciousness".

Eliot comes in the line or poet-critics like Arnold who did categorically declare that one should be studying languages other than one's own that are "a poet should cross-breed English with continental and classical tradition." Eliot with his Mastery of French Symbolism and thorough reading of Dante is himself the supreme model to emulate what he is suggesting here (Note (a) Points to ponder: perhaps we add Kalidas, Mirza Ghalib, Tagore and Vinda Karandikar.) What naturally flows out of this theory is the other concomitant his impersonal theory is the other concomitant his impersonal theory of art. Many critics read this essay as a manifesto of impersonality". Writing about the process of creation in the essay Eliot states "What happens is a continual self surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self sacrifice, continual extinction of personality."

He adds "It remains to define this process of depersonalization and its relation to the sense of tradition. It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science. I therefore invite you to consider, as a suggestive analogy, the action which takes place when a bit of finely foliated platinum is introduced into a chamber containing oxygen and sulphur dioxide".

This is Eliot's analogy for the role of the poet's personality in the act of creation. He explains the individual talent (Apoorvatha) is that endowment best comparable to the role of a catalyst (Note: Remember from school chemistry the meaning and role of catalyst) in certain chemical reaction. This is the core of his anti romantic reaction. That is creation, far from being an expression of the poet's personality or emotions (as the Romantics believe) is actually as escape from natural emotions and personality.

His analogy tries to explain the "chemical process" of creation in which the mind like a catalyst accelerates or decelerates the reaction but it remains unaffected. Similarly, says Eliot.

" It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates, the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material." Eliot clearly points out that emotion and feelings are the two kind's elements that make up the catalyst, i.e. the mind. He says that sometimes.

"Great poetry may be made without the direct use of any emotion whatever composed out of feelings." For Eliot, the poet's mind is "a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together. "

If a poet has to write with any enduring excellence he must convert his mind into a receptacle for storing myriad human emotions, numberless feeling, phrases and images. This is the ground on which in the creative process various particles unite in order to form a compound.

Eliot's next thesis is his debunking of Wordsworth's formula. For him seeking to express new emotions in poetry appears as a fact of eccentricity. He feels that a poet should utilize ordinary emotion and work them up into poetry in order "to express feelings which are not emotions at all" Therefore, he says"….We must believe that emotion recollected in tranquility is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion nor recollection without distortion of meaning tranquility." Eliot seems to think that those experiences are not recollected and "They finally unite in an atmosphere which is 'tranquil' only in that it is a passive ascending upon the event."

Explaining the whole story Eliot's states "of course, this is not quite the whole story. There is a great deal in the writing of poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate. In fact that bad poet is usually unconscious where he ought to be conscious. Both the errors tend to make him personal. Poetry is not a turning loose of motion, but an escape from emotion: it is not the expression of personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to escape from these things."

A major emphasis in this essay is Eliot's call to "divert interest from the poet to the poetry."In any age the tendency to indulge in autobiographical criticism has to be clearly discouraged and to create a conductive atmosphere to estimate value of poetry this declaration of Eliot has had great impact.

One can't afford to ignore Eliot's emphasis of tradition, the impersonality of art and his organic view of poetry. He was an avowed anti-romantic and his criticism and poetry were also reaction to "romanticism". His ideal of participating in the tradition from Homer to the present day is rooted in its classicism. His appeal for a historical consciousness and his attempts to rehabilitate a literary tradition remain unparallel. If you like to know more about the sources of Eliot's anti-romantic attitude you must try to trace the influence of T. E. Hume, Ezra Pound, and Irving Babbit on his consciousness. There are some who still believe that Tradition and the individual talent is a sort of a poet's version of living Babbit's Roseau and Romanticism.

Joy and sorrow, excitement and disappointment, love and fear, attraction and repulsion, hope and dismay – all these are feelings we often experience. Emotions are intense feeling that are directed at someone or something. Emotions are object specific. One is happy about something, angry at someone or afraid of something. Psychology considers the following six as basic emotions; anger, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust and surprise. These vary in intensity, frequency and duration. Felt and displayed emotions may vary.

Eliot is to British literary criticism what Einstein is to modern physics in our century. He is easily the most influential poet and critic of the twentieth century in the English speaking world. While he is classified often under the New Humanist tradition of Irving Babbit and the Imaginistic School his genius has varied sources and several other ingredients. It was his" Tradition and the individual Talent"(1917) that made the big difference to new critics. Eliot argues that a contemporary writer acquires meaning only in terms of his literary ancestors and tradition with which comparison of his work is inescapable. He sees poetic tradition as a growing continue comprising all the poetry ever written in a given language and can never be represented by an individual poet or a school of poets. Though he recognizes that all poets do contribute to tradition each contribution of every poet may not be of value. In his case for metaphysical poets we see how Eliot chose Donne and his school as an indication of the real course of English poetry though they had been abandoned by critics from John Milton's time till the beginning of the 20th century. He also challenged the Wordsworthian dictum of 'spontaneous overflow…tranquility' and argued that the poet's contribution does not lie in the 'peculiar essence' of that poet or how he differs from tradition but "that part of his work is important where it is most harmony with the dead poets who preceded him."

He does not mean that a poet must be judged from anachronistic canons of criticism when he says that
poet must be judged by standards from the past. For Eliot a poet's work is in "The degree to which he fits into tradition". His greatest contribution lies in focusing the critic's attention away from the poet,
i.e. upon poetry, not upon a poet. For him a poet does not express his personality in a poem but makes use of a medium that has amazing way of uniting myriad experiences and impression in the most unpredictable ways. Such experiences of the poet may not be crucial ones in the poet's life but may be just marginal experiences. Eliot finds that they are significant with reference to the tradition of poetry in a given language. Eliot is concerned with readers who are 'schooled' and instructed readers who can effortlessly react to a given poem based on an acquaintance with the tradition. It is useful to study Walter Jackson Bate's anthology Criticism: The major texts to find an exquisite and short statement of Eliot's creed. Mr. Bateson argues that "a significant artist may modify the direction in which the stream of tradition will flow; but he never abandons the stream, he simply produces it". His view is that the reader will not respond according to a set literary theory. But "Eliot deduces criteria from the practice of the metaphysical poets, who represent the farthest production of the tradition before poet's abandoned true course of the stream."

Eliot's influence is apparent in several phrases from his essays which have today become standard critical terminology. Critics like M .K. Heiser and W. Allston have shown how a term like "objective correlative" today has become the standard term, a term to denote expression of complex emotions in art. The other term which has drawn global attention is "dissociation of sensibility". Besides his exquisite views in his insightful study of

Dante have brought to the world of literary criticism new force of what are called as "hierarchical principle" and "allegorical modes" of criticism. He diametrically argues who claimed that criticism is creative and made a case to prove that criticism is not "autogenic"; its aims are only "interpretation" and "correction of taste". It was Eliot who brought to currency the need to see criticism as collaborative exercise and the need to accord centrality to "guardianship" of language (Criticism as common pursuit of true judgment) Eliot feels that a good critic, (every critic should endeavour to become one) must have a keen and abiding sensibility along with highly discriminated reading, on such critics even the most powerful personalities dominate. That is how like life itself good criticism will be pursuit of rounded and integrated life in art and not merely appendages to ethics and theology, John Paul Prichard says.

"Younger critics it is true often disagree with his pronouncements. His belief that the English criticism should state beliefs rather than argue or persuade, has brought complaints that he has become prone to speak ex-Cathedra. Others have been alienated by his capping of literary criticism with theological judgment which in his case means traditional, Anglo-catholic Christianity, Still others, while agreeing that the critic needs a religious belief have ludicrously tried to have a religion upon the law of supply and demand; and not being conspicuously successful, have discounted Eliot's emphasis upon ethics and theology by asserting that he wanders too far from critical matters". In the 1920's, other big name is that of I. A. Richards who used the physiological approach to literary criticism. Almost always we find his ideas corroborated by critical ideas from the times of Aristotle. Serious students of Eliot must consider Eliot's interest in Coleridge's theory of imagination also.

Nature of Eliot's influence as a critic has always been felt to be mysterious and indefinable. Tillyard in his history of the Cambridge English school, has told how the essay in the sacred wood (1920) they first appeared made me uncomfortable and I knew I could not be ignored. Disciples – even enemies – have hardly succeeded in identifying what is new and special in Eliot's criticism, though they have been loud in praise and censure.

Eliot believes that every age should revalue the literature of the past ages according to its own standards. This is what he himself tried to achieve in his career. He has given fresh interpretation of the works of Elizabethan dramatist, metaphysical poet the Caroline poets, poets of the eighteenth century poets and romantics. Describing Eliot's criticism, Watson says, 'The formal properties of Eliot's criticism are clear enough'. An Eliot essay is a statement of attitude, a prise de positions, an evaluation. It does not pretend to be biolographical. Eliot hardly ever stoops to purvey information. To him 'relevance' means relevance to modern poets rather than modern readers.

Thirdly, Eliot eschews close analysis in favour of general judgment; his taste and techniques were formed decades before the new criticism of the thirties and he never practices the 'close analysis' of the characteristics of that school.

Eliot declared himself classicist in literature, an Ango-Catholic in religion and a royalist in politics. He is classicist because he believes in order in literature, faith in system of writing and that a work of art must conform to the past tradition. The new classicists believed that the writer must follow rules and ancients and that literature must be didactic. Eliot's idea of 'conformity to tradition' is totally different from this. A work of art must conform to the tradition in such a way that it alters the tradition as it is directed by it. In 'tradition and the individual talent' he says the existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for

order to persist after the supurvention novelty, the whole existing order must be, if even so slightly, altered towards the whole are readjusted and this is conformity between old and new.

Pointing out the difference between Eliot and the noe-classicist of the eighteenth century poetry Maxwell says : the structure of modern classical poetry is analogous to that of eighteenth century. Each accepts a poetic framework, the rules of objective authority and makes a conscious effort to work with in that framework. Satirical wit plays an important role in both and with it goes a concern for the necessity of cultivating precision of form and word. This requires an intellectual rather than on emotional, instinctive approach to the task of selecting words of relating them to each other and to the whole. Yet each of these similarities involves also a difference. The system to which Eliot relates his poetry has a greater scope that Augustan classical authority and it becomes a more vital part of the poetry which depends on it. By its relationship with Eliot's poetry the traditional system acquires new significance and it becomes living part of the poetic experience transcribed in the poetry. Not only does tradition clarify the relation between symbol and object reduce the need for elaboration and add a dimension to the poem but it is itself altered by relationship and so shown to be a vital force. This is more intimate contact than existed between the eighteenth century classicism and Greco-Roman literature and it is a contact which can be common to all poets without inevitable resulting uniformity.

George Watson thinks that there is an element of intellectual snobber in Eliot's criticism. Its real purpose is not the correction of taste, but justification of his own achievement as a poet. The object of Eliot's criticism is not just an Addisonian ambition to correct taste, more narrowly, it is the correction of taste with a view to conditioning his own future readership and audiences. The real parallel among our classic critic lies not in Addison but in Dryden, and an Eliot essay thought not openly pre factoral and self justifying like most of Drydens criticism – serves a comparable purpose.

Stanley Hywan notices two other defects in his criticism fuzzy contradictory thinking and extra-literary irritation. The result is that the key terms are meaningless or nebulous. The extra-litereary irritation grows more frequent with his subject. About Dante Eliot says that belief in a poet's philosophy of idea is not necessary for appreciating his (Dante's) poetry. While Eliot rejects Shelley's poetry because of his repellent ideas, 'The idea of Shelley seems to me always to be ideas of adolescent'. Eliot's unsymphathatic attitude to Milton's poetry was caused by antipathy towards Milton the man. The other form which Eliot's growing irritation with writers takes is his habit of reproaching them for not being something else he would have found more satisfactory. Blake and Shakespeare should have a better philosophy, the Victorian poets should not have written so much.

Summing up despite these short comings Eliot's reputation as leading critic of twentieth century is secure. He made a positive contribution to the literature of criticism. In the age of falling values, he upheld the cause of poetry. Here we find him almost quoting Sanskrit Subhashit in expression 'the people which cease to care for its literary inheritance become barbaric'. Those who produce less and less sensible. He is against impressionistic school of crisis. He emphasises on the need of a strict critical method of the application of the method of science of study if literature. He has a faith in the draftsman – critic provided that he possess a highly developed 'sense of fact'. There is lucidity and severity in his prose style which is admired by all eminent critics. He is more successful in judicial criticism than theoretic criticism. He analyzed works of specific writers with lucidity and

subtlety. He has wide influence in modern age and has influence writers like F.R.Leavis. He has been rightly recognized as the leader of modern criticism.

Northrop Frye

H. Northrop Frye (14 July 1912 – 23 January 1991) is Canada's greatest literary and cultural theorist. Criticism in its true form, said Frye, is a creative act of the imagination. As such, it deals synoptically with the entire body of literature, assimilating it to "a total order of words" that illuminates human understanding and eventually transforms the shape of Imagination itself (Anatomy 17). In fact, literature is a "human apocalypse" (The Educated Imagination 22). This theory owes as much to the opening of John's gospel, where the Word is the primary vehicle of creation, as it does to Blake, in whose works Frye discovered a series of archetypes (Zoas), demolished in the fallen world and reconstructing themselves into their Original Form in the Giant Man, Albion (Fearful Symmetry). His full theoretical system was worked out in the Anatomy where the constituent genres of literature (Comedy, Romance, Tragedy, and Irony or Satire) are conceived as a series of verbal epiphanies governed by the cycle of the (mental) seasons. Inductive analysis of literature—Frye affirms that Aristotle is his critical ancestor—confirms that the organized scheme of true critical thought is as much a science as an art form. Its intrinsic language is derived from the pre-literate, specifically forms of ritual, myth, and folk-tale whose symbols and archetypes are the real discourse within society: the basis of knowledge, imagination, and prophetic vision. Frye's reading of the 18th century Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico's *The New Science* confirmed his view that mankind's recorded history and thought originated in these poetic and archetypal frameworks, and that the human creative imagination was more real than the externally perceived world.

The insights gained from his study of Blake set Frye on his critical path and shaped his contributions to literary criticism and theory. He was the first critic to postulate a systematic theory of criticism, "to work out," in his own words, "a unified commentary on the theory of literary criticism". In so doing, he shaped the discipline of criticism. Inspired by his work on Blake, Frye developed and articulated his unified theory ten years after *Fearful Symmetry*, in the *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). He described this as an attempt at a "synoptic view of the scope, theory, principles, and techniques of literary criticism" (Anatomy 3). He asked, "what if criticism is a science as well as an art?" (7), Thus, Frye launched the pursuit which was to occupy the rest of his career—that of establishing criticism as a "coherent field of study which trains the imagination quite as systematically and efficiently as the sciences train the reason".

Criticism as a science

As A. C. Hamilton outlines in *Northrop Frye: Anatomy of his Criticism*, Frye's assumption of coherence for literary criticism carries important implications. Firstly and most fundamentally, it presupposes that literary criticism is a discipline in its own right, independent of literature. Claiming with John Stuart Mill that "the artist . . . is not heard but overheard," Frye insists that,

The axiom of criticism must be, not that the poet does not know what he is talking about, but that he cannot talk about what he knows. To defend the right of criticism to exist at all, therefore, is to assume that criticism is a structure of thought and knowledge existing in its

own right, with some measure of independence from the art it deals with (Anatomy 5).

This “declaration of independence” is necessarily a measured one for Frye. For coherence requires that the autonomy of criticism, the need to eradicate its conception as “a parasitic form of literary expression, . . . a second-hand imitation of creative power” (Anatomy 3), sits in dynamic tension with the need to establish integrity for it as a discipline. For Frye, this kind of coherent, critical integrity involves claiming a body of knowledge for criticism that, while independent of literature, is yet constrained by it: “If criticism exists,” he declares, “it must be an examination of literature in terms of a conceptual framework derivable from an inductive survey of the literary field” itself (Anatomy 7).

The function of criticism

In effect, Frye’s theory freed criticism from its former dependency on the dialectic of history, philosophy, and psychology. On “the assumption of total coherence” (Anatomy 16), he demonstrated that literature and its analysis were located within a verbal universe governed by its own laws and linguistic protocols. By understanding those laws, the student could observe how literature functioned as an agent for social transformation. The process was rather simple: first, critical inquiry proceeds centrifugally (inward toward the core of a text whose metaphorical pattern alters and transfigures the reader’s understanding) and, second, centripetally (outward toward the reader’s society whose moral and spiritual ignorance he is obliged to dispel). The trajectory of his criticism followed that pattern: following Blake, he posited that the Old and New Testaments were the “Great Code of Art.” His last books, Words With Power and The Double Vision (the latter published posthumously in 1991), developed linguistic forms (i.e., the metaphoric and the metonymic) that were intended to further liberate the imagination from distracting rhetoric and thereby to ground the transcendent in human thought.

Frye was convinced that he succeeded to both Arnold’s and Eliot’s critical project in his perspective “to see literature as showing a progressive evolution in time,” in relation to which he seeks, by establishing the scientific study of critical genres, “the possibility of a critical progress toward a total comprehension of literature which no critical history gives any hint of” (667). He begins this ambitious project with the suggestion that “what if criticism is a science as well as an art?” (660). But what he means by art is in the sense that “the writing of history is an art” (660). Diagnosing that “literary criticism is now in such a state of nave induction as we find in a primitive science,” he suggests that “it is time for criticism to leap to a new ground from which it can discover what the organizing or containing forms of its conceptual framework are” (662).

Unlike Leavis who sees literary criticism as “antithetically remote from mathematics” (Principle 21), Frye finds some parallel in both fields: just as “form and content become the same thing” in mathematics which, having begun with “a form of understanding an objective world regarded as its content,” “conceives of the content as being itself mathematical in form,” so can literature at first begin with “a commentary on an external ‘life’ or ‘reality’” and end up with “an autonomous language” in “a verbal universe” (665-66). This ‘verbal universe’ is for Frye “the first postulate" of a science of criticism, in which life and reality are contained in "a system of verbal relationships" without any "direct reference to external criteria" (666). In his view, the 'verbal' universe is not only one of the compartmentalised universes which similarly "exist for all the arts," but it is also shared in by other specialist disciplines such as metaphysics and social sciences (666).

In this argument, it is no wonder that Frye sees 'English literature' merely as "the miscellaneous pile of literary works that happened to get written in English" (663). In this way he relegates language to a "secondary aspect of literature" (663). In his new science of literary criticism, 'research' is naturally set in opposition to a 'value- judgment' of which Leavis thinks so highly, and criticism "proper" is deprived of value judgments which Frye suggests are likely to be "either unorganized and tentative or over-organized and irrelevant" (665 & 658).

As Northrop Frye states in his article “The function of criticism at the present time”, he attempts to make clear what the function of criticism is. In the first place, he argues that criticism mediates between the artist and his public. As for him: “Criticism exists because it can talk, and all arts are dumb.” He does not neglect the possibility of having authors analyzing and interpreting their own pieces of work for poets and writers in general may as well have critical abilities. Also, Frye makes a distinction between two types of critics: (a) one who faces the public (the one we would call the critical reader), and (b) the one who is involved in the literary work; that is, the author himself.

The primordial task of a critic is then to evaluate the state of literature as it is presented, and exemplify how literature is to be absorbed into a particular society. It is also stated that both (the critic proper and the critical reader) are supposed (though not all the time) to fulfill different functions buy approaching different aspects of the same text simultaneously. In order to do so, the critic’s first step to take is reading literature in order to shape the principles he or she is going to use according to the knowledge of the field of expertise of the critic. The ideal step to take would be to, somehow, systematize the process of criticism to make its scientific by integrating, not only religion and philosophy, but other sciences as well.

What is taken as criticism is basically the work of critical readers with several and different critical attitudes and standpoints depending on the relevant facts collected by the critic. Still, the work of a critic is not a systematic process following the scientific method because the literary text is not viewed as phenomena that can be explained and / or analyzed taking into consideration a theoretical or conceptual framework which can only be used by criticism. So, if research and criticism are not combined in order to make more valid analyses, critical readers and critical authors will be excluded from making meaningful contributions in terms of culture. Therefore, according to Frye, it is high time for criticism to start defining a conceptual framework within which the scientific method can be used; it will also be well timed for critics to get into a multidisciplinary field in which they can relate to subjects such as biography, history, philosophy, and language.

After making these aspects clear, what Frye next describes are the steps of criticism. In the first place, the critic should try to identify the category of literature in which the books are located before proceeding to examine aspects such as the author’s life, the historical context, his language and his thought. Then, it is important to make a distinction between genres such as prose or poetry in order to know what theory is more likely to be used comprehensively to analyze the text. Therefore, the critic will be able to know whether the text deals with elements that are part of his/her area of expertise or if, on the contrary, deals with concepts that should be researched in detail by the critic before analyzing properly. The final step is to identify different levels of meaning (if there are, of course) in the literary text so as to define them and classify them.

One of the main problems that criticism faces at the present time, according to the author, is that it is not well enough organized so as to clearly understand what factors to take into account when it comes to critical judgment. Such judgment may come whether from the critical reader or from the spokesman of a critical attitude. Besides, another problem involves determining the category of literature which should start by making a distinction between two groups: (a) a complex verbal facts (a verbal form which is itself), and (b) a complex of verbal symbols (a verbal form which is related to something else).

His *Anatomy of Criticism*, the critical tour de force, is a touchstone in archetypal criticism, and perhaps the first attempt at erecting a grandiose theory of literary cartography. At the time of the publication of the work, his was the sole voice inveighing against the uncompromising attitude of New Criticism. He was a strident believer in treating a work of literature as part of a larger system, and not as a purely isolated phenomenon. 'Literature imitates the total dream of man.' For him, the whole body of literary works of any society constitutes what might be called a self-contained, autonomous universe. The natural world and the human world are brought together by the human imagination. Poetic thought is categorical, mystical and so powerful in its impact on the human mind that in our innermost being the natural world is assimilated to the human world. The term 'archetype' stands for a recurring pattern of experience which can be identified in works of literature, and human sciences. These can be identified in the form of recurring actions, characters, images, metaphors, analogues, figurative language, etc. These archetypes are the reflections of primitive, universal thoughts which are essentially poetic. They are the primordial images which reside deep in our psyche, and which seek an outlet in works of art. Have we not known that in the earliest stages of any culture, language was ritualistic and prelogical? When the archetypes are embodied in literary works, they awaken in us our profound feelings which are socially sharable.

In his much-anthologised essay, 'The Archetypes of Literature', Frye expresses his dissatisfaction with New Criticism. What is missing from it is a coordinating principle that will place works of art as parts of a larger whole, a larger system. And so, he would rather approach them from two opposite ends, the inductive (centripetal) and the deductive (centrifugal). In great works, especially, one can discover growing, emerging patterns of significance, spreading out from the centre, like the ripples in a pond when a stone is cast upon it. He illustrates this from Yorick's soliloquy in the gravedigger scene in Hamlet. The text opens out from the literal meaning of words, to images of decay and corruption, to psychological relationships among characters, to archetypal patterns, and so on. Critics interpret the play based on what their assumptions happen to be. From the other end, the deductive one, one can discover in works of literature analogies of the recurrent rhythms of the natural cycle (of births, deaths, seasons, etc.). Literature enacts these. Frye classifies the literary universe into four categories–he calls them *mythoi* – corresponding to the four natural seasons: comedy corresponds to spring, romance to summer, tragedy to autumn and satire to winter. For him, educated imagination is that which is nurtured by classical mythology. Using this as his base, he develops his brand of cultural criticism. He

can thus reach out to wider worlds of ethical, and social criticism enshrining deep human values. His view of life, and his view of literature are one and the same; one life, structured as concrete universals, is refracted and made available to us in a heightened form through the medium of literature. And so, only through literature can we be interested in larger questions pertaining to life. Hence Frye says, 'Art deals not with the real but with the conceivable, and literary criticism, though it will eventually have to have some theory of conceivability, can never be justified in trying to develop, much less assume, any theory of actuality'('The Archetypes of Literature' ,431).

Frye chooses two Platonic levels of knowledge from *The Republic* –'nouns' and 'dianoia' for his discussion of the basic kinds(and degrees) of criticism. At the primary, literal level, criticism is concerned with the knowledge about things. This is seen in the gathering of what constitutes the sense of fact in Eliot's sense(the sense of the past, for Lionel Trilling): in the acquiring of all related facts, ideas and thoughts, which constitute the foundation for building up the context for literary study. But, this knowledge about literature has to seek a transformation as knowledge of literature, which we generally associate with wisdom. In this ideal situation, the reader and the work become one and the same. In the words of Frye, "Criticism in order to point beyond itself needs to be actively iconoclastic about itself.' For him, literature is not only an object to be contemplated, but also a power to be absorbed.

Frye is the spokesman that literary exegesis need not (and does not) lead to judgment. For him, 'the sense of value is an individual, unpredictable variable, incommunicable, indemonstrable, and mainly intuitive reaction to knowledge.' Evaluation has its right place in book and theatre reviewing; in fact it may be even necessary for various reasons. Frye's view of literature is that it is a 'reservoir of potential values.' Our value sense is not part of our critical discussion, and for this very reason value judgments have no place in literary scholarship.

Frye uses the term 'structure' in several related senses. Indeed, it was he who had anticipated structuralism in literary criticism. He was a structuralist without being aware of it. Theme is referred to as the structural principle in a poem. Sometimes, he calls the images the structural units; at other times, he holds myths as the conventional structures in literature. These are, for him, the units which form the organizing principle of literary work. Structuralist poetics treats literature as a system of conventions in which signs are embedded. These signs take on a meaning, not on account of an inherent property in the form of any ontological meaning in them, but by virtue of a signification within a larger system. By 'structuring' is meant relating one signifying element with another with a view to discovering relationships among them. Frye's view is that any literary work – secular scripture for him –exists as a 'displacement' from the larger mythos. The critic's job is to realign it with the larger framework and situate it there, for literature, as we have argued before, is reconstructed mythology.

Frye's view of literature 'as a total order of words' and that works of literature are created out of literature anticipates again the structuralist view of intertexutuality. Only in the case of Frye, coherence is to be achieved by conformity, whereas for the structuralists it is through a play of difference. Frye restricts the associations with other texts to mythological images and to the metaphysical agents by which analogies and identities are established.

To conclude, the author shows his insights on the state of literature in relation to

criticism. As for the current trends of criticism, Frye states that literature is, and will be, "a pile of creative efforts" as long as there is a lack of organization established by criticism. It still needs to develop a theory of literature which will see this "pile of efforts" with a verbal universe. The concept of culture, as stated by Arnold Matthew, was precisely an integration and consolidation of literature and the verbal universe by using criticism as a main means of connection. The process of this consolidation is, according to Frye, the main function of criticism at the present time.

- **A. Richards**

II.A. Richards believes that sometimes the impulses of man respond to a situation in such an organised way that the mind has a unique experience. Poetry is the representation of this experience, this organised and happy play of impulses and a true reader ought to feel the same in his own self. The poet, Richards, does not tell the literal truth about the real world, but suggests attitudes which represent a proper balance of the nervous system and which are absorbed by the properly qualified reader.

Principles of Literary Criticism-

In his *Science and Poetry* (1926), Richards says that much labour has been done to explain the high place of poetry in human affairs, with, on the whole, few satisfactory or convincing results. The reason is that both a passionate knowledge of poetry and a capacity for dispassionate psychological analysis are required if poetry is to be properly understood and interpreted.

To understand the real nature of poetry, we have to understand clearly "how the mind works in an experience, and what sort of stream of events the experience is." There are conflicting instincts and desires, or appetencies, as he calls them, in the human mind. Man is often between conflicting pulls from different directions and consequently he suffers from mental uneasiness. The main function of art is to enable human mind to organize itself more quickly and completely than it could do otherwise. In short, art (poetry) is a means whereby we can gain emotional balance, mental equilibrium, peace and rest.

Affective fallacy, according to the followers of New Criticism, the misconception that arises from judging a poem by the emotional effect that it produces in the reader. The concept of affective fallacy is a direct attack on impressionistic criticism, which argues that the reader's response to a poem is the ultimate indication of its value.

Those who support the affective criterion for judging poetry cite its long and respectable history, beginning with Aristotle's dictum that the purpose of tragedy is to evoke "terror and pity." Edgar Allan Poe stated that "a poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul." Emily Dickinson said, "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry." Many modern critics continue to assert that emotional communication and response cannot be separated from the evaluation of a poem.

Illustrating his point by an image of a magnetic compass, I. A. Richards says that the systematization of impulses is necessary for the poise and balance. Emotions make experiences, and emotions are better realized and expressed through poetry. The poet does all this with the help of words. Misunderstanding and under-estimation of poetry is mainly

due to over estimation of the thought in it. "It is never what a poem *says* which matters, but what it *is.* The poet is not writing as a scientist. He uses these words because the interest which the situation calls into play combine to bring them, just in this form, into his consciousness as a means of ordering, controlling, and consolidating the whole experience."

Value of poetry- I. A. Richards

Richards defines the poem as "the artist's experience." He examines poetry as a stimulus-response proposition. The poem can be a communication in the broad sense that it communicates an experience. Some experience must naturally be good and some bad. It is only the good ones that can be said to be valuable. What are they like. It has frequently been emphasized by Richards that an experience results from theplay of impulses. The mind is ever engaged in the unconscious process of reconciling their conflicting claims in such a way that success is obtained for the greater number or mass of them, for the most important and the weightiest set. In the very exercise of this choice the mind unconsciously decided which impulses are valuable for it and should therefore be satisfied U the full, and which not and should therefore be suppressed.

In order to answer the questions—"Of what use is poetry?" "Why and how is it valuable?" Richards develops a general theory of value— general in the sense that it applies to all human activities and not especially to poetry—and then shows how poetry is valuable on the basis of this general standard. Poetry is valuable because it produces man's moral improvement. Richards seems to support Sidney's observations about poetry and also Shelley from whom Richards quotes in his *Principles of Literary Criticism* " poetry acts in a divine manner. It awakens and the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand unapprehended combinations of thought. Whatever strengthens and purifies the affections, enlarges the imagination, and adds spirit to sense, is useful". We may look upon *Principles of Literary Criticism* as an attempt to chisel this doctrine into the marble of positivism."

A. Richards has explained his views on the value of poetry in the chapter 'Art and Morals' in *Principles of Literary Criticism.* He begins, the chapter by saying : "From this excursion let us return to our proper task, the attempt to outline a morality which will change its values as circumstances alter, a morality free from occultism, absolutes and arbitrariness, a morality which will explain, as no morality has yet explained, the place and value of the arts in human affairs. What is good or valuable, we have said, is the exercise of impulses and the satisfaction of their appetencies." And poetry does this task. Poetry does the reconciliation of impulses.

David Daiches comments : "Poetry," wrote Shelley, "is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." This is precisely Richards' position, though Richards would define "best" and "happiest" in his own way. Whether the psychological humanism on which Richards bases his view of what is good in poetry as in any other human activity is really adequate to account for the special nature and value of, poetry is argueable. To many of his readers there seems to be a gap between his perceptive, detailed discussion of particular poems and his generalizations about the value of poetry, which are in large measure based on psychological notions which no important contemporary psychologist accepts."

However, Richards, like Arnold, is of the opinion that poetry is a central means of saving

civilization. He concludes the essay *Science and Poetry* with a general statement which expresses his view very clearly
: "It is very probable that the Hindenburg Line to which the defence of our traditions retired as a result of the onslaughts of the last century will be blown up the near future. If this should happen a moral chaos such as man has never experienced may be expected. We shall then be thrown back, as Matthew Arnold foresaw, upon poetry. It is capable of saving us; it is perfectly possible means of overcoming chaos."

This is Richard's reply to the attack made on poetry by Thomas Love Peacock in 1820 in the half- serious essay, *The Four Ages of Poetry.* While the other branches of learning, he had complained, were steadily marching towards a fuller knowledge or reality, poetry by its love of myth and legend was 'wallowing in the rubbish of departed ignorance.' Whence he concluded : 'A poet in our times is a semi- barbarian in a civilized community. He lives in the ways that ate past. His ideas, thoughts, feelings, associations, are all with barbarious manners, obsolete customs, and exploded superstitions. The march of his intellect if like that of a crab, backward.' Richards's analysis of poetry, if it is accepted as true, shows how even in this age of scientific enlightenment poetry has a vital role to play in the life of the individual and society. In the mind ordered in the poetic way lies the hope of civilization.

FOUR KINDS OF MEANING-I.A RICHARDS

I.A. Richards was the first critic to bring to English criticism a scientific precision and objectivity. He was the first to distinguish between the two uses of language – the referential and the emotive. His well articulated theory is found in his *Principles of Literary Criticism*. The present extract is from his Practical Criticism which speaks about the four kinds of meaning. Richards is remembered for his modern way of teaching and studying literature. New criticism and the whole of modern tensional poetics derive their strength and inspiration from the seminal writings of Richards.

Richards begins the extract by pointing to the difficulty of all reading. The problem of making out the meaning is the starting point in criticism. The answers to ‘what is a meaning?’, ‘What are we doing when we endeavour to make it out?’ are the master keys to all the problems of criticism. The all important fact for the study of literature or any other mode of communication is that there are several kinds of meaning. Whether we speak, write, listen, read, the ‘Total meaning’ is a blend of several contributory meanings of different types. Language – and pre eminently language as it is used in poetry has several tasks to perform simultaneously. Four kinds of functions or meanings as enlisted by I.A. Richards are the following: (1) Sense, (2) Feeling, (3) Tone and (4) Intention.

(1) Sense : ‘We speak to say something and when we listen we expect something to be said. We use words to direct our hearers’ attention upon some state of affairs, to present to them some items for consideration and to excite in them some thoughts about these items’. In short, what we speak to convey to our listeners for their consideration can be called ‘sense’. This is the most important thing in all scientific utterances where verification is possible.

(2) Feeling :The attitude towards what we convey is known as 'feeling'. In other words, we have bias or accentuation of interest towards what we say. We use language to express these feelings. Similarly, we have these feelings even when we receive. This happens even if the speaker is conscious of it or not. In exceptional cases, say in mathematics, no feeling enters. The speaker's attitude to the subject is known as 'feeling'.

(3) Tone : The speaker has an attitude to his listener. 'He chooses or arranges his words differently as his audience varies, in automatic or deliberate recognition of his relation to them. The tone of his utterance reflects his awareness of this relation, his sense of how he stands towards those he is addressing. Thus 'tone' refers to the attitude to the listener.

(4) Intention: Finally apart from what he says (sense), his attitude to what he is talking about (feeling), and his attitude to his listener (tone), there is the speaker's intention, his aim (conscious or unconscious) - the effect he is endeavouring to promote. The speaker's purpose modifies his speech. Frequently, the speaker's intention operates through and satisfies itself in a combination of other functions. 'It may govern the stress laid upon points in an argument. It controls the 'plot' in the larger sense of the word. It has special importance in dramatic and semi dramatic literature. Thus the influence of his intention upon the language he uses is additional to the other three influences.

If we survey the uses of language as a whole, predominance of one function over the other may be found. A man writing a scientific treatise will put the 'sense' of what he has to say first. For a writer popularising some of the results and hypotheses of science, the principles governing his language are not so simple; his intention will inevitably interfere with the other functions. In conversation, we get the clearest examples of the shifts of function, i.e. one function being taken over by another.

Towards the end of the essay, I.A. Richards says that it is much harder to obtain statements about poetry than expressions of feelings towards it and towards the author. Very many apparent statements turn out to be the indirect expressions of Feeling, Tone and Intention.

The Value of his Criticism

Richards turns criticism into a science. The making of literature, he holds, is a scientifically analyzable activity. He does not subscribe to the belief that while other human activities can be explained by science, literary activity is beyond its reach. There is a clearly definable reason for every aspect of literature, he says; and as more and more knowledge of the working of the human mind is acquired, many more 'mysteries' of the literary art will be mysteries no more. It is to this stage in human progress that Richards looks forward. The science that can unearth the secrets of literature is psychology.

Criticism hitherto has either merely 'enjoyed' literature, often adding something of its own to it, or proceeded from the literary product to an analysis of the process that has gone to its making. From the work of the writer alone, says Richards, the whole of the inner process cannot be known. For much of it is unconscious and unverifiable even by psychology in the present stage of its development. But until it is so traced to its source, the criticism of the work must remain incomplete. Richard's 'experiment' is but a step in this direction. Instead of merely contenting himself with the literary process, as manifested in the work, he goes to its very source in the writer's mind. 'All the other critical principles', he

says, ‘are obstructive influence’. His discussion of criticism therefore always includes ‘ as a preliminary what amounts to a concise treatise on psychology’. In other words, he considers an adequate knowledge of psychology an essential preliminary to literary criticism. This appears a heavy demand to make on the critic and heavier still to make on the reader. Yet if this is only how literature can be fully understood, and not merely enjoyed, not more than a select few can every qualify for the task. However, Richards has inspired a host of followers, the most notable of whom is William Empson, and given an entirely new turn to criticism in England and America. But his method is too technical to be ever popular. The lay reader who turns over his pages ‘retires harassed and over burdened, and looks elsewhere for recreation. He deserts his master, and seeks for companions.’

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UNIT –III – Literary Theory and Criticism –SHS5009

I. INTRODUCTION:

Modernism and post modernism are ways of looking at things, a condition of the mind and a way of life. Structuralism post structuralism are generally used with reference to literary and language as in structural anthropology, structural linguistics, structural poetics, structuralist narratology and post structuralist criticism. The term post modernism and post structuralism are partners in the same paradigm and there is bound to be some overlap between some people use them even interchangeably but it may be better to make some distinction in their use as shown below:

Post Modernism	**Post Structuralism**
World view : a theory / a condition/ a vision/ a state of mind, a way of life, an attitude , a culture	Textualism, minute reading or anti reading

Structuralism:

Structuralism is a philosophical method of understanding the world too. Structuralists argue that the entities that constitute the world we perceive (human beings, meanings, social positions, texts, rituals…) are not the works of God or the mysteries of nature. It is an effect of the principles that structure us. The world without structures is meaningless. It will then be a random and chaotic continuum.

Structures order that continuum and organize it according to certain set of principles. And thus we make sense of it. In this way structures make this world meaningful and real. Once discovered, structures show us how meanings come about.

Structuralism designates the practise on analysing and evaluating a work of art on the explicit model of structuralist linguistics. It is based upon the concept that things cannot be fully understood in isolation. They have to seen in the context of larger structures they are part of.

Structualist criticism views literature as a second-order signifying system that uses the first-order structural system of language as its medium. Structuralist critics often apply a variety of linguistic concepts to the analysis of a literary work, such as the distinction between phonemic and morphemic levels of organization, or between paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships. Some critics analyze the structure of a literary text on the model of the syntax in a well-formed sentence. Literary structuralism explains how it is that a competent reader is able to make sense of a particular literary text by specifying the underlying system of literary conventions and rules of combination that has been unconsciously mastered by such a reader

Tenets of Structuralism

i. A literary text is considered as a ‘text’ i.e. a mode of writing constituted by a play of component elements according to specifically literary conventions and codes. These factors may generate an illusion of reality, but have no truth-value, nor any reference to a reality existing outside the literary system itself.

ii. The individual author is not assigned any initiative, expressive intentions or design as the ‘origin; or producer of a work. Instead the conscious ‘self’ is declared to be a ‘space’ within which the impersonal, the pre-existing system of literary language, conventions, codes and rules of combination gets precipitated into a particular text.

iii. Structuralism replaces the author by the reader as the central agency in criticism; but the traditional reader, as a conscious, purposeful and feeling individual, is replaced by the impersonal activity of “reading’ and what is read is not a work imbued with meanings, but ‘ecriture’. The focus of structuralist criticism is on the impersonal process of reading.

Post structuralism :

Post structuralism is more language based where as post modernism is a vision and a way of life.

The literary theories that can be considered post structuralist can be defined in terms of their focus on one hand, exclusively based on language/text and on the other hand with a bias towards society. Other approaches within post modernism with varying degrees of post structuralist orientation like reader response theory feminist criticism post colonialism and new historicism are represented in the following way

REPRESENTATION OF THE PRESENTATION

Deconstruction	**Psychoanalysis**	**Social discourse**
French Jacques Derrida, Ronald Barthes	Jacques Lacan	Michel Foucau
American Harold Bloom, Hillis Miller and others	Julia Kristeva	Mikhail Bakhtin

Deconstruction:

It is a literary theory developed by Jacques Derrida. It regards language as inadequate to convey the meaning, for languages are all based upon sound symbols. Communication is therefore made fuller with gestures, facial expression and so on. Since the same word may mean different thinkers, distortion is possible. Derrida challenges the conventional theory that language has the potential to refer to an extra-textual world or to express determinate signification.

The most influential of all post modernist/post structuralist theories is deconstruction, propounded by Jacques Derrida. He is the single most influential intellectual in current philosophy and Anglo American literary theory. Derrida represents the French mocking tradition combined with suburban Algerian, petit bourgeois Jewish family background. The student revolution of May 1969 in Paris followed the publication of Derrida's most influential work 'Of Grammatology in 1967'.

Derrida simply problematises all habits of thoughts in any 'discipline' by deconstructing how impossible it is to draw a clear cut line between reality and representation. Though the focus of study in deconstruction is 'language/text' ultimately deconstruction is a rigorous attempt to (re) think the limits of that principle of reason which has shaped emergence of Western philosophy, science and technology at large and its search for an answer to the question. Is the reason for reason rational?

Derrida points out that Rousseau uses writing to debunk writing and denounces the very means by which his own ideas are set down for others to read. Writing is exactly the mechanism which allows Rousseau to practice the art of concealment to express the opposite of what he feels. Derrida minutely examines Saussure's ideas on language and points of that Saussure is not so sure of what he says.

To deconstruct is to do and undo ceaselessly. To undo is not the same as to deconstruct but rather it is akin to put it off the centre, to constantly destabilize what has been done and to rigorously demystify what is received in the name of knowledge. To deconstruct is to examine minutely in order to dismantle conventional hierarchies in the given system to arrive at an exactly opposite positive. Some American deconstructionalist think that deconstruction is a kind of joyous release from all rules and constraints of critical reading and

understanding. In fact it needs highest standards of argumentative rigor because it is a disciplined identification and dismantling of the potentialities of textual power. The 'text' is shown to read against itself through the exposure of what might be called the 'textual subconscious' where meanings are directly contrary to the surface meaning; the text is shown in multiple disunited with shifts and breaks contradictions silences, 'aporias' (blind spots) and fault lines much like cracks in rock formation that reveal previous activity and movement.

II. The Death of the Author

Roland Barthes says in his essay The Death of the Author, "The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author." It is very easy to see that it is the reader who breathes meaning into the text. We arrive at Ronald Barthes, one can declare that the author is dead and the reader is the author/creator. Ronald Barthes concern was the critical institution which makes discovering the author's life and time the key to the only possible reading of a text. There can be no real level of independent thinking achieved by the reader if their thoughts are dictated by the Author's opinions and biases. For this reason there needs to be a distance between the Author and those who read the work.

Barthes makes two main points as to why the death of the Author is an inevitable and beneficial occurrence. To begin with Barthes states that the author is merely a way through which a story is told. They neither create the story nor form it, these have already been done. The author is merely retelling this story that has already been told many times. His argument against original thought is very persuasive, especially considering the many ways stories have been logically broken down into a predictable sequence of events. For instance, Vladimir Propp (Literary Theory) a Russian Formalist used Formalist theories to determine thirty one plot functions in Russian folk tales. Each folk tale has at least some, if not all, of these functions, typically in the order which he has organized them but occasionally one or two will be inverted. Most modern fairy tales are merely an adaptation of a classic fairy tale and they follow the general functions that Propp outlined.

Even beyond fairy tales, most fiction stories fall into a typical patter with a beginning problem, a training period, a set back of the hero, the hero overcoming the obstacle, the conflict, and finally resolution. There are no original thoughts, just old thoughts combined in different patterns or adjusted to fit the current society. Music, fashion, and movies are an example of the never ending recycling of ideas. There are only so many musical combinations or clothing styles that people find pleasing. It is inevitable that old styles will be used to "inspire" new ones. It is easy to see in all different areas of society how there are few no new ideas, merely old ideas being reused.

Barthes second point is that if the reader were to view the work through the Author's eyes then they would gain no benefit from the reading. By associating the Author with the text, the text is automatically limited. Instead of drawing their own meaning from the text using their own experiences and therefore stimulating their own thoughts of their lives and how it connects with the world around them the reader is then restricted to trying to guess what the author meant. The reader focuses on understanding the Author's opinions and whether they agree with the Author and don't focus on their own thoughts and opinions of the piece.

Barthes claims that it is the status of the reader that should be elevated, not the status of the Author. If the reader gains any deep insight from a piece of writing it should not be considered due to the Author's genius but instead to the personal experiences of the reader providing them with an insightful interpretation. Barthes believes that if it is the reader who brings meaning to the text then there can be no limit to the interpretations available because everyone in the world has their own unique experiences that have shaped them.

For the independent thinking of readers and the growth of their skills of interpretation the death of the Author is necessary, in most cases. The death of the Author is not always a necessary occurrence however, in some cases the presence of the Author is needed for the reader to achieve a greater understanding of what is being read. For instance, in the book Slaughterhouse 5: A Children's Crusade, Kurt Vonnegut went through great effort to make himself known at the beginning of the book. The entire first chapter is told in first person from the author's point of view as he rambles about how he wanted to write a book about the bombing of Dresden. He was there when Dresden was bombed and was one of the only survivors. The first chapter of the book he describes how he has wanted to write a book about the bombing of Dresden for years but he's never been able to find the right words. "There's nothing intelligent to say about a massacre." Vonnegut said.

After spending the first chapter introducing the reader to himself Vonnegut then proceeds to take himself out of the story (for the most part) and instead tell the story of Billy Pilgrim. Pilgrim had also survived the bombing of Dresden but a head injury later in life combined with post traumatic stress disorder caused Pilgrim to lose his grip on reality. Pilgrim becomes unstuck in time and being unstuck causes him to flash back and forth from the past to the future and back again. As a reader if I had not known Vonnegut's background as one of the few survivors of the bombing of Dresden then I would have not been able to understand the book. I would have seen it as crazy and disjointed and not have been able to draw any meaning out of it. However, looking through the eyes of the Author I got an understanding and view of the events that was completely different from what I would have understood on my own.

If the Author is writing on a topic of which the reader will have their own past experiences to compare it to then the birth of the reader must come at the cost of the death of the Author. However, if the reader has no experiences on which to base their judgments or to grasp the meaning of the text with then it might be necessary for the Author to tell the reader of their own experiences. I agree with Barthes when he says that the reader and the readers interpretation and understanding of a text is what is important. However, sometimes the understanding of the reader is best helped by the presence of the Author.

That being said, the Author should only make an appearance if it will help the understanding of the reader. Here again, the focus is on the reader and their understanding, not on the Author. It is inevitable though that some readers will have a certain mindset about a book before they even buy it because of the author's name on the cover. The reader may have liked a different book the author had written or had disliked it, but depending on which it was before they pick the book up they will already have an idea of what it is going to be like. Some readers have been known to buy entire series after reading the first book because they know they like the Author so much. They are basing four or five books off of their experience from one and the name of the Author. Should it be that way? Authors want to claim credit for the work they've done but Barthes says that where the work originated from isn't what's important, it's the destination that matters.

If we were to take Barthes statement that authors are not creating new material merely meshing bits and pieces from previous writings together, then for the author to claim credit of the piece would essentially be plagerism, for they would be taking credit for thoughts that were not theirs. Putting their names on books could qualify for intellectual property theft as well, according to Barthes. Unless, of course, the author is not seeking to take credit for the story itself but instead wants to take credit for the order in which the words are put together to form the story. So maybe the author is not dead at all. After all, if the author was completely dead then there would be no names on the covers of books. Not only would they not be allowed to take credit for a story that has already been told but they would not be allowed to affect the reader's interpretation of their story.

Even though Barthes thinks that knowing the Authors background would be detrimental to the readers interpretation of the text I wonder if the public would really wish to know nothing about the writer whose book they are reading. Is it possible that reading the book without the name or basic information of the author could be like watching a movie without knowing what the rating or the plot summary of the movie is? To what extent is it right to broaden the readers horizons? Some people choose to live highly sheltered lives, only reading certain things or watching specific t.v. shows. Anything that doesn't fall under their approved categories is to be completely ignored. So if we were to take the Authors name off of books, would going into a bookstore be akin to playing a game of Russian Roulette for them? Not knowing the author means not knowing if there may be any hidden surprises in the book. So aside from the Author's objections to not getting credit for their work, would the readers object? In this way the Author isn't dead, for their reputation still affects the readers choice and open mindedness to the book.

It seems that when Barthes says "the birth of the reader must come at the cost of the death of the Author," he is thinking idealistically, not realistically. It would help the interpretations and understanding of the reader for there to be no connection between the Author and the text, in that Barthes is correct. If the only focus was the individual interpretations of the reader then the absolute disassociation of the Author with the text would be a beneficial thing. However, I don't believe that the Author will ever be completely dead. Barthes said that the Author should get neither praise for a good book not blamed for a bad one and yet this is exactly why the Author will never be fully dead. Readers want heroes and villains, people to look up to and people to despise. A good writer earns praise from the readers and social status, but a controversial writer can draw just as much negative attention as an inspiring writer can draw positive attention. In this way people seek to categorize their lives, and to categorize books the readers need labels. Their favorite labels are the Authors who wrote the books. I think that the readers are partially responsible for the continued presence of the Author, as well as the Author's own interests in being involved. Is the Author fully dead? No, but neither is he fully alive either. The Author is stuck somewhere between.

Once written, the text doesn't need the author for the writing to work. We can imagine anyone speaking as I so far as text will allow. I might be all sorts of other things but as far as the words are concerned I is nothing more than a hungry person. Linguistically, the author is more than the instance writing…. The language knows a subject not a person… it is a language which speaks not the author. To write is through a prerequisite impersonally to reach that point where only language acts, performs and not me.

Barthes did not think books wrote themselves. He points out that writing doesn't lock a text, it liberates it – a written text has as it were flown the authors nest and can survive on its own. To return to the author is like clipping its wings. In other terms we might say that the meaning is about coherence with the text (not adherence) not correspondence with the authors veto-esque final say. To give a text, an author is to impose a limit on that text to furnish it with a final signified to close the writing.

Barthes is driven by a concern that we read the text itself, not something else that we imagine would provide a clue to it or a guarantee of the correctness of our interpretation. We should look at the text not through it. There is nothing beneath the space of writing is to be ranged over, not pierced.

For Barthes, there is something tragic violent even about closing down the possibility of new interpretation based on attention to the signifiers themselves: the story, the images, the genre, allusions to other texts or surprising breaks with expectations. As Barthes develops in mythologies the joy of reading is finding and giving voice to these dimensions structures codes in the text itself.

There is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader not as was hitherto said the author. Some of us will see some possibilities some others and the text keeps itself its secret about which is right. Indeed it becomes unclear just what right would mean. Importantly, this doesn't entail a subjectivism where the text's fleeting personal associations or me as an individual reader will do as an account of its meaning. It is still possible to be wrong. (If we do not know the words, or don't pay sufficient attention to them or we miss a citation or mistake the genre)

The reader is the space on which all that makes up a writing which are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination.

III. Jean Baudrillard

According to Baudrillard, what has happened in postmodern culture is that our society has become so reliant on models and maps that we have lost all contact with the real world that preceded the map. Reality itself has begun merely to imitate the model, which now precedes and determines the real world: "The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory—precession of simulacra—that engenders the territory" ("The Precession of Simulacra" 1). According to Baudrillard, when it comes to postmodern simulation and simulacra, "It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real" ("The Precession of Simulacra" 2). Baudrillard is not merely suggesting that postmodern culture is artificial, because the concept of artificiality still requires some sense of reality against which to recognize the artifice. His point, rather, is that we have lost all ability to make sense of the distinction between nature and artifice.

To clarify his point, he argues that there are three "orders of simulacra": 1) in the first order of simulacra, which he associates with the pre-modern period, the image is a clear counterfeit of the real; the image is recognized as just an illusion, a place marker for the real; 2) in the second order of simulacra, which Baudrillard associates with the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, the distinctions between the image and the representation begin to break down because of mass production and the proliferation of copies. Such production misrepresents and masks an underlying reality by imitating it so well, thus threatening to replace it (e.g. in photography or ideology); however, there is still a

belief that, through critique or effective political action, one can still access the hidden fact of the real; 3) in the third order of simulacra, which is associated with the postmodern age, we are confronted with a precession of simulacra; that is, the representation precedes and determines the real. There is no longer any distinction between reality and its representation; there is only the simulacrum.

Baudrillard points to a number of phenomena to explain this loss of distinctions between "reality" and the simulacrum:

1) **Media culture**. Contemporary media (television, film, magazines, billboards, the Internet) are concerned not just with relaying information or stories but with interpreting our most private selves for us, making us approach each other and the world through the lens of these media images. We therefore no longer acquire goods because of real needs but because of desires that are increasingly defined by commercials and commercialized images, which keep us at one step removed from the reality of our bodies or of the world around us.

2) **Exchange-Value**. According to Karl Marx, the entrance into capitalist culture meant that we ceased to think of purchased goods in terms of use-value, in terms of the real uses to which an item will be put. Instead, everything began to be translated into how much it is worth, into what it can be exchanged for (its exchange-value). Once money became a "universal equivalent," against which everything in our lives is measured, things lost their material reality (real-world uses, the sweat and tears of the laborer). We began even to think of our own lives in terms of money rather than in terms of the real things we hold in our hands: how much is my time worth? How does my conspicuous consumption define me as a person? According to Baudrillard, in the postmodern age, we have lost all sense of use-value: "It is all capital" (For a Critique 82).

3) **Multinational capitalism**. As the things we use are increasingly the product of complex industrial processes, we lose touch with the underlying reality of the goods we consume. Not even national identity functions in a world of multinational corporations. According to Baudrillard, it is capital that now defines our identities. We thus continue to lose touch with the material fact of the laborer, who is increasingly invisible to a consumer oriented towards retail outlets or the even more impersonal Internet. A common example of this is the fact that most consumers do not know how the products they consume are related to real-life things. How many people could identify the actual plant from which is derived the coffee bean? Starbucks, by contrast, increasingly defines our urban realities. (On multinational capitalism, see Marxism: Modules: Jameson: Late Capitalism.)

4) **Urbanization**. As we continue to develop available geographical locations, we lose touch with any sense of the natural world. Even natural spaces are now understood as "protected," which is to say that they are defined in contradistinction to an urban "reality," often with signs to point out just how "real" they are. Increasingly, we expect the sign (behold nature!) to precede access to nature.

5) **Language and Ideology.** Baudrillard illustrates how in such subtle ways language keeps us from accessing "reality." The earlier understanding of ideology was that it hid the truth, that it represented a "false consciousness," as Marxists phrase it, keeping us from seeing the real workings of the state, of economic forces, or of the dominant groups in power. (This understanding of ideology corresponds to Baudrillard's second order of simulacra.) Postmodernism, on the other hand, understands ideology as the support for our very perception of reality. There is no outside of ideology, according to this view, at least no outside that can be articulated in language. Because we are so reliant on language to structure

our perceptions, any representation of reality is always already ideological, always already constructed by simulacra.

Structure Sign and Play

IV. Jacques Derrida

Jacques Derrida first read his paper *"Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences (1966)"* at the John Hopkins International Colloquium on *"The Language of Criticism and the Sciences of Man"* in October 1966 articulating for the first time a post structuralist theoretical paradigm. This conference was described by Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donata to be *"the first time in United States when structuralism had been thought of as an interdisciplinary phenomenon"*. However, even before the conclusion of the conference there were clear signs that the ruling trans-disciplinary paradigm of structuralism had been superseded, by the importance of Derrida's *"radical appraisals of our assumptions"*

Derrida begins the essay by referring to 'an event' which has 'perhaps' occurred in the history of the concept of structure, that is also a 'redoubling'. The event which the essay documents is that of a definitive epistemological break with structuralist thought, of the ushering in of post-structuralism as a movement critically engaging with structuralism and also with traditional humanism and empiricism. It turns the logic of structuralism against itself insisting that the *"structurality of structure"* itself had been repressed in structuralism.

Derrida starts this essay by putting into question the basic metaphysical assumptions of Western philosophy since Plato which has always principally positioned itself with a fixed immutable centre, a static presence. The notion of structure, even in structuralist theory has always presupposed a centre of meaning of sorts. Derrida terms this desire for a centre as "logocentrism" in his seminal work *"Of Grammatology (1966)"*. '*Logos'*, is a Greek word for 'word' which carries the greatest possible concentration of presence. As Terry Eagleton explains in "Literary Theory: An Introduction (1996)", *"Western Philosophy…. has also been in a broader sense, 'logocentric', committed to a belief in some ultimate 'word', presence, essence, truth or reality which will act as the foundation for all our thought, language and experience. It has yearned for the sign which will give meaning to all others, – 'the transcendental signifier' – and for the anchoring, unquestioning meaning to which all our signs can be seen to point (the transcendental signified')."*

Derrida argues that this centre thereby limits the *"free play that it makes possible"*, as it stands outside it, is axiomatic – *"the Centre is not really the centre"*. Under a centered structure, free play is based on a fundamental ground of the immobility and indisputability of the centre, on what Derrida refers to "as the metaphysics of presence". Derrida's critique of structuralism bases itself on this idea of a center. A structure assumes a centre which orders the structure and gives meanings to its components, and the permissible interactions between them, i.e. limits play. Derrida in his critique looks at structures diachronically, i.e., historically, and synchronically, i.e. as a freeze frame at a particular juncture. Synchronically, the centre cannot be substituted: *"It is the point at which substitution of contents, elements and terms is no longer possible."* (Structuralism thus stands in tension with history as Derrida argues towards the end of the essay.) But historically, one centre gets substituted for another to form an epistemological shift: *"the entire history of the concept of structure must be thought of as a series of substitutions of center for center."* Thus, at a given point of time, the centre of the structure cannot be substituted by other elements, but historically, the point that

defines play within a structure has changed. The history of human sciences has thereby been a process of substitution, replacement and transformation of this centre through which all meaning is to be sought – God, the Idea, the World Spirit, the Renaissance Man, the Self, substance, matter, Family, Democracy, Independence, Authority and so on. Since each of these concepts is to found our whole system of thought and language, it must itself be beyond that system, untainted by its play of linguistic differences. It cannot be implicated in the very languages and system it attempts to order and anchor: it must be somehow anterior to these discourses. The problem of centers for Derrida was thereby that they attempt to exclude. In doing so, they ignore, repress or marginalize others (which become the Other). This longing for centers spawns binary opposites, with one term of the opposition central and the other marginal. Terry Eagleton calls these binary opposition with which classical structuralism tends to function as a way of seeing typical of ideologies, which thereby becomes exclusionary. To quote him, *"Ideologies like to draw rigid boundaries between what is acceptable and what is not"*.

Derrida insists that with the 'rupture' it has become *"necessary to begin to think that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a being-present, that the center had no natural locus….a sort of non-locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play."* Derrida attributes this initiation of the process of decentering *"to the totality of our era"*. As Peter Barry argues in *"Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural (1995)"* that in the twentieth century, through a complex process of various historico-political events, scientific and technological shifts, *"these centers were destroyed or eroded"*. For instance, the First World War destroyed the illusion of steady material progress; the Holocaust destroyed the notion of Europe as the source and centre of human civilization. Scientific discoveries – such as the way the notion of relativity destroyed the ideas of time and space as fixed and central absolutes. Then there were intellectual and artistic movements like modernism in the arts which in the first thirty years of the century rejected such central absolutes as harmony in music, chronological sequence in narrative, and the representation of the visual world in art. This 'decentering' of structure, of the 'transcendental signified' and of the sovereign subject, Derrida suggests – naming his sources of inspiration – can be found in the Nietzchean critique of metaphysics, and especially of the concepts of Being and Truth, in the Freudian critique of self-presence, as he says, *"a critique of consciousness, of the subject, of self-identity, and of the self-proximity or self-possession"*, and more radically in the Heideggerean destruction of metaphysics, *"of the determination of Being as Presence"*.

Derrida argues that all these attempts at 'decentering' were however, *"trapped in a sort of circle"*. Structuralism, which in his day was taken as a profound questioning of traditional Western thought, is taken by Derrida to be in support of just those ways of thought. This is true, according to deconstructive thought, for almost all critique of Western thought that arises from within western thought: it would inevitably be bound up with that which it questions – *"We have no language-no syntax and no lexicon-which is alien to this history; we cannot utter a single destructive proposition which has not already slipped into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest."* Semiotics and Phenomenology are similarly compromised. Semiotics stresses the fundamental connection of language to speech in a way that it undermines its insistence on the inherently arbitrary nature of sign. Phenomenology rejects metaphysical truths in the favor of phenomena and appearance, only to insist for truth to be discovered in human consciousness and lived experience. To an extent Derrida seems to see this as inevitable, *"There is no sense in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to attack metaphysics"*; however, the awareness

of this process is important for him – *"Here it is a question of a critical relationship to the language of the human sciences and a question of a critical responsibility of the discourse. It is a question of putting expressly and systematically the problem of a discourse which borrows from a heritage the resources necessary of that heritage itself."* It is important to note that Derrida does not assert the possibility of thinking outside such terms; any attempt to undo a particular concept is likely to become caught up in the terms which the concept depends on. For instance: if we try to undo the centering concept of 'consciousness' by asserting the disruptive counterforce of the 'unconscious', we are in danger of introducing a new center. All we can do is refuse to allow either pole in a system to become the center and guarantor of presence.

In validate this argument, Derrida takes up the example of Saussure's description of sign. In Saussure, the 'metaphysics of presence' is affirmed by his insistence on the fact that a sign has two components – the signifier and the signified, the signified which the mental and psychological. This would imply that the meaning of a sign is present to the speaker when he uses in, in defiance of the fact that meaning is constituted by a system of differences. That is also why Saussure insists on the primacy of speaking. As soon as language is written down, a distance between the subject and his words is created, causing meaning to become unanchored. Derrida however critiques this 'phonocentrism' and argues that the distance between the subject and his words exist in any case, even while speaking – that the meaning of sign is always unanchored. Sign has no innate or transcendental truth. Thus, the signified never has any immediate self-present meaning. It is itself only a sign that derives its meaning from other signs. Hence a signified can be a signifier and vice versa. Such a viewpoint entails that sign thus be stripped off its signified component. Meaning is never present at face-value; we cannot escape the process of interpretation. While Saussure still sees language as a closed system where every word has its place and consequently its meaning, Derrida wants to argue for language as an open system. In denying the metaphysics of presence the distances between inside and outside are also problematized. There is no place outside of language from where meaning can be generated.

Derrida next considers the theme of decentering with respect to French structuralist Levi Strauss's ethnology. Ethnology too demonstrates how although it sets out as a denouncement of Eurocentrism, its practices and methodologies get premised on ethnocentricism in its study and research of the 'Other' – *"the ethnologist accepts into his discourse the premises of ethnocentrism at the very moment when he is employed in denouncing them This necessity is irreducible; it is not a historical contingency"*. Derrida uses the classical debate on the opposition between nature and culture with respect to Levi Strauss's work. In his work, *Elementary Structures*, Strauss starts with the working definition of nature as the universal and spontaneous, not belonging to any other culture or any determinate norm. Culture, on the other hand, depends on a system of *norms* regulating society and is therefore capable of *varying* from one social structure to another. But Strauss encountered a 'scandal' challenging this binary opposition – incest prohibition. It is natural in the sense that is it almost universally present across most communities and hence is natural. However, it is also a prohibition, which makes it a part of the system of norms and customs and thereby cultural. Derrida argues that this disputation of Strauss's theory is not really a scandal, as it the pre-assumed binary opposition that makes it a scandal, the system which sanctions the difference between nature and culture. To quote him, *"It could perhaps be said that the whole of philosophical conceptualization, systematically relating itself to the nature/culture opposition, is designed to leave in the domain of the unthinkable the very thing that makes this conceptualization possible: the origin of the prohibition of incest."*

This leads Derrida to his theory of the bricoleur inspired from Levi Strauss. He argues that it is very difficult to arrive at a conceptual position "outside of philosophy", to not be absorbed to some extent into the very theory that one seeks to critique. He therefore insists on Strauss's idea of a *bricolage*, *"the necessity of borrowing one's concept from the text of a heritage which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that every discourse is bricoleur."* It is thereby important to use these *'tools at hand'* through intricate mechanisms and networks of subversion. For instance, although Strauss discovered the scandal, he continued to use sometimes the binary opposition of nature and culture as a methodological tool and to preserve as an instrument that those truth value he criticizes, *"The opposition between nature and culture which I have previously insisted on seems today to offer a value which is above all methodological."* Strauss discusses bricolage not only as an intellectual exercise, but also as *"mythopoetical activity"*. He attempts to work out a structured study of myths, but realizes this is not a possibility, and instead creates what he calls his own myth of the mythologies, a 'third order code'. Derrida points out how his 'reference myth' of the Bororo myth, does not hold in terms of its functionality as a reference, as this choice becomes arbitrary and also instead of being dependent on typical character, it derives from irregularity and hence concludes, "that violence which consists in centering a language which is describing an acentric structure must be avoided".

Derrida still building on Strauss's work, introduces the concept of totalization – *"Totalization is…. at one time as useless, at another time as impossible"*. In traditional conceptualization, totalization cannot happen as there is always too much one can say and even more that exists which needs to be talked/written about. However, Derrida argues that non-totalization needs to conceptualized not the basis of finitude of discourse incapable of mastering an infinite richness, but along the concept of free-play – "If totalization no longer has any meaning, it is not because the infinity of a field cannot be covered by a finite glance or a finite discourse, but because the nature of the field-that is, language and a finite language-excludes totalization." It is finite language which excludes totalization as language is made up of infinite signifier and signified functioning inter-changeably and arbitrarily, thereby opening up possibilities for infinite play and substitution. The field of language is limiting, however, there cannot be a finite discourse limiting that field.

Derrida explains the possibility of this free play through the concept of "supplementality" – *"this movement of the free play, permitted by the lack, the absence of a center or origin, is the movement of supplementarily. One cannot determine the center, the sign which supplements it, which takes its place in its absence-because this sign adds itself, occurs in addition, over and above, comes as a supplement"*. Supplementality is thus involves infinite substitutions of the centre which is an absence which leads to the movement of play. This becomes possible because of the lack in the signified. There is always an overabundance of the signifier to the signified. So a supplement would hence be an addition to what the signified means for already. Derrida also introduces the concept of how this meaning is always deferred (difference), how signifier and signified are inter-changeable in a complex network of free-play.

This concept of free-play Derrida believes also stands in tension with history. Although history was thought as a critique of the philosophy of presence, as a kind of shift; it has paradoxically become complicitous *"with a teleological and eschatological metaphysics."* Free-play also stands in conflict with presence. Play is disruption of presence. Free play is always interplay of presence and absence. However, Derrida argues that a radical approach

would not be the taking of presence or absence as ground for play. Instead the possibility of play should be the premise for presence or absence.

Derrida concludes this seminal work which is often regarded as the post-structuralist manifesto with the hope that we proceed towards an *"interpretation of interpretation"* where one *"is no longer turned towards the origin, affirms freeplay and tries to pass beyond man and humanism"*. He says that we need to borrow Nietzsche's idea of affirmation to stop seeing play as limiting and negative. Nietzsche pronouncement "God is dead" need not be read as a destruction of a cohesive structure, but can be seen as a chance that opens up a possibility of diverse plurality and multiplicity.

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UNIT –IV – Literary Theory and Criticism –SHS5009

I. Introduction

Modernism and postmodernism are two literary movements that took place in the late 19th and 20th century. Modernism is the deliberate break from the traditional form of poetry and prose that took place in the late 19th and early 20th century. Postmodernism, a movement that began in the mid 20th century, is often described as a reaction against modernism. The main difference between modernism and postmodernism is that modernism is characterized by the radical break from the traditional forms of prose and verse whereas postmodernism is characterized by the self-conscious use of earlier styles and conventions.

Modernism

Modernism is a movement in literature that took place during late 19th and early 20th centuries, mainly in North America and Europe. Modernism marks a strong and deliberate break from the traditional styles of prose and poetry. The horrors of the First World War and the changing ideas about reality developed by prominent figures such as Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, etc. illustrated the need for the prevailing assumptions about the society to be reassessed.

Modernists experimented with new forms and styles. Irony, satire, stream-of-consciousness, interior monologue, use of multiple points-of-view, and comparison were popular literary techniques in the modernist literature. Championship of the individual and celebration of inner strength, alienation, loss, and despair were common themes of the movement. The idea of reality underwent a major change during this movement. The reality was seen as a constructed fiction since modernists believed that the reality is created in the act of perceiving it; basically, they believed that the world is what we say it is.

D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Wolf, James Joyce, W.B Yeast, Sylvia Plath, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway are some notable modernist authors. James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* are some notable literary works that epitomize modernism.

Modernism is an aesthetic ideology

1. *Form follows function.*
   Modernists rejected the stylistic anarchy and eclecticism of the victorian period on the grounds that a new age of machines and technology had been borne. They argued that it was essential to create a new style, a modern style based on Form follows function and the dictates of new materials, machines and techniques.

2. *Reject the past*
   Since modernists believed that a new age had dawned- the modern age, they insisted on a complete break with the past.

3. *Simplicity of style*
   Modernists rejected decoration and ornament on the grounds that they were a residue of primitivism and superfluous. They preferred geometric to organic forms. They espoused the values of simplicity, clarity, uniformity, purity, order and rationality.

4. *Universalism is preferred to localism*
   Modernists rejected national, regional and vernacular (native or indigenous) styles and favored the "International style" as the tenets of modernism were universally applicable.

5. *Art for the "brave new world"*
   Work was produced which was inspired by socialist ideals, to improve the human condition by imposing solutions which did not always reflect the wishes of the masses or popular taste. (biggest disasters: public housing blocks) Modernists attempted to develop the spheres of science, morality and art "according to their inner logic"

Postmodernism

Postmodernism was a reaction against modernism, brought about by the disillusionment followed by the Second world war. Postmodernism is characterized by the deliberate use of earlier styles and conventions, a mixing of different artistic styles and media, and a general distrust of theories. It can be seen as a radical break from modernism when we look at some unique features of postmodernism. Some of these features include,

Irony and parody: Postmodernism works are often characterized by irony and satire. They demonstrate playful, mischievous vibe and a love of satirical humor.

Pastiche: Copying ideas and styles from various authors and combining them to make a new style.
Metafiction: Making the readers aware that of the fictional nature of the text they are reading.
Intertextuality: Acknowledging other texts and referring to them in a text.
Faction: Mixing of actual events and fictional events without mentioning what is real and what is fictional.

Paranoia: The distrust in the system and even the distrust of the self.
Some notable writers in postmodernism include Vladimir Nabokov, Umberto Eco, John Hawkes, Richard Kalich, Giannina Braschi, Kurt Vonnegut, William Gaddis, John Barth, Jean Rhys, Donald Barthelme, E.L. Doctorow, Don DeLillo, Ana Lydia Vega, Jachym Topol and Paul Auster.

Features of post-modernism

1. *Plurality of styles*
   The modernist Idea that each age only has one style is rejected in favour of the idea that a plurality of styles exists. Eclecticism, hybrid styles become fashionable. No single style appears to be dominant.

2. *Retro style*
   History and tradition (including the history of modernism) become believable again-hence "retro style" via the use of quotations and the technique of collage, involving recycling, parodies and pastiches of old styles.

3. *Re-validation of the ornament*
   Ornament and decoration become acceptable again

4. *Complexity and contradiction*

"Complexity and contradiction" is the title of a little book by Robert Ventury. Complexity, contradiction and ambiguity aare the values which replace the modernist values of simplicity, purity and rationality.
Mixtures of high and low culture, fine and commercial art styles are encouraged as a way of producing buildings capable of producing multi-layered readings appealing to audiences of different levels of sophistication and knowledge.

5. *Concern with "language"*
   Post-modernists are concerned with meaning-that is, they treat architecture and design as 'languages' which can be used to construct all kinds of different statements.

6. *Inter-textuality*
   The basic characteristic of art: Inter-textuality is heightened in post-modernism. Inter-textuality is a term which indicates that every literary text or work of art relates to or alludes to, or comments upon (either implicitly or explicitly) various other texts or works. Sub issues associated with post-modernism Such sub- issues are: feminism, post-colonialism, homosexuality, Gay culture, AIDS, homelessnes, grunge, new technologies, the question of the body and a myriad of other issues. definitions of words commonly used.

Difference between Modernism and Postmodernism

Definition

Modernism is a late 19th century and early 20th-century style, or movement that aims to depart significantly from classical and traditional forms.
Postmodernism is a late 20th-century style and concept which represents a departure from modernism and is characterized by the deliberate use of earlier styles and conventions, a mixing of different styles and forms, and a general distrust of theories.

Time Frame
Modernism was prevalent from late 19th century and early 20th-century style.
Postmodernism was prevalent from the mid-twentieth century.

War

Modernism was influenced by first world war.
Postmodernism was influenced by the second world war.

Rational and Logical Thinking

Modernism was based on using rational and logical means to gain knowledge since it rejected realism.
Postmodernism was based on an unscientific, irrational thought process, and it rejected logical thinking.

Earlier Styles
Postmodernism deliberately uses a mixture of conventional styles.

Fredric Jameson 1934-American critic and editor is widely recognized as being among the most influential Marxist literary theorists in America. As such, he is credited with having

introduced much European thinking to American academia. A proponent of dialectical criticism, Jameson continually impresses his peers with the breadth and variety of his fields of reference. Jameson analyzes literature, seemingly not for its own sake, but to uncover its social and political underpinnings. As an interpreter of both modern and postmodern culture, he applies a rethinking of Marxism to his work. Jameson's unique brand of Marxist literary theory, however, is firmly grounded in a belief in the importance of history.

II. The problem of periodization and the cultural dominant

Jameson believed that, according to his two causes that each movement or period is either a reaction against or dependent upon the previous. ie postmodernism is a reaction against modernism. Therefore high modernism is catalyst for postmodernism. The concept of postmodernism immediately raises the issue of periodization, entailed by the prefix "post-" assigned to the time of modernism. When did modernism begin and when did it end? Is it possible to set clear temporal boundaries between modernism and postmodernism? Jameson believes that it is possible to speak of cultural modes with in a defined timeline. Nevertheless, he restricts his periodization of postmodernism to the unbinding notion of cultural dominant which has a degree of flexibility which still allows for other forms of cultural production to coexist alongside it.

In the notion of cultural dominant Jameson stays true to the Marxist tradition of tying culture with the political and economical state of society. This stance holds that the socio-economical structure of a society is reflected in a society's cultural forms.

Jamson relies on the work of Ernest Mandel that divided capitalism into three distinct periods which coincide with three stages of technological development: industrialized manufacturing of steam engines starting from the mid 19th century, the production of electricity and internal combustion engines since the late 90's of the 19th century and the production of electronic and nuclear devices since the 1940's. these three technological developments match three stages in the evolution of capitalism: the market economy stage which was limited to the boarders of the nation state, the monopoly or imperialism stage in which courtiers expanded their markets to other regions and the current phase of late capitalism in which borders are no longer relevant. Jameson proceeds to match these stages of capitalism with three stages of cultural production, the first stage with realism, the second with modernism and the current third one with our present day postmodernism.

Postmodernism according to Jameson is therefore a cultural form which has developed in the wake of the socio-economical order of present day capitalism. Again, postmodernism in Jameson's view is not an all- encompassing trend but rather a cultural dominant that affects all cultural productions. This approach accounts for the existence of other cultural modes of production (thus protecting Jameson from criticism) while still enabling to treatment of our time as postmodern. Other types of art, literature and architecture which are not wholly postmodern are still produced nowadays, but nevertheless postmodernism is the field force, the state of culture, through which cultural urges of very different types have to go. No one today is free from the influence, perhaps even rein, of postmodernism.

In postmodern “death of the subject” indicates how this death is related to contemporary “corporate capitalism”. In the classic age of competitive capitalism in the heyday of the nuclear family and the emergence of the bourgeoisie the hegemonic social class , there was

individualism, as individual subjects.

In the postindustrial position, not only is the bourgeoisie and individual subject a thing of the past, it was always a myth to begin with. It was merely a philosophical and cultural mystification to persuade people that they had individuality.

FREDRIC JAMESON builds on the work of previous theorists in his understanding of ideology. He is particularly influenced by Jacques Lacan and those post-Marxist theorists who have made use of Lacan's distinction between reality and "the Real" in order to understand ideology (Louis Althusser, Chantalle Mouffe, and Ernesto Laclau). (See the Lacan module on the structure of the psyche.) At one point, Jameson quotes Althusser's Lacanian definition of ideology: "the representation of the subject's Imaginary relationship to his or her Real conditions of existence" (Postmodernism 51). Those "Real conditions of existence" remain, by definition, outside of language. History therefore functions for Jameson as an "absent cause," insofar as, in its totality, it remains inexpressible; however, it nonetheless does exist as that which drives real antagonisms in the present (for example, between social classes). We may not be able to get out of ideological contradiction altogether; however, Jameson asserts the importance of attempting, nonetheless, to acknowledge the real antagonisms that are, in fact, driving our fantasy constructions.

Jameson also makes it clear that there is not one ideological dominant in any period. In this, Jameson follows Raymond Williams' useful distinctions among "residual" ideological formations (ideologies that have been mostly superceded but still circulate in various ways); "emergent" ideological formations (new ideologies that are in the process of establishing their influence); and "dominant" ideological formations (those ideologies supported by what Louis Althusser terms "ideological state apparatuses"; e.g. schools, government, the police, and the military). Jameson insists on the value of such a model because "If we do not achieve some general sense of a cultural dominant, then we fall back into a view of present history as sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of distinct forces whose effectivity is undecidable" (Postmodernism 6).

By determining the dominant of our age in his book, Postmodernism, Jameson hopes to provide his reader with a "cognitive map" of the present, which then can make possible effective and beneficial political change. The problem with our current postmodern age, according to Jameson, is that "the prodigious new expansion of multinational capital ends up penetrating and colonizing those very precapitalist enclaves (Nature and the Unconscious) which offered extraterritorial and Archimedean footholds for critical effectivity" (Postmodernism 49). Any effort to contest dominant ideology threatens to be reabsorbed by capital, so that "even overtly political interventions like those of The Clash are all somehow secretly disarmed and reabsorbed by a system of which they themselves might well be considered a part, since they can achieve no distance from it" (Postmodernism 49). Given such a situation, Jameson argues that what is needed is a "cognitive map" of the present, one that reinjects an understanding of the present's real historicity. Jameson compares the situation of the individual in postmodern late capitalist society to the experience of being in a postmodern urban landscape: "In a classic work, The Image of the City, Kevin Lynch taught us that the alienated city is above all a space in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves: grids such as those of Jersey City, in which none of the traditional markers (monuments, nodes, natural boundaries, built perspectives) obtain, are the most obvious examples" (Postmodernism 49). The notion of a "cognitive map" enables "a situational representation on

the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as a whole" (Postmodernism 51).
Jameson expands this concept of cognitive mapping to ideological critique, suggesting that his task is to make sense of our place in the global system: "The political form of postmodernism, if there ever is any, will have as its vocation the invention and projection of a global cognitive mapping, on a social as well as a spatial scale" (Postmodernism 54).

One "cognitive map" Jameson for example turns to is Algirdas Greimas' semiotic square, which he calls "a virtual map of conceptual closure, or better still, of the closure of ideology itself, that is, as a mechanism, which, while seeming to generate a rich variety of possible concepts and positions, remains in fact locked into some initial aporia or double bind that it cannot transform from the inside by its own means" ("Foreword" xv). Using Greimas' semiotic square, Jameson seeks to find the dominant ideological contradictions of a given text or cultural work. (For more on the semiotic square, see the Greimas module on the semiotic square.)

As Jameson explains in Postmodernism (1991), the term "late capitalism" originated with the Frankfurt School (Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, etc.) and refers to the form of capitalism that came to the fore in the modernist period and now dominates our own postmodern culture. (On postmodernism, see my control..., and (2) the interpenetration of government and big business ('state capitalism') such that Nazism and the New Deal are related systems. (xviii)

As Jameson explains, the term "late capitalism" now has "very different overtones from these" (xviii); indeed, Jameson dates the emergence of "late capitalism" in the 1950s, so that late capitalism for Jameson is ultimately coincident with and even synonymous with postmodernism: "the economic preparation of postmodernism or late capitalism began in the 1950s, after the wartime shortages of consumer goods and spare parts had been made up, and new products and new technologies (not least those of the media) could be pioneered" (Postmodernism xx). In turn, the psychic break that made possible the cultural (rather than merely economic) emergence of late-capitalist sensibilities occurred, according to Jameson, in the 1960s. Finally, the 1970s allowed the economic and the cultural side of postmodern late capitalism to come together: the economic system and the cultural "structure of feeling" "somehow crystallized in the great shock of the crises of 1971 (the oil crisis, the end of the international gold standard, for all intents and purposes the end of the great wave of 'wars of national liberation' and the beginning of the end of traditional communism)" (Postmodernism xx-xxi). In general, Jameson understands "late capitalism" as the pervasive condition of our own age, a condition that speaks both to economic and cultural structures: "What 'late' generally conveys is... the sense that something has changed, that things are different, that we have gone through a transformation of the life world which is somehow decisive but incomparable with the older convulsions of modernization and industrialization, less perceptible and dramatic, somehow, but more permanent precisely because more thoroughgoing and all-pervasive" (Postmodernism xxi). The newly emergent social order he is referring to is late capitalism or the postindustrial consumer society, the society of the media.

According to Jameson, the new elements that postmodernism adds to the Frankfurt School's version of **late capitalism** include:

1) "New forms of business organization (multinationals, transnationals) beyond the monopoly stage" (Postmodernism xviii-xix). Lenin's concept of the "monopoly stage" of

capitalism now expands out beyond any national border.

2) An internationalization of business beyond the older imperial model; in the new order of capital, multinational corporations are not tied to any one country but represent a form of power and influence greater than any one nation. That internationalization also applies to the division of labor, making possible the continued exploitation of workers from poor countries in support of multinational capital. Jameson refers to "the flight of production to advanced Third World areas, along with all the more familiar social consequences, including the crisis of traditional labor, the emergence of yuppies, and gentrification on a now-global scale" (Postmodernism xix).

3) "A vertiginous new dynamic in international banking and the stock exchanges (including the enormous Second and Third World debt)" (Postmodernism xix). Through such a banking structure, the First World's multinational corporations maintain their control over the world market.

4) "New forms of media interrelationship" (Postmodernism xix). The media constitutes one of the more influential new products of late capitalism (print, internet, television, film) and a new means for the capitalist take-over of our lives. Through the mediatization of culture, we become increasingly reliant on the media's version of our reality, a version of reality that is filled predominantly with capitalist values.

5) "Computers and automation" (Postmodernism xix). Advances in computer automation have allowed for an unprecedented level of mass production, leading to ever greater profit-margins for multinational corporations.

6) Planned obsolescence. As Jameson puts it, "the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to airplanes), at ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation" (Postmodernism

7) American military domination. As Jameson writes in Postmodernism, "this whole global, yet American, postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world: in this sense, as throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood, torture, death, and terror" (5).Some synonyms for "late capitalism" include "'multinational capitalism, 'spectacle or image society,' 'media capitalism,' 'the world system,' even 'postmodernism' itself" (*Postmodernism* xviii). Jameson however rejects the synonym "postindustrial society" because that term suggests that what we are seeing is a radical break from the forms of capital that existed in the nineteenth century (and thus, by implication, a break from Karl Marx's understanding of capital). Jameson is more interested in perceiving a continuity from earlier forms of industrial society (even as he acknowledges the differences) and in affirming the continuing relevance of Marx's theories.

III. Feminism and Critical Theory (1985)

Gayatri Chakravorty-Spivak is one of the most influential figures in contemporary critical theory. She is perhaps the best known for her overtly political use of contemporary cultural and critical theories to challenge the legacy of colonialism on the way we read

and think about literature and culture. She has challenged disciplinary conventions of literary criticism and academic philosophy by focusing on the cultural texts of those people who are often marginalized by dominant Western culture: the new immigrant, the working class, women and postcolonial subject. By championing the voices and texts of such minority groups, she has also challenged some of the dominant ideas of the contemporary era.

Can the Subaltern Speak? is considered a founding text of postcolonialism. Spivak is also known for her translation of Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology*. This translation brought her to prominence. After this she carried out a series of historical studies and literary critiques of imperialism and feminism. She has often referred to herself as a ―Marxist, Feminist and Deconstructionist. Her ordering ethic- political concern has been the tendency of institutional and cultural discourses/ practices to exclude and marginalize the subaltern, especially subaltern women.This selection is a rewritten and expanded version of a talk entitled "Feminism and Critical Theory" (1978) and of the essay "Three Feminist Readings: McCullers, Drabble, Habermas" (1979). Here Spivak aims primarily at reaching a United States feminist audience, which was in 1985 still relatively unfamiliar and often uncomfortable with abstract theoretical writing. Hence she strives for clarity of expression without oversimplification, once again introducing deconstructive reading strategies, this time directed toward the texts of Marx, Freud, and Margaret Drabble.

In the first section, based on the 1978 talk, Spivak demonstrates that Marx's theory of the alienation of the worker from the product of his labor is based on inadequate evidence, because it does not take into account the instance of the womb as workshop, and the very different forms of alienation of product from labor represented by childbirth and by women's domestic work as unpaid, and thus unvalued, labor.
Freud's account of penis envy as the chief determinant of femininity similarly avoids confronting the womb as a place of production, or the possibility of womb envy as penis envy's interactive complement. Thus Spivak proposes that feminists use the texts of Marx and Freud by reading them "beyond" themselves, producing a new "common currency" with which to understand society.

Spivak addresses in the second section of the essay, the limitations of the first section. Since producing the earlier readings of Marx and Freud, she has recognized the crucial importance of race and the history of colonialism to an international feminist project. These concerns shape her reading of Drabble's novel The Waterfall (1971), and inform her exposure of the complicities of First World feminism with the heightened exploitation of Third World women's labor brought about by multinational corporations in the microelectronics industry. Reading the world and our own positions in it demands the skills and attention to textuality required of literary critics in deconstruction's wake.

Feminism and Critical Theory

What has been the itinerary of my thinking during the past few years about the relationships among feminism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, and deconstruction? The issues have been of interest to many people, and the configurations of these fields continue to change. I will not engage here with the various lines of developments have been inscribed in my own work. The first section of the essays is a version of a talk I gave several years ago. The second section represents a reflection on that earlier work. The third section is an intermediate moment. The fourth section inhabits something like the present.

I cannot speak of feminism in general. I speak of what I do as a woman within literary criticism. My own definition of a woman is very simple: it rests on the word "man" as used in the texts that provide the foundation for the corner of the literary criticism establishment that I inhabit. You might say at this point, defining the word "woman" as resting on the word "man" is a reactionary position. Should I not carve out an independent definition for myself as a woman? Here I must repeat some deconstructive lessons learned over the past decade that I often repeat. One, no rigorous definition of anything is ultimately possible, so that if one wants to, one could go on deconstructing the opposition between man and woman, and finally show that it is a binary opposition that displaces itself.1 Therefore, "as a deconstructivist," I cannot recommend that kind of dichotomy at all, yet, I feel that definitions are necessary in order to keep us going, to allow us to take a stand. The only way that I can see myself making definitions is in a provisional and polemical one: I construct my definition as a woman not in terms of a woman's putative essence but in terms of words currently in use. "Man" is such a word in common usage. Not a word, but the word. I therefore fix my glance upon this word even as I question the enterprise of redefining the premises of any theory.

In the broadest possible sense, most critical theory in my part of the academic establishment (Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, the last Barthes) sees the text as that area of the discourse of the human sciences—in the United States called the humanities—in which the problem of the discourse of the human sciences is made available. Whereas in other kinds of discourses there is a move toward the final truth of a situation, literature, even within this argument, displays that the truth of a human situation is the itinerary of not being able to find it. In the general discourse of the humanities, there is a sort of search for solutions, whereas in literary discourse there is a playing out of the problem as the solution.

The problem of human discourse is generally seen as articulating itself in the play of, in terms of, three shifting "concepts": language, world, and consciousness. We know no world that is not organized as a language— languages that we cannot possess, for we are operated by those languages as well. The category of language, then, embraces the categories of world and consciousness even as it is determined by them. Strictly speaking, since we are questioning the human being's control over the production of language, the figure that will serve us better is writing, for there the absence of the producer and receiver is taken for granted. A safe figure, seemingly outside of the language-(speech)-writing opposition, is the text—a weave of knowing and not-knowing which is what knowing is. (This organizing principle— language, writing, or text—might itself be a way of holding at bay a randomness incongruent with consciousness.)

The theoreticians of textuality read Marx as a theorist of the world (history and society), as a text of the forces of labor and production-circulation-distribution; and Freud as a theorist of the self, as a text of consciousness and the unconscious. Human textuality can be seen not only as world and self, as the representation of a world in terms of a self at play with other selves and generating this representation, but also in the world and self, all implicated in an "intertextuality." It should be clear from this that such a concept of textuality does not mean a reduction of the world to linguistic texts, books, or a tradition composed of books, criticism in the narrow sense, and teaching.

I am not, then, speaking about Marxist or psychoanalytic criticism as a reductive enterprise which diagnoses the scenario in every book in terms of where it would fit into a Marxist or a psychoanalytical canon. To my way of thinking, the discourse of the literary text is part of a

general configuration of textuality, a placing forth of the solution as the unavailability of a unified solution to a unified or homogeneous, generating or receiving, consciousness. This unavailability is often not confronted. It is dodged and the problem apparently solved, in terms perhaps of unifying concepts like "man," the universal contours of a sex-, race-, class-transcendent consciousness as the generating, generated, and receiving consciousness of the text.

I could have broached Marx and Freud more easily. I wanted to say all of the above because, in general, reductive methods are implicit in both of them, Marx and Freud do also seem to argue in terms of a mode of evidence and demonstration. They seem to bring forth evidence from the world of man or man's self, and thus prove certain kinds of truths about the world and self. I would risk saying that their descriptions of world and self are based on inadequate evidence. In terms of this conviction, I would like to fix upon the idea of alienation in Marx, and the idea of normality and health in Freud.

One way of moving into Marx is in terms of use-value, exchange-value, and surplus-value. Marx's notion of use-value is that which pertains to a thing as it is directly consumed by an agent. Its exchange-value (after the emergence of the money form) does not relate to its direct fulfillment of a specific need, but is rather assessed in terms of what it can be exchanged for in either labor-power or money. In this process of abstracting through exchange, by making the worker work longer than necessary for subsistence wages or by means of labor-saving machinery, the buyer of the laborer's work gets more (in exchange) than the worker needs for his subsistence while he makes the thing.2 This "more-worth" (literally, in German, Mehrwert) is surplus-value.

One could indefinitely allegorize the relationship of woman within this particular triad—use, exchange, and surplus—by suggesting that woman in the traditional social situation produces more than she is getting in terms of her subsistence, and therefore is a continual source of the production of surpluses, for the man who owns her, or by the man for the capitalist who owns his labor-power. Apart from the fact that the mode of production of housework is not, strictly speaking, capitalist, such an analysis is paradoxical.
The contemporary woman, when she seeks financial compensation for housework, seeks the abstraction of use-value into exchange-value. But the situation of the domestic workplace is not one of "pure exchange." The Marxian exigency would make us ask at least two questions: What is the use-value of a woman's unremunerated work for husband or family? Is the willing insertion into the wage structure a curse or a blessing? How should we fight the idea, universally accepted by men, that wages are the only mark of value-producing work? (Not, I think, through the slogan "Housework is beautiful.") What would be the implications of denying women entry into the capitalist economy? Radical feminism can here learn a cautionary lesson from Lenin's capitulation to capitalism.

These are important questions, but they do not necessarily broaden Marxist theory from a feminist point of view. For our purpose, the idea of externalization (EntauBerung/VerduBerung) or alienation (Entfremdung) is of greater interest. Within the capitalist system, the labor process externalizes itself and the worker as commodities. Upon this idea of the resultant fracturing of the human being's relationship to himself and his work as commodities rests the ethical charge of Marx's argument.3

I would argue that, in terms of the physical, emotional, legal, custodial, and sentimental situation of the woman's product, the child, this picture of the human relationship to

production, labor, and property is incomplete. The possession of a tangible place of production, the womb, situates women as agents in any theory of production. Marx's dialectics of externalization-alienation followed by fetish formation are inadequate because he has not taken into account one fundamental human relationship to a product and labor.4

This does not mean that, if the Marxian account of externalizationalienation were rewritten from a feminist perspective, the special interest of childbirth, childbearing, and childrearing would be inserted. It seems that the entire problematic of sexuality, rather than remaining caught within arguments about overt sociosexual politics, would be fully broached.

In both so-called matrilineal and patrilineal societies the legal possession of the child is an inalienable fact of the property right of the man who "produces" the child.6 In terms of this legal possession, the common custodial definition, that women are much more nurturing of children, might be seen as a dissimulated reactionary gesture. The man retains legal property rights over the product of the woman's body. On each separate occasion, the custodial decision—which parent will have custody?—is a sentimental questioning of man's right. The current struggle over abortion rights has foregrounded this unacknowledged agenda.

In order not simply to make an exception to man's legal right, or to add a footnote from a feminist works on an analogy with use-value, exchange value, and surplus-value relationships. Marx's own writings on women and children seek to alleviate their condition in terms of a desexualized labor force.7 If there were the kind of rewriting that I am proposing, it would be harder to sketch out the rules of economy and social ethics; in fact, one would see that in Marx there is a moment of major transgression where rules for humanity and criticism of societies are based on inadequate evidence. Marx's texts, including Capital, presuppose an ethical theory: alienation of labor must be undone because it undermines the agency of the subject in his work and his property. I would like to suggest that if the nature and history of alienation, labor, and the production of property are reexamined in terms of women's work and childbirth, it can lead us to a reading of Marx beyond Marx.

One way of moving into Freud is in terms of his notion of the nature of pain as the deferment of pleasure, especially the later Freud who wrote Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud's spectacular mechanics of imagined, anticipated, and avoided pain write the subject's history and theory, and constantly broach the never-quite-defined concept of normality: anxiety, inhibition, paranoia, schizophrenia, melancholy, mourning. I would like to suggest that in the womb, a tangible place of production, there is the possibility that pain exists within the concepts of normality and productivity. (This is not to sentimentalize the pain of childbirth.) The problematizing of the phenomenal identity of pleasure and unpleasure should not be operated only through the logic of repression. The opposition pleasure-pain is questioned in the physiological "normality" of woman.

If one were to look at the never-quite-defined concepts of normality and health that run through and are submerged in Freud's texts, one would have to redefine the nature of pain. Pain does not operate in the same way in men and women. Once again, this deconstructive move will make it much harder to devise the rules.

Freud's best-known determinant of femininity is penis envy. The most crucial text of this argument is the essay on femininity in New Introductory Lectures.9 There, Freud begins to argue that the little girl is a little boy before she discovers sex. As Luce Irigaray and others have shown, Freud does not take the womb into account.10 Our mood, since we carry the

womb as well as being carried by it, should be corrective.11 We might chart the itinerary of womb envy in the production of a theory of consciousness: the idea of the womb as a place of production is avoided both in Marx and in Freud. (There are exceptions to such a generalization, especially among American neo-Freudians such as Erich Fromm. I am speaking here about invariable presuppositions, even among such exceptions.) In Freud the genital stage is preeminently phallic, not clitoral or vaginal. This particular gap in Freud is significant. The hysteron remains the place which constitutes only the text of hysteria. Everywhere there is a non-confrontation of the idea of the womb as a workshop, except to produce a surrogate penis. Our task in rewriting the text of Freud is not so much to declare it possible to reject the idea of penis envy, but to make available the idea of a womb envy as something that interacts with the idea of penis envy to determine human sexuality and the production of society.12

These are some questions that may be asked of the Freudian and Marxist "grounds" or theoretical "bases" that operate our ideas of world and self. We might want to ignore them altogether and say that the business of literary criticism has to do with neither your gender (such a suggestion seems hopelessly dated) nor the theories of revolution or psychoanalysis. Criticism must remain resolutely neuter and practical. One should not mistake the grounds out of which the ideas of world and self are reproduced with the business of the appreciation of the literary text. If one looks closely, one will see that, whether one diagnoses the names or not, certain kinds of thoughts are presupposed by the notions of world and consciousness of the most "practical" critic. Part of the feminist enterprise might well be to provide "evidence" so that these great male texts do not become great adversaries, or models from whom we take our ideas and then revise or reassess them. These texts must be rewritten so that there is new material for the grasping of the production and determination of literature within the general production and determination of consciousness and society. After all, the people who produce literature, male and female, are also moved by general ideas of world and consciousness to which they cannot give a name.

If we work in this way, the common currency of the understanding of society will change. I think that kind of change, the coining of new money, is necessary. I certainly believe that such work is supplemented I have outlined would infiltrate the male academy and redo the terms of our understanding of the context and substance of literature as part of the human enterprise. I I .

What seems missing in these earlier remarks is the dimension of race. Today I would see my work as the developing of a reading method that is sensitive to gender, race, and class. The earlier remarks would apply indirectly to the development of class-sensitive and directly to the development of gendersensitive readings.

In the matter of race-sensitive analyses, the chief problem of American feminist criticism is its identification of racism as such with the constitution of racism in America. Thus, today I see the object of investigation to be not only the history of "Third World women" or their testimony, but also the production, through the great European theories, often by way of literature, of the colonial object. As long as American feminists understand "history" as a positivistic empiricism that scorns "theory" and therefore remains ignorant of its own, the "Third World" as its object of study will remain constituted by those hegemonic First World intellectual practices.13

My attitude toward Freud today involves a broader critique of his entire project. It is a critique not only of Freud's masculism but of nuclear-familial psychoanalytical theories of the constitution of the sexed subject. Such a critique extends to alternative scenarios to Freud that keep to the nuclear parent-child model; as it does to the offer of Greek mythical alternatives to Oedipus as the regulative type-case of the model itself; as it does to the romantic notion that an extended family, especially a community of women, would necessarily cure the ills of the nuclear family. My concern with the production of colonial discourse thus touches my critique of Freud as well as most Western feminist challenges to Freud. The extended or corporate family is a socioeconomic (indeed, on occasion political) organization which makes sexual constitution irreducibly complicit with historical and political economy.14 To learn to read that way is to understand that the literature of the world, itself accessible only to a few, is not tied by the concrete universals of a network of archetypes—a theory that was entailed by the consolidation of a political excuse—but by a textuality of material, ideological, psychosexual production. This articulation sharpens a general presupposition of my earlier remarks.

Pursuing these considerations, I proposed recently an analysis of "the discourse of the clitoris."15 The reactions to that proposal have been interesting in the context I discuss above. A certain response from American lesbian feminists can be represented by the following quotation: "In this openended definition of phallus/semination as organically omnipotent the only recourse is to name the clitoris as orgasmically phallic and to call the uterus the reproductive extension of the phallus....You must stop thinking of yourself privileged as a heterosexual woman."16 Because of its physiologistic orientation, the first part of this objection sees my naming of the clitoris as a repetition of Freud's situating of it as a "little penis." To the second part of the objection I customarily respond: "You're right, and one cannot know how far one succeeds. Yet, the effort to put First World lesbianism in its place is not necessarily reducible to pride in female heterosexuality." Other uses of my suggestion, both supportive and adverse, have also reduced the discourse of the clitoris to a physiological fantasy. In the interest of the broadening scope of my critique, I should like to reemphasize that the clitoris, even as I acknowledge and honor its irreducible physiological effect, is, in this reading, also a shorthand for women's excess in all areas of production and practice, an excess which must be brought under control to keep business going as usual.17

My attitude toward Marxism now recognizes the historical antagonism between Marxism and feminism, on both sides. Hardcore Marxism at best dismisses and at worst patronizes the importance of women's struggle. On the other hand, not only the history of European feminism in its opposition to Bolshevik and Social Democrat women, but the conflict between the suffrage movement and the union movement in this country must be taken into account. This historical problem will not be solved by saying that we need more than an analysis of capitalism to understand male dominance, or that the sexual division of labor as the primary determinant is already given in the texts of Marx. I prefer the work that sees that the "essential truth" of Marxism or feminism cannot be separated from its history. My present work relates this to the ideological development of the theory of the imagination in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. I am interested in class analysis of families as it is being practiced by, among others, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Heidi Hartmann, Nancy Hartsock, and Annette Kuhn. I am myself bent upon reading the earlier concern with the specific theme of reproductive (non)alienation seems to me today to be heavily enough touched by a nuclear-familial hystero-centrism to be open to the critique of psychoanalytic feminism that I suggest above.

On the other hand, if sexual reproduction is seen as the production of a product by an irreducibly determinate means (conjunction of semination and ovulation), in an irreducibly

determinate mode (heterogeneous combination of domestic and politico-civil economy), entailing a minimal variation of social relations, then two original Marxist categories would be put into question: use-value as the measure of communist production and absolute surplus-value as the motor of primitive (capitalist) accumulation. For the first: the child, although not a commodity, is also not produced for immediate and adequate consumption or direct exchange. For the second: the premise that the difference between a subsistence wage and laborpower's potential of production is the origin of original accumulation can only be advanced if reproduction is seen as identical with subsistence; in fact, the reproduction and maintenance of children would make heterogeneous the original calculation in terms of something like the slow displacement of value from fixed capital to commodity.18 These insights take the critique of wage-labor in unexpected directions.

When I earlier touched upon the relationship between wage theory and "women's work," I had not yet read the autonomist arguments about wage and work as best developed in the work of Antonio Negri.19 Exigencies of work and limitations of scholarship and experience permitting, I would like next to study the relationship between domestic and political economies in order to establish the subversive power of "women's work" in models for the construction of a "revolutionary subject." Negri sees this possibility in the inevitable consumerism that socialized capitalism must nurture. Commodity consumption, even as it realizes surplus-value as profit, does not itself produce the value and therefore persistently exacerbates a crisis.20 It is through reversing and displacing this tendency within consumerism, Negri suggests, that the "revolutionary subject" can be released. Mainstream English Marxists sometimes think that such an upheaval can be brought about by political interventionist teaching of literature. Some French intellectuals think this tendency is inherent in the "pagan tradition," which pluralizes the now-defunct narratives of social justice still endorsed by traditional Marxists in a postindustrial world. In contrast, I now argue as follows:

It is women's work that has continuously survived within not only the varieties of capitalism but other historical and geographical modes of production. The economic, political, ideological, and legal heterogeneity of the relationship between the definitive mode of production and race- and class differentiated women's and wives' work is abundantly recorded. Rather than the refusal to work of the freed Jamaican slaves in 1834, which is cited by Marx as the only example of zero-work, quickly recuperated by imperialist maneuvers, it is the long history of women's work which is a sustained example of zero-work: work not only outside of wage-work, but, in one way or another, "outside" of the definitive modes of production. The displacement required here is a transvaluation, an uncatastrophic implosion of the search for validation via the circuit of productivity. Rather than a miniaturized and thus controlled metaphor for civil society and the state, the power of the oikos, domestic economy, can be used as the model of the foreign body unwittingly nurtured by the polis.lx

With psychoanalytic feminism, then, an invocation of history and politics leads us back to the place of psychoanalysis in colonialism. With Marxist feminism, an invocation of the economic text foregrounds the operations of the new imperialism. The discourse of race has come to claim its importance in this way in my work.

I am still moved by the reversal-displacement morphology of deconstruction, crediting the asymmetry of the "interest" of the historical moment. Investigating the hidden ethico-political agenda of differentiations constitutive of knowledge and judgment interests me even more. It is also the deconstructive view that keeps me resisting an essentialist freezing of the concepts of gender, race, and class. I look rather at the repeated agenda of the situational production of

those concepts and our complicity in such a production. This aspect of deconstruction will not allow the establishment of a hegemonic "global theory" of feminism. Over the last few years, however, I have also begun to see that, rather than deconstruction simply opening a way for feminists, the figure and discourse of women opened the way for Derrida as well. His incipient discourse of women surfaced in Spurs (first published as "La Question du Style" in 1975), which also articulates the thematics of "interest" crucial to political deconstruction.22 This study marks his move from the critical deconstruction of phallocentrism to "affirmative" deconstruction (Derrida's phrase). It is at this point that Derrida's work seems to become less interesting for Marxism.23 The early Derrida can certainly be shown to be useful for feminist practice, but why is it that, when he writes under the sign of woman, as it were, his work becomes solipsistic and marginal? What is it in the history of that sign that allows this to happen? I will hold this question until the end of this essay.

IV.

In 1979 and 1980, concerns of race and class were beginning to invade my mind. What follows is in some sense a checklist of quotations from Margaret Drabble's The Waterfall that shows the uneasy presence of those concerns.24 Reading literature "well" is in itself a questionable good and can indeed be sometimes productive of harm and "aesthetic" apathy within its ideological framing. My suggestion is to use literature, with a feminist perspective, as a "nonexpository" theory of practice.

Drabble has a version of "the best education" in the Western world: a First Class in English from Oxbridge. The tradition of academic radicalism in England is strong. Drabble was at Cambridge when the prestigious journal New Left Review was being organized. I am not averse to a bit of simple biographical detail: I began to reread The Waterfall with these things in mind as well as the worrying thoughts about sex, race, and class.

Like many woman writers, Drabble creates an extreme situation, presumably, to answer the question, "Why does love happen?" In place of the mainstream objectification and idolization of the loved person, she situates her protagonist, Jane, in the most inaccessible privacy—at the moment of birthing, alone by choice. Lucy, her cousin, and James, Lucy's husband, take turns watching over her in the empty house as she regains her strength. The Waterfall is the story of Jane's love affair with James. In place of legalized or merely possessive ardor toward the product of his own body, Drabble gives to James the problem of relating to the birthing woman through the birth of "another man's child." Jane looks and smells dreadful. There is blood and sweat on the crumpled sheets. And yet "love" happens. Drabble slows language down excruciatingly as Jane records how, wonders why. It is possible that Drabble is taking up the challenge of feminine "passivity" and making it the tool of analytic strength. Many answers emerge. I will quote two, to show how provisional and self-suspending Jane can be:

I loved him inevitably, of necessity. Anyone could have foreseen it, given those facts: a lonely woman, in an empty world. Surely I would have loved anyone who might have shown me kindness.... But of course it's not true, it could not have been anyone else. I know that it was not inevitable: it was a miracle....What I deserved was what I had made: solitude, or a repetition of pain. What I received was grace. Grace and miracles. I don't much care for my terminology. Though at least it lacks that most disastrous concept, the concept of free will. Perhaps I could make a religion that denied free will, that placed God in his true place, arbitrary, carelessly kind, idly malicious, intermittently attentive, and himself subject, as Zeus

was, to necessity. Necessity is my God. Necessity lay with me when James did [pp. 49- 50).

And, in another place, the "opposite" answer—random contingencies:

I loved James because he was what I had never had: because he belonged to my cousin: because he was kind to his own child: because he looked unkind: because I saw his naked wrists against a striped tea towel once, seven years ago. Because he addressed me an intimate question upon a beach on Christmas Day.
Because he helped himself to a drink when I did not dare to accept the offer of one. Because he was not serious, because his parents lived in South Kensington and were mysteriously depraved. Ah, perfect love. For these reasons, was it, that I lay there, drowned was it, drowned or stranded, waiting for him, waiting to die and drown there, in the oceans of our flowing bodies, in the white sea of that strange familiar bed [p

If the argument for necessity is arrived at by slippery happenstance from thought to thought, each item on this list of contingencies has a plausibility that is far from random.

She considers the problem of making women rivals in terms of the man who possesses them. There is a peculiar agreement between Lucy and herself before the affair begins:

I wonder why people marry? Lucy continued, in a tone of such academic flatness that the topic seemed robbed of any danger. I don't know, said Jane, with equal calm So arbitrary, really, said Lucy, spreading butter on the toast. It would be nice, said Jane, to think there were reasons.... Do you think so? said Lucy. Sometimes I prefer to think we are victims. If there were a reason, said Jane, one would be all the more a victim. She paused, thought, ate a mouthful of the toast. I am wounded, therefore I bleed. I am human, therefore I suffer. Those aren't reasons you're describing, said Lucy.... And from upstairs the baby's cry reached them—thin, wailing, desperate. Hearing it, the two women looked at each other, and for some reason smiled [pp. 26-27].

This, of course, is no overt agreement, but simply a hint that the "reason" for female bonding has something to do with a baby's cry. For example, Jane records her own deliberate part in deceiving Lucy this way: "I forgot Lucy. I did not think of her—or only occasionally, lying awake at night as the baby cried, I would think of her, with pangs of irrelevant inquiry, pangs endured not by me and in me, but at a distance, pangs as sorrowful and irrelevant as another person's pain" (p. 48; italics mine).

Jane records inconclusively her gut reaction to the supposed natural connection between parent and child: "Blood is blood, and it is not good enough to say that children are for the motherly, as Brecht said, for there are many ways of unmothering a woman, or unfathering a man.... And yet, how can I deny that it gave me pleasure to see James hold her in his arms for me? The man I loved and the child to whom I had given birth" (p. 48).

The loose ending of the book also makes Jane's story an extreme case. Is this love going to last, prove itself to be "true," and bring Jane security and Jane and James happiness? Or is it resolutely "liberated," overprotesting its own impermanence, and thus falling in with the times? Neither. The melodramatic and satisfactory ending, the accident which might have killed James, does not in fact do so. It merely reveals all to Lucy, does not end the book, and reduces all to a humdrum kind of double life.

These are not bad answers; necessity if all else fails, or perhaps random contingency; an attempt not to trivialize women; blood bonds between mothers and daughters; love free of social security. The problem for a reader like me is that the entire question is carried on in what I can only see as a privileged atmosphere. I am not saying, of course, that Jane is Drabble (although that, too, is true in a complicated way). I am saying that Drabble considers the story of so privileged a woman the most worth telling. Not the well-bred lady of pulp fiction, but an impossible princess who mentions in one passing sentence toward the beginning of the book that her poems are read on the BBC.

It is not that Drabble does not want to rest her probing and sensitive fingers on the problem of class, if not race. The account of Jane's family's class prejudice is incisively told. Her father is headmaster of a public school.

There was one child I shall always remember, a small thin child...whose father, he proudly told us, was standing as Labour Candidate for a hopeless seat in an imminent General Election. My father teased him unmercifully, asking questions that the poor child could not begin to answer, making elaborate and hideous semantic jokes about the fruits of labor, throwing in familiar references to prominent Tories that were quite wasted on such...tender ears; and the poor child sat there, staring at his roast beef...turning redder and redder, and trying, pathetically, sycophantically, to smile. I hated my father at that instant [pp. 56-57].

Yet Drabble's Jane is made to share the lightest touch of her parents' prejudice. The part I have elided is a mocking reference to the child's large red ears. For her the most important issue remains sexual deprivation, sexual choice. The Waterfall, the name of a card trick, is also the name of Jane's orgasms, James's gift to her.

But perhaps Drabble is ironic when she creates so classbound and yet so analytic a Jane? It is a possibility, of course, but Jane's identification with the author of the narrative makes this doubtful. If there is irony to be generated here, it must come, as they say, from "outside the book."

Rather than imposing my irony, I attempt to find the figure of Jane as narrator helpful. Drabble manipulates her to examine the conditions of production and determination of microstructural heterosexual attitudes within her chosen enclosure. This enclosure is important because it is from here that rules come. Jane is made to realize that there are no fixed new rules in the book, not as yet. First World feminists are up against that fact, every day. This should not become an excuse but should remain a delicate responsibility: "If I need a morality, I will create one: a new ladder, a new virtue. If I need to understand what I am doing, if I cannot act without my own approbation—and I must act, I have changed, I am no longer capable of inaction—then I will invent a morality that condones me. Though by doing so, I risk condemning all that I have been" (pp. 52-53).

If the cautions of deconstruction are heeded—the contingency that the desire to "understand" and "change" are as much symptomatic as they are revolutionary—merely to fill in the void with rules will spoil the case again, for women as for human beings. We must strive moment by moment to practice a taxonomy of different forms of understanding, different forms of change, dependent perhaps upon resemblance and seeming substitutability—figuration—rather than on the self-identical category of truth:

Because it's obvious that I haven't told the truth, about myself and James. How could I? Why,

more significantly, should I?... Of the truth, I haven't told enough. I flinched at the conclusion and can even see in my hesitance a virtue: it is dishonest, it is inartistic, but it is a virtue, such discretion, in the moral world of love.... The names of qualities are interchangeable: vice, virtue: redemption, corruption: courage, weakness: and hence the confusion of abstraction, the proliferation of aphorism and paradox. In the human world, perhaps there are merely likenesses.... The qualities, they depended on the supposed true end of life Salvation, damnation.... I do not know which of these two James represented. Hysterical terms, maybe; religious terms, yet again. But then life is a serious matter, and it is not merely hysteria that acknowledges this fact: for men as well as women have been known to acknowledge it. I must make an effort to comprehend it. I will take it all to pieces. I will resolve it to parts, and then I will put it together again, I will reconstitute it in a form that I can accept, a fictitious form [pp. 46, 51, 52].

The categories by which one understands, the qualities of plus and minus, are revealing themselves as arbitrary, situational. Drabble's Jane's way out—to resolve and reconstitute life into an acceptable fictional form that need not, perhaps, worry too much about the categorical problems—seems, by itself, a classical privileging of the aesthetic, for Drabble hints at the limits of self-interpretation through a gesture that is accessible to the humanist academic. Within a fictional form, she confides that the exigencies of a narrative's unity had not allowed her to report the whole truth. She then changes from the third person to the first.

What can a literary critic do with this? Notice that the move is absurdity twice compounded, since the discourse reflecting the constraints of fiction-making goes on then to fabricate another fictive text. Notice further that the narrator who tells us about the impossibility of truth in fiction—the classic privilege of metaphor—is a metaphor as well.25

I should choose a simpler course. I should acknowledge this global dismissal of any narrative speculation about the nature of truth and then dismiss it in turn, since it might unwittingly suggest that there is somewhere a way of speaking about truth in "truthful" language, that a speaker can somewhere get rid of the structural unconscious and speak without roleplaying. Having taken note of the frame, I will thus explain the point Jane is making here and relate it to what, I suppose, the critical view above would call "the anthropomorphic world"; when one takes a rational or aesthetic distance from oneself one gives oneself up to the conveniently classifying macrostructures, a move dramatized by Drabble's third-person person who recognizes the limits of understanding and change, indeed the precarious necessity of the micro-macro opposition, yet is bound not to give up.

The risks of first-person narrative prove too much for Drabble's fictive Jane. She wants to plot her narrative in terms of the paradoxical category— "pure corrupted love"—that allows her to make a fiction rather than try, in fiction, to report on the unreliability of categories: "I want to get back to that schizoid third-person dialogue. I've one or two more sordid conditions to describe, and then I can get back there to that isolated world of pure corrupted love" (p. 130). To return us to the detached and macrostructural third- person narrative after exposing its limits could be an aesthetic allegory of deconstructive practice.

Thus Drabble fills the void of the female consciousness with meticulous and helpful articulation, though she seems thwarted in any serious presentation of the problems of race and class, and of the marginality of sex. She engages in that microstructural dystopia, the sexual situation in extremis, that begins to seem more and more a part of women's fiction. Even within those limitations, our motto cannot be Jane's "I prefer to suffer, I think," the

privatist cry of heroic liberal women; it might rather be the lesson of the scene of writing of The Waterfall; to return to the third person with its grounds mined under.

V.

It is no doubt useful to decipher women's fiction in this way for feminist students and colleagues in American academia. I am less patient with literary texts today, even those produced by women. We must of course remind ourselves, our positivist feminist colleagues in charge of creating the discipline of women's studies, and our anxious students, that essentialism is a trap. It seems more important to learn to understand that the world's women do not all relate to the privileging of essence, especially through "fiction," or "literature," in quite the same way.

In Seoul, South Korea, in March 1982, 237 women workers in a factory owned by Control Data, a Minnesota-based multinational corporation, struck over a demand for a wage raise. Six union leaders were dismissed and imprisoned. In July, the women took hostage two visiting U.S. vicepresidents, demanding reinstatement of the union leaders. Control Data's main office was willing to release the women; the Korean government was reluctant. On July 16, the Korean male workers at the factory beat up the female workers and ended the dispute. Many of the women were injured; two suffered miscarriages.

To grasp this narrative's overdeterminations (the many telescoped lines—sometimes noncoherent, often contradictory, perhaps discontinuous—that allow us to determine the reference point of a single "event" or cluster of "events") would require a complicated analysis.26 Here, too, I will give no more than a checklist of the determinants. In the earlier stages of industrial capitalism, the colonies provided the raw materials so that the colonizing countries could develop their manufacturing industrial base. Indigenous production was thus crippled or destroyed. To minimize circulation time, industrial capitalism needed to establish due process, and such civilizing instruments as railways, postal services, and a uniformly graded system of education. This, together with the labor movements in the First World and the mechanisms of the welfare state, slowly made it imperative that manufacturing itself be carried out on the soil of the Third World, where labor can make many fewer demands, and the governments are mortgaged. In the case of the telecommunications industry, which makes old machinery obsolete at a more rapid pace than it takes to absorb its value in the commodity, this is particularly practical.

The incident that I recounted above, not at all uncommon in the multinational arena, complicates our assumptions about women's entry into the age of computers and the modernization of "women in development," especially in terms of our daily theorizing and practice. It should make us confront the discontinuities and contradictions in our assumptions about women's freedom to work outside the house, and the sustaining virtues of the working-class family. The fact that these workers were women was not merely because, like those Belgian lacemakers, oriental women have small and supple fingers. It is also because they are the true army of surplus labor. No one, including their men, will agitate for an adequate wage. In a two-job family, the man saves face if the woman makes less, even for a comparable job.

Does this make Third World men more sexist than David Rockefeller? The nativist argument that says "do not question Third World mores" is of course unexamined imperialism. There is something like an answer to this vexed question, which makes problematic the ground upon

which we base our own intellectual and political activities. No one can deny the dynamism and civilizing power of socialized capital. The irreducible search for greater production of surplus-value (dissimulated as, simply, "productivity") through technological advancement; the corresponding necessity to train a consumer who will need what is produced and thus help realize surplus-value as profit; the tax breaks associated with supporting humanist ideology through "corporate philanthropy"—all conspire to "civilize." These motives do not exist on a large scale in a comprador economy like that of South Korea, which is neither the necessary recipient nor the agent of socialized capital. The surplus-value is realized elsewhere. The nuclear family does not have a transcendent ennobling power. The fact that ideology and the ideology of marriage have developed in the West since the English revolution of the seventeenth century has something like a relationship to the rise of meritocratic individualism.

These possibilities overdetermine any generalization about universal parenting based on American, Western European, or laundered anthropological speculation.

Socialized capital kills by remote control. In this case, too, the American managers watched while the South Korean men decimated their women. The managers denied charges. One remark made by a member of Control Data management, as reported in Multinational Monitor, seemed symptomatic in its self- protective cruelty: "Although 'it's true' Chae lost her baby, 'this is not the first miscarriage she's had. She's had two before this.'"27 However active in the production of civilization as a byproduct, socialized capital has not moved far from the presuppositions of a slavery mode of production. "In Roman theory, the agricultural slave was designated an instrumentum vocale, the speaking tool, one grade away from the livestock that constituted an instrumentum semi-vocale, and two from the implement which was an instrumentum mutum."2S

One of Control Data's radio commercials speaks of how its computers open the door to knowledge, at home or in the workplace, for men and women alike. The acronym of the computer system in this ad is PLATO. One might speculate that this noble name helps to dissimulate a quantitative and formula- permutational vision of knowledge as an instrument of efficiency and exploitation by surrounding it with an aura of the unique and subject-expressive wisdom at the very root of "democracy." The undoubted historical-symbolic value of the acronym PLATO shares in the effacement of class history that is the project of "civilization" as such: "the slave mode of production which underlay Athenian civilization necessarily found its most pristine ideological expression in the privileged social stratum of the city, whose intellectual heights its surplus labour in the silent depths below the polis made possible."29

Why is it, I asked above, that when Derrida writes under the sign of woman his work becomes solipsistic and marginal?

His discovery of the figure of woman is in terms of a critique of propriation—proper-ing, as in the proper name (patronymic) or property.30 Suffice it to say here that, in thus differentiating himself from the phallocentric tradition under the aegis of a(n idealized) woman who is the "sign" of the indeterminate, of that which has impropriety as its property, Derrida cannot think that the sign "woman" is indeterminate by virtue of its access to the tyranny of the text of the proper. It is this tyranny of the "proper"— in the sense of that which produces both property and proper names of the patronymic—that I have called the suppression of the clitoris, and that the news item about Control Data illustrates.31

Derrida has written a magically orchestrated book—La carte postale— on philosophy as telecommunication (Control Data's business) using an absent, unnamed, and sexually indeterminate woman (Control Data's victim) as a vehicle for the reinterpretation of the relationship between Socrates and Plato (Control Data's acronym) taking it through Freud and beyond. The determination of that book is a parable of my argument. Here deconstruction becomes complicit with an essentialist bourgeois feminism. The following paragraph appeared recently in Ms.: "Control Data is among those enlightened corporations that offer social-service leaves.... Kit Ketchum, former treasurer of Minnesota NOW, applied for and got a full year with pay to work at NOW's national office in Washington, D.C. She writes: 'I this to your employer?"32 Bourgeois feminism, because of a blindness to the multinational theater, dissimulated by "clean" national practice and fostered by the dominant ideology, can participate in the tyranny of the proper and see in Control Data an extender of the Platonic mandate to women in general.

The dissimulation of political economy is in and by ideology. What is at work and can be used in that operation is at least the ideology of nationstates, nationalism, national liberation, ethnicity, and religion. Feminism lives in the master text as well as in the pores. It is not the determinant of the last instance. I think less easily of "changing the world" than I did in the past. I teach a small number of the holders of the can(n)on, male or female, feminist or masculist, how to read their own texts, as best I can.

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THE EMPIRE WRITES BACK- Edward Said

INTRODUCTION

More than three-quarters of the people living in the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism. It is easy to see how important this has been in the political and economic spheres, but its general influence on the perceptual frameworks of contemporary peoples is often less evident. Literature offers one of the most important ways in which these new perceptions are expressed and it is in their writing, and through other arts such as painting, sculpture, music, and dance that the day-to-day realities experienced by colonized peoples have been most powerfully encoded and so profoundly influential.

Several post-colonial writers have contributed significantly to the process in which Third World countries have forced First World countries to acknowledge the harm done during a long and bitterly contentious period of colonization. The most well-known of these is Edward Said. He was born in Palestine, educated in Jerusalem and Cairo, later moving to America where he earned a PhD from Harvard. Said was recognized as a distinguished professor at various universities ranging from Harvard to Yale to Stanford. He early on urged scholars and critics of the humanities to examine the means by which colonizing powers (like England and France used their hegemonic superiority in technology and the military to dominate colonized states (like much of the Middle East and Africa). Said was not interested in a Derridean/linguistic approach to literature nor did he embrace the post-structuralist theories of Lyotard or Baudrillard. His interests lay in isolating how the West interacted vis-à-vis with the Orient. Finally, it was his intense personal identification with the Palestine struggle for autonomy that occupied the bulk of his writing career.

WHAT ARE POST-COLONIAL LITERATURES?

This book is concerned with writing by those peoples formerly colonized by Britain, though much of what it deals with is of interest and relevance to countries colonized by other European powers, such as France, Portugal, and Spain. The semantic basis of the term ‘postcolonial’ might seem to suggest a concern only with the national culture after the departure of the imperial power. It has occasionally been employed in some earlier work in the area to distinguish between the periods before and after independence (‘colonial period’ and ‘post-colonial period’), for example, in constructing national literary histories, or in suggesting comparative studies between stages in those histories. Generally speaking, though, the term ‘colonial’ has been used for the period before independence and a term indicating a national writing, such as ‘modern Canadian writing’ or ‘recent West Indian literature’ has been employed to distinguish the period after independence.

We use the term ‘post-colonial’, however, to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression.

We also suggest that it is most appropriate as the term for the new cross-cultural criticism which has emerged in recent years and for the discourse through which this is constituted. In this sense this book is concerned with the world as it exists during and after the period of European imperial domination and the effects of this on contemporary literatures.

So the literatures of African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka are all postcolonial literatures. The literature of the USA should also be placed in this category. Perhaps because of its current position of power, and the neo-colonizing role it has played, its post-colonial nature has not been generally recognized. But its relationship with the metropolitan centre as it evolved over the last two centuries has been paradigmatic for postcolonial literatures everywhere. What each of these literatures has in common beyond their special and distinctive regional characteristics is that they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial.

POST-COLONIAL LITERATURES AND ENGLISH STUDIES

The study of English has always been a densely political and cultural phenomenon, a practice in which language and literature have both been called into the service of a profound and embracing nationalism. The development of English as a privileged academic subject in nineteenth-century Britain – finally confirmed by its inclusion in the syllabuses of Oxford and Cambridge, and re-affirmed in the 1921 Newbolt Report – came about as part of an attempt to replace the Classics at the heart of the intellectual enterprise of nineteenth-century humanistic studies. From the beginning, proponents of English as a discipline linked its methodology to that of the Classics, with its emphasis on scholarship, philology, and historical study – the fixing of texts in historical time and the perpetual search for the determinants of a single, unified, and agreed meaning.

The historical moment which saw the emergence of 'English' as an academic discipline also produced the nineteenth-century colonial form of imperialism (Batsleer et al. 1985: 14, 19–25). Gauri Viswanathan has presented strong arguments for relating the 'institutionalisation and subsequent valorisation of English literary study [to] a shape and an ideological content developed in the colonial context', and specifically as it developed in India, where:

British colonial administrators, provoked by missionaries on the one hand and fears of native insubordination on the other, discovered an ally in English literature to support them in maintaining control of the natives under the guise of a liberal education.(Viswanathan 1987: 17)

It can be argued that the study of English and the growth of Empire proceeded from a single ideological climate and that the development of the one is intrinsically bound up with the development of the other, both at the level of simple utility (as propaganda for instance) and at the unconscious level, where it leads to the naturalizing of constructed values (e.g. civilization, humanity, etc.) which, conversely, established 'savagery', 'native', 'primitive', as their antitheses and as the object of a reforming zeal.1

A 'privileging norm' was enthroned at the heart of the formation of English Studies as a template for the denial of the value of the 'peripheral', the 'marginal', the 'uncanonized'. Literature was made as central to the cultural enterprise of Empire as the monarchy was to its political formation. So when elements of the periphery and margin threatened the exclusive claims of the centre they were rapidly incorporated. This was a process, in Edward Said's terms, of conscious affiliation proceeding under the guise of filiation (Said 1984), that is, a mimicry of the centre proceeding from a desire not only to be accepted but to be adopted and absorbed. It caused those

from the periphery to immerse themselves in the imported culture, denying their origins in an attempt to become 'more English than the English'. We see examples of this in such writers as Henry James and T.S. Eliot.

As post-colonial societies sought to establish their difference from Britain, the response of those who recognized this complicity between language, education, and cultural incorporation was to break the link between language and literary study by dividing 'English' departments in universities into separate schools of Linguistics and of Literature, both of which tended to view their project within a national or international context. Ngugi's essay 'On the abolition of the English department' (Ngugi 1972) is an illuminating account of the particular arguments involved in Africa. John Docker's essay, 'The neocolonial assumption in the university teaching of English' (Tiffin 1978: 26– 31), addresses similar problems in the settler colony context, describing a situation in which, in contrast to Kenya, little genuine decolonization is yet in sight. As Docker's critique makes clear, in most post-colonial nations (including the West Indies and India) the nexus of power involving literature, language, and a dominant British culture has strongly resisted attempts to dismantle it. Even after such attempts began to succeed, the canonical nature and unquestioned status of the works of the English literary tradition and the values they incorporated remained potent in the cultural formation and the ideological institutions of education and literature. Nevertheless, the development of the post-colonial literatures has necessitated a questioning of many of the assumptions on which the study of 'English' was based.

DEVELOPMENT OF POST-COLONIAL LITERATURES

Post-colonial literatures developed through several stages which can be seen to correspond to stages both of national or regional consciousness and of the project of asserting difference from the imperial centre.

During the imperial period writing in the language of the imperial centre is inevitably, of course, produced by a literate elite whose primary identification is with the colonizing power. Thus the first texts produced in the colonies in the new language are frequently produced by 'representatives' of the imperial power; for example, gentrified settlers (Wentworth's 'Australia'), travellers and sightseers (Froude's Oceana, and his The English in the West Indies, or the travel diaries of Mary Kingsley), or the Anglo-Indian and West African administrators, soldiers, and 'boxwallahs', and, even more frequently, their memsahibs (volumes of memoirs).

Such texts can never form the basis for an indigenous culture nor can they be integrated in any way with the culture which already exists in the countries invaded. Despite their detailed reportage of landscape, custom, and language, they inevitably privilege the centre, emphasizing the 'home' over the 'native', the 'metropolitan' over the 'provincial' or 'colonial', and so forth. At a deeper level their claim to objectivity simply serves to hide the imperial discourse within which they are created. That this is true of even the consciously literary works which emerge from this moment can be illustrated by the poems and stories of Rudyard Kipling. For example, in the well-known poem 'Christmas in India' the evocative description of a Christmas day in the heat of India is contextualized by invoking its absent English counterpart. Apparently it is only through this absent and enabling signifier that the Indian daily reality can acquire legitimacy as a subject of literary discourse.

The second stage of production within the evolving discourse of the post-colonial is the literature produced 'under imperial licence' by 'natives' or 'outcasts', for instance the large body of poetry and prose produced in the nineteenth century by the English educated Indian upper class, or African 'missionary literature' (e.g. Thomas Mofolo's Chaka). The producers signify by the very fact of writing in the language of the dominant culture that they have temporarily or permanently entered a specific and privileged class endowed with the language, education, and leisure necessary to produce such works. TheAustralian novel Ralph Rashleigh, now known to have been written by the convict James Tucker, is a case in point. Tucker, an educated man, wrote Rashleigh as a 'special' (a privileged convict) whilst working at the penal settlement at Port Macquarie as storekeeper to the superintendent.

Written on government paper with government ink and pens, the novel was clearly produced with the aid and support of the superintendent. Tucker had momentarily gained access to the privilege of literature. Significantly, the moment of privilege did not last and he died in poverty at the age of fifty-eight at Liverpool asylum in Sydney. It is characteristic of these early post- colonial texts that the potential for subversion in their themes cannot be fully realized. Although they deal with such powerful material as the brutality of the convict system (Tucker's Rashleigh), the historical potency of the supplanted and denigrated native cultures (Mofolo's Chaka), or the existence of a rich cultural heritage older and more extensive than that of Europe (any of many nineteenth-century Indo-Anglian poets, such as Ram Sharma) they are prevented from fully exploring their anti-imperial potential.

Both the available discourse and the material conditions of production for literature in these early post-colonial societies restrain this possibility. The institution of 'Literature' in the colony is under the direct control of the imperial ruling class who alone license the acceptable form and permit the publication and distribution of the resulting work. So, texts of this kind come into being within the constraints of a discourse and the institutional practice of a patronage system which limits and undercuts their assertion of a different perspective. The development of independent literatures depended upon the abrogation of this constraining power and the appropriation of language and writing for new and distinctive usages. Such an appropriation is clearly the most significant feature in the emergence of modern post-colonial literatures (see chs 2 and 3).

HEGEMONY

Why should post-colonial societies continue to engage with the imperial experience? Since all the post-colonial societies we discuss have achieved political independence, why is the issue of coloniality still relevant at all? This question of why the empire needs to write back to a centre once the imperial structure has been dismantled in political terms is an important one. Britain, like the other dominant colonial powers of the nineteenth century, has been relegated to a relatively minor place in international affairs. In the spheres of politics and economics, and increasingly in the vital new area of the mass media, Britain and the other European imperial

powers have been superseded by the emergent power of the USA. Nevertheless, through the literary canon, the body of British texts which all too frequently still acts as a touchstone of taste and value, and through RS-English (Received Standard English), which asserts the English of south-east England as a universal norm, the weight of antiquity continues to dominate cultural production in much of the post-colonial world.

This cultural hegemony has been maintained through canonical assumptions about literary activity, and through attitudes to postcolonial literatures which identify them as isolated national off-shoots of English literature, and which therefore relegate them to marginal and subordinate positions. More recently, as the range and strength of these literatures has become undeniable, a process of incorporation has begun in which, employing Eurocentric standards of judgement, the centre has sought to claim those works and writers of which it approves as British. In all these respects the parallel between the situation of post-colonial writing and that of feminist writing is striking.

LANGUAGE

One of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language. The imperial education system installs a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language as the norm, and marginalizes all 'variants' as impurities. As a character in Mrs Campbell Praed's nineteenth century Australian novel Policy and Passion puts it, 'To be colonial is to talk Australian slang; to be . . . everything that is abominable' (Campbell Praed 1881:154). Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' become established. Such power is rejected in the emergence of an effective post-colonial voice. For this reason, the discussion of post-colonial writing which follows is largely a discussion of the process by which the language, with its power, and the writing, with its signification of authority, has been wrested from the dominant European culture.

In order to focus on the complex ways in which the English language has been used in these societies, and to indicate their own sense of difference, we distinguish in this account between the 'standard' British English inherited from the empire and the english which the language has become in post-colonial countries. Though British imperialism resulted in the spread of a language, English, across the globe, the english of Jamaicans is not the english of Canadians, Maoris, or Kenyans. We need to distinguish between what is proposed as a standard code, English (the language of the erstwhile imperial centre), and the linguistic code, english, which has been transformed and subverted into several distinctive varieties throughout the world. For this reason the distinction between English and english will be used throughout our text as an indication of the various ways in which the language has been employed by different linguistic communities in the post-colonial world.

The use of these terms asserts the fact that a continuum exists between the various linguistic practices which constitute english usage in the modern world. Although linguistically the links between English and the various post-colonial englishes in use today can be seen as unbroken, the political reality is that English sets itself apart from all other 'lesser' variants and so demands to be interrogated about its claim to this special status.

In practice the history of this distinction between English and English has been between the claims of a powerful 'centre' and a multitude of intersecting usages designated as 'peripheries'. The language of these 'peripheries' was shaped by an oppressive discourse of power. Yet they have been the site of some of the most exciting and innovative literatures of the modern period and this has, at least in part, been the result of the energies uncovered by the political tension between the idea of a normative code and a variety of regional usages.

PLACE AND DISPLACEMENT

A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place. Indeed, critics such as D. E. S. Maxwell have made this the defining model of post-coloniality (see ch. 1). A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation, or 'voluntary' removal for indentured labour. Or it may have been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model. The dialectic of place and displacement is always a feature of post-colonial societies whether these have been created by a process of settlement, intervention, or a mixture of the two. Beyond their historical and cultural differences, place, displacement, and a pervasive concern with the myths of identity and authenticity are a feature common to all post-colonial literatures in english.

The alienation of vision and the crisis in self-image which this displacement produces is as frequently found in the accounts of Canadian 'free settlers' as of Australian convicts, Fijian–Indian or Trinidadian–Indian indentured labourers, West Indian slaves, or forcibly colonized Nigerians or Bengalis. Although this is pragmatically demonstrable from a wide range of texts, it is difficult to account for by theories which see this social and linguistic alienation as resulting only from overtly oppressive forms of colonization such as slavery or conquest. An adequate account of this practice must go beyond the usual categories of social alienation such as master/slave; free/bonded; ruler/ruled, however important and widespread these may be in post-colonial cultures. After all, why should the free settler, formally unconstrained, and theoretically free to continue in the possession and practice of 'Englishness', also show clear signs of alienation even within the first generation of settlement, and manifest a tendency to seek an alternative, differentiated identity?

The most widely shared discursive practice within which this alienation can be identified is the construction of 'place'. The gap which opens between the experience of place and the language available to describe it forms a classic and all pervasive feature of post-colonial texts. This gap occurs for those whose language seems inadequate to describe a new place, for those whose language is systematically destroyed by enslavement, and for those whose language has been rendered unprivileged by the imposition of the language of a colonizing power. Some admixture of one or other of these models can describe the situation of all post-colonial societies. In each case a condition of alienation is inevitable until the colonizing language has been replaced or appropriated as english.

That imperialism results in a profound linguistic alienation is obviously the case in cultures in which a pre-colonial culture is suppressed by military conquest or enslavement. So, for example, an Indian writer like Raja Rao or a Nigerian writer such as Chinua Achebe have needed to transform the language, to use it in a different way in its new context and so, as Achebe says, quoting James Baldwin, make it 'bear the burden' of their experience (Achebe 1975: 62).

Although Rao and Achebe write from their own place and so have not suffered a literal geographical displacement, they have to overcome an imposed gap resulting from the linguistic displacement of the pre-colonial language by English. This process occurs within a more comprehensive discourse of place and displacement in the wider post-colonial context. Such alienation is shared by those whose possession of English is indisputably 'native' (in the sense of being possessed from birth) yet who begin to feel alienated within its practice once its vocabulary, categories, and codes are felt to be inadequate or inappropriate to describe the fauna, the physical and geographical conditions, or the cultural practices they have developed in a new land. The Canadian poet Joseph Howe, for instance, plucks his picture of a moose from some repository of English nursery rhyme romanticism:

. . . the gay moose in jocund gambol springs,

Cropping the foliage Nature round him flings. (Howe 1874: 100)

Such absurdities demonstrate the pressing need these native speakers share with those colonized peoples who were directly oppressed to escape from the inadequacies and imperial constraints of English as a social practice. They need, that is, to escape from the implicit body of assumptions to which English was attached, its aesthetic and social values, the formal and historically limited constraints of genre, and the oppressive political and cultural assertion of metropolitan dominance, of centre over margin (Ngugi 1986). This is not to say that the English language is inherently incapable of accounting for post-colonial experience, but that it needs to develop an 'appropriate' usage in order to do so (by becoming a distinct and unique form of english). The energizing feature of this displacement is its capacity to interrogate and subvert the imperial cultural formations.

The pressure to develop such a usage manifests itself early in the development of 'english' literatures. It is therefore arguable that, even before the development of a conscious de-colonizing stance, the experience of a new place, identifiably different in its physical characteristics, constrains, for instance, the new settlers to demand a language which will allow them to express their sense of 'Otherness'. Landscape, flora and fauna, seasons, climatic conditions are formally distinguished from the place of origin as home/colony, Europe/New World, Europe/Antipodes, metropolitan/provincial, and so on, although, of course, at this stage no effective models exist for expressing this sense of Otherness in a positive and creative way.

POST-COLONIALITY AND THEORY

The idea of 'post-colonial literary theory' emerges from the inability of European theory to deal adequately with the complexities and varied cultural provenance of post-colonial writing.

European theories themselves emerge from particular cultural traditions which are hidden by false notions of 'the universal'. Theories of style and genre, assumptions about the universal features of language, epistemologies and value systems are all radically questioned by the practices of postcolonial writing. Post-colonial theory has proceeded from the need to address this different practice. Indigenous theories have developed to accommodate the differences within the various cultural traditions as well as the desire to describe in a comparative way the features shared across those traditions.

The political and cultural monocentrism of the colonial enterprise was a natural result of the philosophical traditions of the European world and the systems of representation which this privileged. Nineteenth-century imperial expansion, the culmination of the outward and dominating thrust of Europeans into the world beyond Europe, which began during the early Renaissance, was underpinned in complex ways by these assumptions. In the first instance this produced practices of cultural subservience, characterized by one postcolonial critic as 'cultural cringe' (Phillips 1958). Subsequently, the emergence of identifiable indigenous theories in reaction to this formed an important element in the development of specific national and regional consciousnesses (see ch. 4).

Paradoxically, however, imperial expansion has had a radically destabilizing effect on its own preoccupations and power. In pushing the colonial world to the margins of experience the 'centre' pushed consciousness beyond the point at which monocentrism in all spheres of thought could be accepted without question. In other words the alienating process which initially served to relegate the post-colonial world to the 'margin' turned upon itself and acted to push that world through a kind of mental barrier into a position from which all experience could be viewed as uncentred, pluralistic, and multifarious.

Marginality thus became an unprecedented source of creative energy. The impetus towards decentring and pluralism has always been present in the history of European thought and has reached its latest development in post-structuralism. But the situation of marginalized societies

and cultures enabled them to come to this position much earlier and more directly (Brydon 1984b). These notions are implicit in post-colonial texts from the imperial period to the present day.

***Cultural Identity and Diaspora*- Stuart Hall**

In this essay Stuart Hall begins with a discussion of Caribbean and "Third Cinema" using this discussion as a springboard for addressing questions about identity, cultural practices, and cultural production. Hall theorizes two ways of reflecting on "cultural identity": first, identity understood as a collective, shared history among individuals affiliated by race or ethnicity that is considered to be fixed or stable; and second, identity understood as unstable, metamorphic, and even contradictory – an identity marked by multiple points of similarities as well as differences.

From this second, more complex understanding of identity, Hall proceeds to theorize the multiple presences and absences that are constitutive of cultural identities in the Caribbean. Utilizing Jacques Derrida's theoretical play of *différance*, Hall posits Caribbean cultural identities – heterogeneous composites defined in relation to first world terrains and in relation to the different heritages of the Caribbean islands – as the play of three dominant presences: *Présence Africaine*, *Présence Européene*, and *Présence Américaine*. In Hall's configuration, *Présence Africaine* is the "site of the repressed"; *Présence Européene* is the site of colonialist, hegemonic construction of knowledges; and *Présence Américaine* is the "New World" site of cultural confrontation, possibility for creolization and points of new becomings.

A new cinema of the Caribbean is emerging, joining the company of the other "Third Cinemas." It is related to, but different from, the vibrant film and other forms of visual representation of the Afro-Caribbean (and Asian) "blacks" of the diasporas of the West – the new postcolonial subjects. All these cultural practices and forms of representation have the black subject at their center, putting the issue of cultural identity in question. Who is this emergent, new subject of the cinema? From where does he/she speak? Practices of representation always implicate the positions from which we speak

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> passionate research . . . directed by the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation and abjuration, some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others.

New forms of cultural practice in these societies address themselves to this project for the very good reason that, as Fanon puts it, in the recent past,

> Colonization is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.[1]

The question that Fanon's observation poses is, what is the nature of this "profound research" which drives the new forms of visual and cinematic representation? Is it only a matter of unearthing that which the colonial experience buried and overlaid, bringing to light the hidden continuities it suppressed? Or is a quite different practice entailed – not the rediscovery but the *production* of identity? Not an identity grounded in the archeology, but in the *retelling* of the past?

We should not, for a moment, underestimate or neglect the importance of the act of imaginative rediscovery that this conception of a rediscovered, essential identity entails. "Hidden histories" have played a critical role in the emergence of many of the most important social movements of our time – feminist, anti-colonial and anti-racist. The photographic work of a generation of Jamaican and Rastafarian artists, or of a visual artist like Armet Francis (a Jamaican-born photographer who has lived in Britain since the age of eight) is a testimony to the continuing creative power of this conception of identity within the emerging practices of representation. Francis's photographs of the peoples of the Black Triangle, taken in Africa, the Caribbean, the USA, and the UK, attempt to reconstruct in visual terms "the underlying unity of the black people whom colonization and slavery distributed across the African diaspora." His text is an act of imaginary reunification.

Crucially, such images offer a way of imposing an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation, which is the history of all enforced diasporas. They do this by representing or "figuring" Africa as the mother of these different civilizations. This Triangle is, after all, "centered" in Africa. Africa is the name of the missing term, the great aporia, which lies at the center of our cultural identity and gives it a meaning which, until recently, it lacked. No one who looks at these textural images now, in the light of the history of transportation, slavery, and migration, can fail to understand how the rift of separation, the "loss of identity," which has been

integral to the Caribbean experience only begins to be healed when these forgotten connections are once more set in place. Such texts restore an imaginary fullness or plenitude to set against the broken rubric of our past. They are resources of resistance and identity, with which to confront the fragmented and pathological ways in which that experience has been reconstructed within the dominant regimes of cinematic and visual representation of the West.

There is, however, a second, related but different view of cultural identity. This second position recognizes that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant *difference* which constitute "what we really are"; or rather – since history has intervened – "what we have become." We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about "one experience, one identity," without acknowledging its other side – the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, the Caribbean's "uniqueness." Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being." It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture, and power. Far from being grounded in mere "recovery" of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.

It is only from this second position that we can properly understand the traumatic character of "the colonial experience." The ways in which black people, black experiences, were positioned and subject-ed in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalization. Not only, in Said's "Orientalist" sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as "Other." Every regime of representation is a regime of power formed, as Foucault reminds us, by the fatal couplet "power/knowledge." But this kind of knowledge is internal, not external. It is one thing to position a subject or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that "knowledge," not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, by the power of inner compulsion and subjective conformation to the norm. That is the lesson – the somber majesty – of Fanon's insight into the colonizing experience in *Black Skin, White Masks.*

This inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms. If its silences are not resisted, they produce, in Fanon's vivid phrase, "individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colorless, stateless, rootless – a race of angels."[2] Nevertheless, this idea of otherness as an inner compulsion changes our conception of "cultural identity." In this perspective, cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. It is not some universal and transcendental spirit inside us on which history has made no fundamental mark. It is not once-and-for-all. It is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute return. Of course, it is not a mere phantasm either. It is *something* – not a mere trick of the imagination. It has its histories – and histories have their real, material, and symbolic effects. The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual "past," since our relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is always-already "after the break." It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative, and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning*. Hence, there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental "law of origin."

This second view of cultural identity is much less familiar, and more unsettling. If identity does not proceed in a straight unbroken line from some fixed origin, how are we to understand its formation? We might think of black Caribbean identities as "framed" by two axes or vectors, simultaneously operative: the vector of similarity and continuity; and the vector of difference and rupture. Caribbean identities always have to be thought of in terms of the dialogic relationship between these two axes. The one gives us some grounding in, some continuity with, the past. The second reminds us that what we share is precisely the experience of a profound discontinuity: the peoples dragged into slavery, transportation, colonization, migration, came predominantly from Africa – and when that supply ended, it was temporarily refreshed by indentured labor from the Asian subcontinent. (This neglected fact explains why, when you visit Guyana or Trinidad, you see, symbolically inscribed in the faces of their peoples, the paradoxical "truth" of Christopher Columbus's mistake: you *can* find "Asia" by sailing west, if you know where to look!) In the history of the modern world, there are few more traumatic ruptures to match these enforced separations from Africa – already figured, in the European imaginary, as "the Dark Continent." But the slaves were also from different countries, tribal communities, villages, languages, and gods. African religion, which has been so profoundly formative in Caribbean spiritual life, is precisely *different* from Christian

monotheism in believing that God is so powerful that he can only be known through a proliferation of spiritual manifestations, present everywhere in the natural and social world. These gods live on, in an underground existence, in the hybridized religious universe of Haitian voodoo, pocomania, Native pentecostalism, Black baptism, Rastafarianism, and the black *Saints of Latin* American Catholicism. The paradox is that it was the uprooting of slavery and transportation and the insertion into the plantation economy (as well as the symbolic economy) of the Western world that "unified" these peoples across their differences, in the same moment as it cut them off from direct access to their past.

Difference, therefore, persists – in and alongside continuity. To return to the Caribbean after any long absence is to experience again the shock of the "doubleness" of similarity and difference. Visiting the French Caribbean for the first time, I also saw at once how different Martinique is from, say, Jamaica: and this is no mere difference of topography or climate. It is a profound difference of culture and history. And the difference *matters*. It positions Martiniquains and Jamaicans as *both* the same *and* different. Moreover, the boundaries of difference are continually repositioned in relation to different points of reference. *Vis-à-vis* the developed West, we are very much "the same." We belong to the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery, the "Other." We are at the outer edge, the "rim," of the metropolitan world – always "South" to someone else's *El Norte*.

At the same time, we do not stand in the same relation of the "otherness" to the metropolitan centers. Each has negotiated its economic, political, and cultural dependency differently. And this "difference," whether we like it or not, is already inscribed in our cultural identities. In turn, it is this negotiation of identity which makes us, *vis-à-vis* other Latin American people, with a very similar history, different – Caribbeans, *les Antillienes* ("islanders" to their mainland). And yet, *vis-à-vis* one another, Jamaican, Haitian, Cuban, Guadeloupean, Barbadian, etc. . . .

How, then, to describe this play of "difference" within identity? The common history – transportation, slavery, colonization – has been profoundly formative. For all these societies, unifying us across our differences. But it does not constitute a common *origin*, since it was, metaphorically as well as literally, a translation. The inscription of difference is also specific and critical. I use the word "play" because the double meaning of the metaphor is important. It suggests, on the one hand, the instability, the permanent unsettlement, the lack of any final resolution. On the other hand, it reminds us that the place where this "doubleness" is most powerfully to be heard is "playing" within the varieties of Caribbean musics. This cultural "play" could not therefore be represented, cinematically, as a simple, binary opposition – "past/present," "them/us." Its complexity exceeds this binary structure of

representation. At different places, times, in relation to different questions, the boundaries are resited. They become, not only what they have, at times, certainly been – mutually excluding categories, but also what they sometimes are – differential points along a sliding scale.

One trivial example is the way Martinique both *is* and *is not* "French." It is, of course, a *department* of France, and this is reflected in its standard and style of life: Fort de France is a much richer, more "fashionable" place than Kingston – which is not only visibly poorer, but itself at a point of transition between being "in fashion" in an Anglo-African and Afro-American way – for those who can afford to be in any sort of fashion at all. Yet, what is distinctively "Martiniquais" can only be described in terms of that special and peculiar supplement which the black and mulatto skin adds to the "refinement" and sophistication of a Parisian-derived *haute couture*: that is, a sophistication which, because it is black, is always transgressive.

To capture this sense of difference which is not pure "otherness," we need to deploy the play on words of a theorist like Jacques Derrida. Derrida uses the anomalous "a" in his way of writing "difference" – *différance* – as a marker which sets up a disturbance in our settled understanding or translation of the word/concept. It sets the word in motion to new meanings without erasing the *trace* of its other meanings. His sense of *différance*, as Christopher Norris puts it, thus

> remains suspended between the two French verbs "to differ" and "to defer" (postpone), both of which contribute to its textual force but neither of which can fully capture its meaning. Language depends on difference, as Saussure showed . . . the structure of distinctive propositions which make up its basic economy. Where Derrida breaks new ground . . . is in the extent to which "differ" shades into "defer" . . . the idea that meaning is always deferred, perhaps to this point of an endless supplementarity, by the play of signification.[3]

This second sense of difference challenges the fixed binaries that stabilize meaning and representation and show how meaning is never finished or completed, but keeps on moving to encompass other, additional, or supplementary meanings, which, as Norris puts it elsewhere,[4] "disturb the classical economy of language and representation." Without relations of difference, no representation could occur. But what is then constituted within representation is always open to being deferred, staggered, serialized.

Where, then, does identity come into this infinite postponement of meaning? Derrida does not help us as much as he might here, though the notion of the "trace" goes some way toward it. This is where it sometimes seems as if Derrida has permitted his profound theoretical insights to be reappropriated by his disciples into a celebration of formal "playfulness," which evacuates them of their political meaning. For if signification depends upon

the endless repositioning of its differential terms, meaning, in any specific instance, depends on the contingent and arbitrary stop – the necessary and temporary "break" in the infinite semiosis of language. This does not detract from the original insight. It only threatens to do so if we mistake this "cut" of identity – this *positioning*, which makes meaning possible – as a natural and permanent, rather than an arbitrary and contingent "ending" – whereas I understand every such position as "strategic" and arbitrary, in the sense that there is no permanent equivalence between the particular sentence we close, and its true meaning, as such. Meaning continues to unfold, so to speak, beyond the arbitrary closure that makes it, at any moment, possible. It is always either over- or underdetermined, either an excess or a supplement. There is always something "left over."

It is possible, with this conception of "difference," to rethink the positioning and repositioning of Caribbean cultural identities in relation to at least three "presences," to borrow Aimé Césaire's and Leopold Senghor's metaphor: *Présence Africaine*, *Présence Européenne*, and the third, most ambiguous, presence of all – the sliding term, *Présence Américaine*. Of course, I am collapsing, for the moment, the many other cultural "presences" that constitute the complexity of Caribbean identity (Indian, Chinese, Lebanese, etc.). I mean America, here not in its "first-world" sense – the big cousin to the North whose "rim" we occupy – but in the second, broader sense: America, the "New World," *Terra Incognita*.

Présence Africaine is the site of the repressed. Apparently silenced beyond memory by the power of the experience of slavery, Africa was, in fact, present everywhere: in the everyday life and customs of the slave quarters, in the languages and patois of the plantations, in names and words, often disconnected from their taxonomies, in the secret syntactical structures through which other languages were spoken, in the stories and tales told to children, in religious practices and beliefs in the spiritual life, the arts, crafts, musics, and rhythms of slave and post-emancipation society. Africa, the signified which could not be represented directly in slavery, remained and remains the unspoken unspeakable "presence" in Caribbean culture. It is "hiding" behind every verbal inflection, every narrative twist of Caribbean cultural life. It is the secret code with which every Western text was "reread." It is the groundbass of every rhythm and bodily movement. *This* was – is – the "Africa" that "is alive and well in the diaspora."[5]

When I was growing up in the 1940s and 1950s as a child in Kingston, I was surrounded by the signs, music, and rhythms of this Africa of the diaspora, which only existed as a result of a long and discontinuous series of transformations. But, although almost everyone around me was some shade of brown or black (Africa "speaks"!), I never once heard a single person refer to themselves or to others as, in some way, or as having been at some time

in the past, "African." It was only in the 1970s that this Afro-Caribbean identity became historically available to the great majority of Jamaican people, at home and abroad. In this historic moment, Jamaicans discovered themselves to be "black" – just as, in the same moment, they discovered themselves to be the sons and daughters of "slavery."

This profound cultural discovery, however, was not, and could not be, made directly, without "mediation." It could only be made *through* the impact on popular life of the postcolonial revolution, the civil rights struggles, the culture of Rastafarianism, and the music of reggae – the metaphors, the figures or signifiers of a new construction of "Jamaican-ness." These signified a "new" Africa of the New World, grounded in an "old" Africa: a spiritual journey of discovery that led, in the Caribbean, to an indigenous cultural revolution; this is Africa, as we might say, necessarily "deferred" – as a spiritual, cultural, and political metaphor.

It is the presence/absence of Africa, in this form, which has made it the privileged signifier of new conceptions of Caribbean identity. Everyone in the Caribbean, of whatever ethnic background, must sooner or later come to terms with this African presence. Black, brown, mulatto, white – all must look *Présence Africaine* in the face, speak its name. But whether it is, in this sense, an *origin* of our identities, unchanged by four hundred years of displacement, dismemberment, transportation, to which we could in any final or literal sense return, is more open to doubt. The original "Africa" is no longer there. It too has been transformed. History is, in that sense, irreversible. We must not collude with the West which, precisely, normalizes and appropriates Africa by freezing it into some timeless zone of the primitive, unchanging past. Africa must at last be reckoned with by Caribbean people, but it cannot in any simple sense be merely recovered.

It belongs irrevocably, for us, to what Edward Said once called an "imaginative geography and history," which helps "the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the difference between what is close to it and what is far away."[6] It "has acquired an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel."[7] Our belongingness to it constitutes what Benedict Anderson calls "an imagined community."[8] To *this* "Africa," which is a necessary part of the Caribbean imaginary, we can't literally go home again.

The character of this displaced "homeward" journey – its length and complexity – comes across vividly, in a variety of texts. Tony Sewell's documentary archival photographs, "Garvey's Children: the Legacy of Marcus Garvey," tell the story of a "return" to an African identity which went, necessarily, by the long route through London and the United States. It "ends," not in Ethiopia, but with Garvey's statue in front of the St. Ann Parish Library in Jamaica: not with a traditional tribal chant but with the music of Burning Spear and Bob Marley's "Redemption Song." This is our "long

j‹›iirncy” home.. Elcrck Billiton’s coriragtous vinial and written text, *Blvd Mrnrt Man* - the story o1’ the journey of n at fta photographer *on the lrail of the pmmised lantl" - starts in England, aid gpcs, .through Shasheinenc, che place in Ethiopia to which many Jamaican people have found their way on their search the the Promised Land, mid slavery; hit it ends in Pinnacle, {iiniaica, where the fruit Rastafarian settlements were establishetl, and *t›eyoiii1” — amtlng die dispossessed ct twentieth-century Kin ton and the streets ct HanA«vorth, where P.istitoii’s voyagc ut ‹liscovcry first began. These symbolic journeys air necessary for us oil - and necessarily circular. This is the Afrim we must retrirri tn - htit “by another route": what Africa *has* ficriim in the New Wurld, what we have made of “Africa": °Africa” - M iV0 1’Ct011 It IU t’OU gH YOU tuT*, lllCnJOry, 0 nd def r‹t.

What of the second, troubling, test in the identity equation - the European presence* For many of us, this is a matter nor of’ too little brit of tuo much. Where Afficn was a case of the unspoken, liuropc was a case of chat whic'h is epc{lcssi) spciikiiig - mid endlessly speaking m. 'lie Eiirupcan presence intern vipts tire innocence of the whole discoutu of “diffidence" in the Caribbean by introducing the questinn of power, “Europe” belongs Il’i'r\•OCilblj' I.O I “ 1 ñ2” OF wet’, tO t110 limb Of kOi’H rind cnnsent, to IN 0 rule ot the dr»iim»i in Caribbcan cu1mrc. In terms of colonialism, uider-develnpiiient, poverty, and the i»cisni of color, die European presence is that which, in visual representation, has poñtioiied die black subject within its dnnii»ai t icglnics of representation: die colonic tiiscniirsc, die literatures of advelytuiv and exploration, the romance of the exouc, ihc cihnt›graphic and u avclint, eye, the tropical languages of tnuripn, towel brc›chvrc and Hollpvood, anti the. violent, pornogmpliic languages of gonjo and urban violence.

Because Thcsrz £uropiraoz is *tout exclusion, imposition, and cxpt'o-friction, we are often tempted to locate that power as whtilly external to us - an cxtrinsic fnrcc, whosc influence can be thrown off like the serpent sheds its.skin. What Frantz Fannn rcmintb us, in *BE Skin Wbitc Mass* is how this pcwcr has bcconie a constitutive element in otir own idcntities.

> The ninterncnts, tlic artittidcs, tlic piances nf the Other’ fixed rue there in tlic sense in which a chemical solution is fixcd by a dye. I was indignant; I deoliinded ali explanation. Motlling happened, I btlrst' apart. New the flag-ments have been put together again by another self.[9]

Ellis “look,” front —.so to speak — tire place of the Cklier, fixes ui, not only tin its violence, hostility, and sggi esslon, but in tlic mnbivalcnce of its desire. This brings its lice to face wiUi tlic dominating European presence cot simply as the site br “scene.^ of integniion where those other presences that it led actively disaggregated were reconiprised. - retraced, put togctlicr in

i new my; but as the Tie of a profound sp1irri»g and troubling - wiiat fit›iiii Bhiblia lus called “this ambivHent identiScztion of the cciii world . . . the ’Otherncu' rat the iic)f inscribed its the perverse palimpsest of colonial dmiiy."”

The dI a}Qgu0 Of }HWer atJd fflsf8tmlCe, of t’eftl81l alld t’ecG nftion witht ink agauut her £ur‹ipñniir is almost as coiiiplex ve the “dialogue” with Erica. In terms of popular cviltiiral lffc, it is nowhere to be fbund in its pⱱirc, Pristine stnic: lt is always-already Arised, syricrctizcd, »4ih *othcc cu*kutal ed ncnt.s. lt is always-already cre‹ilized - not lost ticyond the Middle Passage, Pitt cVei* prt•8clit: **front** ljie fiafniOHiCs ftt Otl r MUSfm to be QtfiRnd-b0fi of Rica, traversing and interacting our lives at very poinr. Ho»' can we erm this didogtie so ihnc, finalty, we clrt place it, witb‹;›tit rcrror or violence, i ather lien being forcvcr placed by it* Can we ever i-ecogni/z its irreversible influ-:rice, hile mincing its lnipcrializiiig eye.' The enigma is impossible, so]iir, c resolve. It rtqtiires tlic boost conipkx of cu1tiit’al swtcgicx. Think, for :x«tnp1e, tit die duJo$iir oI’ crcry CNbbc ii £lninukcc or writer, one my ir ant›tlmr, with tlic don0iiant cinemas and literatttre of ihc West - tlic :c•rnplex i-elationsliip of’ yoving hlack British filmmakers with die “nvant-iit1’dCt” tit ktll’opeiui null ln0ft0ifil filmmakfllg. **MiO Ct›t11d** c{c! rl be t(11S :cnw mid tortured dialogue as a “one z'ay trip”!

Tllc Third, "New World presence, is nut so much power, its b•iotrnd, Place, territory. It 1s tlic jtulctiire-point where the many cultural tnbtimnea next, the *enipq'* larn.i (the European colonizers emptied fr} where .trstigcrs from Every other put tit die globe collided. None of tlic pcuplc. vlio now occupy the islands - bfark, bcown, mimic, .African, *Europea* n, \niei-ican, Spanish, 1-rench, East Inttian, Chinese, Portuguese, Jew, Dutch - originally “belonged” there. lr ir zfi.qxtee wiicre tlic creolizations and assim-lotions aijd «ynci etisriis were negotiated. The New World is the third term · the primal scene – where the fateful/fatal encounter was staged between Erica auto fire West, It also has to be understood M the place of many, coi-Jiiiiom di ocenients. of tlic original pre Golinnbian inhabitants, the Awake, trip, and Ameñiidians, permanently displaced from their (tone-antls and decimated; of other peoples displaced in different ws.ys ii out Africa, la, and Eufopci tlii: di.sp1accnieiits of slavery, colonization, antj conquest. t slam.1s tor the etidlegg yrgyd in which Caribbean people have hccn ticttincd ta *Hllgf’itfe ” i 1t is I.h0 sign flier Of tl4i tiOH ltscff — Of tril Irig *Of•1Bi* nd rscurn u Etc, as destiny, of the Antillerl as tlic prototype of tlic inodcrn ir postinc›clern blew World nomad, continually rrtovlilg lx•iwc*ia realter nd teri]jhery. TU l8 prcoiictl patlon With iTlQVcMent aI1‹j iillgfatfoil Cilribbean fiicma shorc;with1u:uyodie”ThirdOncr ”httitiso›;cofourdcGn-.\g cheilics, .az\d it is dutined to c ass M\c I at mrivc of every film script a

PJsnre Awsriroine continucs to have Its silelices, in suppressions. Peter Htiliiie, in his essay on *Islands of ncllantinent,"" reminds na that the word “Jamaica” is tlic Hispanic form of the indigenous Arawak namc - “land .of "omt and water" - which Ut›tiinnfivis’s renaming ("Santiagii“) never ieplacc‹l. The Ar*n't presence remains today a ghostly one, visible iii the islands mainly in museums and aiclieological sites, part of the barely know-able or usable “pest.” Hulme notes that it is not represented in tlic emblem of the Jamaican National Hcriiage Trust, for example, wlñch chose instead the ligiire cif Diego Piizienta, “an African who fought for his Spanish inzstci‘s aJiist the English invfion of die island in 165S* - a deferred, inetonyinic, sly, and sliding representation of Jamaican identity if evcr there was one! He recounts the story of how Prime Minister Edward Seam tried to alter the Jaiiiaican coat-of-arms, which coniisti ot’two Arawak figures holding a shield with five pineapples, surmounted by an alligator. “Can tlic crushed and extinct Araivaks represent the dauntless character of Jamaicans? Does the 'or-slung, near cxiinct crocodile, a cold-flooded reptile, syrnboEze tlic warm, staring spirit of Jamaicans*” torture Minister Seaga asked rhetorically." TlJfliv can be few poliuc 1 statements which to cioquendy testify to tlic com-plexities entailed in the process of’ trying ro represent a diverse people with i diverse misery through a nng1e, hegemonic “identify.". Fortunately, fair. Seag«’s invitation to the fainaic n people, who arc overwhelmingly of African ttescent, to smrt their *remembering" by first "forgetting" something else, got die eoineuppance it so richly deserved.

"rhc “New Wand” pi'csei1cc - America, "1" *i» c‹gmir«* - is therefore itself die beginning nf diaspora, of diver'iity, of hybiidity anti difference, what makes Aero-Caribbean people Nrcfiy people of a diaspora. I use this rems .here metaphorically, not literally: diaspora docs not. rcfcr tis to those scat-*te*md tribes whose itJentity can only be securest in relation tn some sacred .;unieIand to which tbcy rnas tt all .cosis return, even if ii incas pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the iinpcrializing; tire hcgenin-nizing, form of “ethnicity" We have seen the fate of the people of Palestine at tlic hands of dms hac¥ward looking conception or diaspora - and the com-plicity of the West with it. The diaspora experience as I intend it here..Is de£ncd, not by essence or putty', bit by the recogstioij of a necessary het-erogeieity arid diversity; ti/ a cnnception of "idcntit” which lives with and through, not dcspitc, difkrencc; by” iJ. Diaspora identities are the which are cnnsrandy protliicing and reproducing themselves anew, through tmnsfotmation and difference. One can only think here nf what is uniquely - “essentially” — Caribbean: preciuty the mixes of color, pigmentation, phys-ognoinic type; the “blends” of tastes that is Caribbean cuisinc; the acsthet-cs of the “cross-ovc1s,” of "cut-and-mix," to borrow Dick Ffebdige’s miling Phrase, shich is the heart and soid of black music. ¥oiitig black ‹annual prac-

fitioners and critics iii Bricaiii are increasingly coming ip acknowledge and exploit in their work this “diaspora aesthetic” aid its formations in the post-eolonjal experience:

> Acruss z wl\uIc tW#c r›l cn1turnl forms thvre is a ‘ ncn:tic° dymn\ie w/i‹cI› critically appropriates clemeno from the minster--Mcs of t}ic dominant cultirrc and “crcolizcs” them, disiwñciilating given signs crirt rcarticiifating tticir ym-bi›lic incatiing. Tlic subversive force nf this hybridizing tcndcncy is met appar-ent It the level of lahgtiagc ›cscIf where cr‹xJcs, pamir and bfacit Eiig)is)i decanter, ‹Jestabitizc and carniiziize the linpiittic domination of “English* — chc nation-I;\i gtiagc of master-disc‹›ursu - rhruu gfi strategic ingcctforzs, zesc-ccntuatio»s and other perl rniati'›'c moycs ir\ so'm8ntic, syntactic artd Ie xic*I codes.[13]

It 1s because dais New World is constituted ft›r as as placc, a narratiw ofdls-p)acmneiit, that it gives rise st› profuiiiuily to a certain inuginaiy plcnitiide, retreating die enAcss desire to return th “lost origins,* to be one ;igm with At mother, to go l›zck to he begitjnii g, Who can ever forget, when oixce seen rising tip out of that blue grccn C,aribbcan, diose islands of enchants £nflrtr* NJ Fla.s nQr kiloW, ‹at tlic fnofl2 clot, thC 8tlr 6 Of Ah Ohr Wl1eliHtft@ nOstalg,I a Ltit lOSt Origind, fOt tim08 past”i Estd jet, tlit8 retglfH IO th c hewn ning” is like the imaginary in Lwati - it can *neither* be fulfilled nor rcqiiited, ind hencc is tlic beginning of the symbolic, of’ rcpresentation, tlic infinitely .’encWab1o sOljrcc Of d6itfre mcDior/, myfi, seal‘c'I1, dNOvP —fi 6l7Of I, tile rnscrvc'it of otir cinematic narratives.

We have but trying, in a scrics of ietaphoM, to pre In pray a dlffertnt ›cijse of i›uf relationship to the past, and thus a. difiércnt w. y of thinking I get cultural identity, which might constitute new points of rccogiitioii In the discc'urwi of the emerging Wnbbtan cinema and black British cinemas. fee have been trying to theorize identity as constituted not oiit*de but within epresentntion; and hence of cinmtin, nut us a second-order mirror held rip :o tcfiect what already vista, but as that form tJ’ representation wlliCh is able !o cnnsfinrtc tis u new kinds of subjects, md thereby enable us to discover blames its Wl3TCf\ tD Speak. O1enjtjnjtit•s, hen&i I dezsolJ ar@tee in r« ••*d C'oz/zusuniñsr,* are ro be distingzizsJ;ed, jJoL by their fi\lsity/gen .linencas, bin by the style in wliicl4 they are ijpagiiied.'* this is the vmañoii if modern black cinemas: by allowing us to m and.recorsi n rhc tiftérent tarts an‹j histories of oiirJves, to construct those points of identification, :liosc pasitionalitics wt call in mtrospect our “ctiiturnf identiscs. ”

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Populism that believes it can discover a people's true nature. A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence.

Literary Studies in an age of Environmental Crisis
– Cheryll Glotfelty

Literary studies in our postmodern age exist in a state of constant flux. Every few years, it seems, the profession of English must "redraw the boundaries" to "remap" the rapidly changing contours of the field. One recent, authoritative guide to contemporary literary studies contains a full twenty-one essays on different methodological or theoretical approaches to criticism. Its introduction observes:

> Literary studies in English are in a period of rapid and sometimes disorienting change. . . . Just as none of the critical approaches that antedate this period, from psychological and Marxist criticism to reader-response theory and cultural criticism, has remained stable, so none of the historical fields and subfields that constitute English and American literary studies has been left untouched by revisionist energies. . . . [The essays in this volume] disclose some of those places where scholarship has responded to contemporary pressures.[1]

Curiously enough, in this putatively comprehensive volume on the state of the profession, there is no essay on an ecological approach to literature. Although scholarship claims to have "responded to contemporary pressures," it has apparently ignored the most pressing contemporary issue of all, namely, the global environmental crisis. The absence of any sign of an environmental perspective in contemporary literary studies would seem to suggest that despite its "revisionist energies," scholarship remains *academic* in the sense of "scholarly to the point of being unaware of the outside world" (*American Heritage Dictionary*).

If your knowledge of the outside world were limited to what you could infer from the major publications of the literary profession, you would quickly discern that race, class, and gender were the hot topics of the late twentieth century, but you would never suspect that the earth's life support systems were under stress. Indeed, you might never know that there was an earth at all. In contrast, if you were to scan the newspaper headlines of the same period, you would learn of oil spills, lead and asbestos poisoning, toxic waste contamination, extinction of species at an unprecedented rate, battles over public land use, protests over nuclear waste dumps, a growing hole in the ozone layer, predictions of global warming, acid rain, loss of topsoil, destruction of the tropical rain forest, controversy over the Spotted Owl in the Pacific Northwest, a wildfire in Yellowstone Park, medical syringes washing onto the shores of Atlantic beaches, boycotts on tuna, overtapped aquifers in the West, illegal dumping in the East, a nuclear reactor disaster in Chernobyl, new auto emissions standards, famines, droughts, floods, hurricanes, a United Nations special conference on environment and development, a U.S. president declaring the 1990s "the decade of the environment," and a world population that topped five billion. Browsing through periodicals, you would discover that in 1989 *Time* magazine's person of the year award went to "The Endangered Earth."

In view of the discrepancy between current events and the preoccupations of the literary profession, the claim that literary scholarship has responded to contemporary pressures becomes difficult to defend. Until very recently there has been no sign that the institution of literary studies has even been aware of the environmental crisis. For instance, there have been no journals, no jargon, no jobs, no professional societies or discussion groups, and no conferences on literature and the environment. While related humanities disciplines, like history, philosophy, law, sociology, and religion have been "greening" since the 1970s, literary studies have apparently remained untinted by environmental concerns. And while social movements, like the civil rights and women's liberation movements of the sixties and seventies, have transformed literary studies, it would appear that the environmental movement of the same era has had little impact.

But appearances can be deceiving. In actual fact, as the publication dates for some of the essays in this anthology substantiate, individual literary and cultural scholars have been developing ecologically informed criticism and theory since the seventies; however, unlike their disciplinary cousins mentioned previously, they did not organize themselves into an identifi-

able group; hence, their various efforts were not recognized as belonging to a distinct critical school or movement. Individual studies appeared in a wide variety of places and were categorized under a miscellany of subject headings, such as American Studies, regionalism, pastoralism, the frontier, human ecology, science and literature, nature in literature, landscape in literature, or the names of the authors treated. One indication of the disunity of the early efforts is that these critics rarely cited one another's work; they didn't know that it existed. In a sense, each critic was inventing an environmental approach to literature in isolation. Each was a single voice howling in the wilderness. As a consequence, ecocriticism did not become a presence in the major institutions of power in the profession, such as the Modern Language Association (MLA). Graduate students interested in environmental approaches to literature felt like misfits, having no community of scholars to join and finding no job announcements in their area of expertise.

BIRTH OF ENVIRONMENTAL LITERARY STUDIES

Finally, in the mid-eighties, as scholars began to undertake collaborative projects, the field of environmental literary studies was planted, and in the early nineties it grew. In 1985 Frederick O. Waage edited *Teaching Environmental Literature: Materials, Methods, Resources,* which included course descriptions from nineteen different scholars and sought to foster "a greater presence of environmental concern and awareness in literary disciplines."[2] In 1989 Alicia Nitecki founded *The American Nature Writing Newsletter,* whose purpose was to publish brief essays, book reviews, classroom notes, and information pertaining to the study of writing on nature and the environment. Others have been responsible for special environmental issues of established literary journals.[3] Some universities began to include literature courses in their environmental studies curricula, a few inaugurated new institutes or programs in nature and culture, and some English departments began to offer a minor in environmental literature. In 1990 the University of Nevada, Reno, created the first academic position in Literature and the Environment.

Also during these years several special sessions on nature writing or environmental literature began to appear on the programs of annual literary conferences, perhaps most notably the 1991 MLA special session

organized by Harold Fromm, entitled "Ecocriticism: The Greening of Literary Studies," and the 1992 American Literature Association symposium chaired by Glen Love, entitled "American Nature Writing: New Contexts, New Approaches." In 1992, at the annual meeting of the Western Literature Association, a new Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was formed, with Scott Slovic elected first president. ASLE's mission: "to promote the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to literature that considers the relationship between human beings and the natural world" and to encourage "new nature writing, traditional and innovative scholarly approaches to environmental literature, and interdisciplinary environmental research." In its first year, ASLE's membership swelled to more than 300; in its second year that number doubled, and the group created an electronic-mail computer network to facilitate communication among members; in its third year, 1995, ASLE's membership had topped 750 and the group hosted its first conference, in Fort Collins, Colorado. In 1993 Patrick Murphy established a new journal, *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, to "provide a forum for critical studies of the literary and performing arts proceeding from or addressing environmental considerations. These would include ecological theory, environmentalism, conceptions of nature and their depictions, the human/nature dichotomy and related concerns."[4]

By 1993, then, ecological literary study had emerged as a recognizable critical school. The formerly disconnected scattering of lone scholars had joined forces with younger scholars and graduate students to become a strong interest group with aspirations to change the profession. The origin of ecocriticism as a critical approach thus predates its recent consolidation by more than twenty years.

DEFINITION OF ECOCRITICISM

What then *is* ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies.

Ecocritics and theorists ask questions like the following: How is nature

represented in this sonnet? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this novel? Are the values expressed in this play consistent with ecological wisdom? How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it? How can we characterize nature writing as a genre? In addition to race, class, and gender, should *place* become a new critical category? Do men write about nature differently than women do? In what ways has literacy itself affected humankind's relationship to the natural world? How has the concept of wilderness changed over time? In what ways and to what effect is the environmental crisis seeping into contemporary literature and popular culture? What view of nature informs U.S. Government reports, corporate advertising, and televised nature documentaries, and to what rhetorical effect? What bearing might the science of ecology have on literary studies? How is science itself open to literary analysis? What cross-fertilization is possible between literary studies and environmental discourse in related disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, art history, and ethics?

Despite the broad scope of inquiry and disparate levels of sophistication, all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman.

Ecocriticism can be further characterized by distinguishing it from other critical approaches. Literary theory, in general, examines the relations between writers, texts, and the world. In most literary theory "the world" is synonymous with society—the social sphere. Ecocriticism expands the notion of "the world" to include the entire ecosphere. If we agree with Barry Commoner's first law of ecology, "Everything is connected to everything else," we must conclude that literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but, rather, plays a part in an immensely complex global system, in which energy, matter, *and ideas* interact.

But the taxonomic name of this green branch of literary study is still being negotiated. In *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* (1972) Joseph W. Meeker introduced the term *literary ecology* to refer to "the study of biological themes and relationships which appear in literary works. It is simultaneously an attempt to discover what roles have been played by literature in the ecology of the human species."[5] The term *eco-*

criticism was possibly first coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (reprinted in this anthology). By ecocriticism Rueckert meant "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature." Rueckert's definition, concerned specifically with the science of ecology, is thus more restrictive than the one proposed in this anthology, which includes all possible relations between literature and the physical world.[6] Other terms currently in circulation include *ecopoetics, environmental literary criticism,* and *green cultural studies.*

Many critics write environmentally conscious criticism without needing or wanting a specific name for it. Others argue that a name is important. It was precisely because the early studies lacked a common subject heading that they were dispersed so widely, failed to build on one another, and became both difficult to access and negligible in their impact on the profession. Some scholars like the term *ecocriticism* because it is short and can easily be made into other forms like *ecocritical* and *ecocritic*. Additionally, they favor *eco-* over *enviro-* because, analogous to the science of ecology, ecocriticism studies relationships between things, in this case, between human culture and the physical world. Furthermore, in its connotations, *enviro-* is anthropocentric and dualistic, implying that we humans are at the center, surrounded by everything that is not us, the environment. *Eco-*, in contrast, implies interdependent communities, integrated systems, and strong connections among constituent parts. Ultimately, of course, usage will dictate which term or whether any term is adopted. But think of how convenient it would be to sit down at a computerized database and have a single term to enter for your subject search. . . .

THE HUMANITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

Regardless of what name it goes by, most ecocritical work shares a common motivation: the troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet's basic life support systems. We are there. Either we change our ways or we face global catastrophe, destroying much beauty and exterminating countless fellow species in our headlong race to apocalypse. Many of us in colleges and universities worldwide find ourselves in a dilemma. Our temperaments and talents have deposited us in literature

departments, but, as environmental problems compound, work as usual seems unconscionably frivolous. If we're not part of the solution, we're part of the problem.

How then can we contribute to environmental restoration, not just in our spare time, but from within our capacity as professors of literature?[7] The answer lies in recognizing that current environmental problems are largely of our own making, are, in other words, a by-product of culture. As historian Donald Worster explains,

> We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystems function but rather because of how our ethical systems function. Getting through the crisis requires understanding our impact on nature as precisely as possible, but even more, it requires understanding those ethical systems and using that understanding to reform them. Historians, along with literary scholars, anthropologists, and philosophers, cannot do the reforming, of course, but they can help with the understanding.[8]

Answering the call to understanding, scholars throughout the humanities are finding ways to add an environmental dimension to their respective disciplines. Worster and other historians are writing environmental histories, studying the reciprocal relationships between humans and land, considering nature not just as the stage upon which the human story is acted out, but as an actor in the drama. They trace the connections among environmental conditions, economic modes of production, and cultural ideas through time.

Anthropologists have long been interested in the connection between culture and geography. Their work on primal cultures in particular may help the rest of us not only to respect such people's right to survive, but also to think about the value systems and rituals that have helped these cultures live sustainably.

Psychology has long ignored nature in its theories of the human mind. A handful of contemporary psychologists, however, are exploring the linkages between environmental conditions and mental health, some regarding the modern estrangement from nature as the basis of our social and psychological ills.

In philosophy, various subfields like environmental ethics, deep ecology, ecofeminism, and social ecology have emerged in an effort to understand and critique the root causes of environmental degradation and to formulate an alternative view of existence that will provide an ethical and conceptual foundation for right relations with the earth.

Theologians, too, are recognizing that, as one book is subtitled, "The Environment Is a Religious Issue." While some Judeo-Christian theologians attempt to elucidate biblical precedents for good stewardship of the earth, others re-envision God as immanent in creation and view the earth itself as sacred. Still other theologians turn to ancient Earth Goddess worship, Eastern religious traditions, and Native American teachings, belief systems that contain much wisdom about nature and spirituality.[9]

Literary scholars specialize in questions of value, meaning, tradition, point of view, and language, and it is in these areas that they are making a substantial contribution to environmental thinking. Believing that the environmental crisis has been exacerbated by our fragmented, compartmentalized, and overly specialized way of knowing the world, humanities scholars are increasingly making an effort to educate themselves in the sciences and to adopt interdisciplinary approaches.

SURVEY OF ECOCRITICISM IN AMERICA

Many kinds of studies huddle under the spreading tree of ecological literary criticism, for literature and the environment is a big topic, and should remain that way. Several years ago, when I was attempting to devise a branding system that would make sense of this mixed herd, Wallace Stegner—novelist, historian, and literary critic—offered some wise counsel, saying that if he were doing it, he would be inclined to let the topic remain "large and loose and suggestive and open, simply literature and the environment and all the ways they interact and have interacted, without trying to codify and systematize. Systems are like wet rawhide," he warned; "when they dry they strangle what they bind."[10] Suggestive and open is exactly what ecocriticism ought to be, but in order to avoid confusion in the following brief survey of ecocritical work to date, I am going to do some codifying. Let us hereby agree that the system is not to be binding. Nonetheless, Elaine Showalter's model of the three developmental stages of feminist criticism provides a useful scheme for describing three analogous phases in ecocriticism.[11]

The first stage in feminist criticism, the "images of women" stage, is concerned with representations, concentrating on how women are portrayed in canonical literature. These studies contribute to the vital process of consciousness raising by exposing sexist stereotypes—witches, bitches,

broads, and spinsters—and by locating absences, questioning the purported universality and even the aesthetic value of literature that distorts or ignores altogether the experience of half of the human race. Analogous efforts in ecocriticism study how nature is represented in literature. Again, consciousness raising results when stereotypes are identified—Eden, Arcadia, virgin land, miasmal swamp, savage wilderness—and when absences are noticed: where *is* the natural world in this text? But nature per se is not the only focus of ecocritical studies of representation. Other topics include the frontier, animals, cities, specific geographical regions, rivers, mountains, deserts, Indians, technology, garbage, and the body.

Showalter's second stage in feminist criticism, the women's literary tradition stage, likewise serves the important function of consciousness raising as it rediscovers, reissues, and reconsiders literature by women. In ecocriticism, similar efforts are being made to recuperate the hitherto neglected genre of nature writing, a tradition of nature-oriented nonfiction that originates in England with Gilbert White's *A Natural History of Selbourne* (1789) and extends to America through Henry Thoreau, John Burroughs, John Muir, Mary Austin, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Edward Abbey, Annie Dillard, Barry Lopez, Terry Tempest Williams, and many others. Nature writing boasts a rich past, a vibrant present, and a promising future, and ecocritics draw from any number of existing critical theories—psychoanalytic, new critical, feminist, Bakhtinian, deconstructive—in the interests of understanding and promoting this body of literature. As evidence that nature writing is gaining ground in the literary marketplace, witness the staggering number of anthologies that have been published in recent years.[12] In an increasingly urban society, nature writing plays a vital role in teaching us to value the natural world.

Another effort to promulgate environmentally enlightened works examines mainstream genres, identifying fiction and poetry writers whose work manifests ecological awareness. Figures like Willa Cather, Robinson Jeffers, W. S. Merwin, Adrienne Rich, Wallace Stegner, Gary Snyder, Mary Oliver, Ursula Le Guin, and Alice Walker have received much attention, as have Native American authors, but the horizon of possibilities remains suggestively open. Corresponding to the feminist interest in the lives of women authors, ecocritics have studied the environmental conditions of an author's life—the influence of place on the imagination—demonstrating that where an author grew up, traveled, and wrote is pertinent to an understanding of his or her work. Some critics find it worthwhile to visit the

all an Author liVed anal rote about, lit tally retracing the footsteps of John Muir in the Sierra, for example, to experience his mountain raptures personally, or paddling down the Merrimac River to apprehend better the phys ıl context of Thoreau's meandering prose.

The third stage that Showalter identifies in feminist criticism is the theo— h:ñczl phase, which is far reaching and complex, drawing on a wide range of theories to raise fundamental questions about the symbolic CORStruC- tion of gender and sexuality within lite dixourse. Analogous work in ecocriticism includes examining the sym& lic construction of species. 'How has,liprary discourse defined the human? Such a critique questions the dualisms prevalent in Western thought, dualisms that separate mean- ieg from matter, sever mind from body, divide men from women, and wrench humanity from nature. A related endeavor is being carried out under the hybrid label "ecofeminism," a theoretical discourse whose theme is the link between the oppression of women and the domination of nature. Yet another theoretical project attempts to develop an ecological poetics, taking the science of ecology, with its concept of the ecosystem and its emphasis on interconnections and energy flow, as a metaphor for the way poetry functions in society. Ecocritics are also considering the philosophy currently known as deep ecology, exploring the implications that its radical critique of anthropocentrism might have for literary study.

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An ecologically focused criticism is a worthy enterprise primarily because it directs our attention to matters about which we need to be thinking. Consciousness raising is its most important task. For how can we solve vironmental problems unless we start thinking about them?

I noted above that ecocritics have aspirations to change the profession. Perhaps I should have written that I have such aspirations for ecocriticism. I would like to see ecocriticism become a chapter of the next *book* that redraws the boundaries of literary studies. : uld like' to see a position in every literature department for a specialist in literature and the environ- ment. Idlii to see candidates running on a green platform elected to the highest offices in our professional organizations. We have witnessed the feminist and multi-ethnic critical movements radically transform the pro- fession, the j b market, and the canon. And because they have transformed the profession, they are h*lp» gt» transform the world.

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A strong voice in the profession will enable ecocritics to be influential in mandating important changes in the canon, the curriculum, and university policy. We will see books like Aldo Leopold's A Sand Ca«nfy Wmnm‹ and Edward Abbey's Desert *Solitaire* become standed texts for courses in American literature. Students taking literature and composition courses will be encouraged to think seriously about the relationship of humans to nature, about the ethical and aesthetic dilemmas posed by the environmental crisis, and about how language and literature transmit values with profound ecological implications. Colleges and universities of the twenty-first century will require that all students complete at least one interdisciplinary course in environmental studies. Institutions of higher learning will one day do business on recycled-content paper—some institutions already do.

In the future we can expect to see ecocritical scholarship becoming ever more interdisciplinary, multicultural, and international. The interdisciplinary work is well underway,and could be further facilitated by inviting experts from a wide range of disciplines to be guest speakers at: literary conferences and by hosting more interdisciplinary conferences on environmental topics. Ecocriticism has|bcen predomin=* r a white movement. It will btcome a multi-ethnic, movement when stronger connections are made between. the environment and issues of social justice, .and when a diversity of voices are encouraged to :contribute to the discussion. This volume focuses on ecocritical work in the United States. The next collection may well be:an international one, for environmental problems are now global in scale and their solution5 will require worldwide collaboration.[1']

In zq8s. Loren Acton, a Montana ranch boy turned solar astronomer, flew on the Challenger Eight space:shuttle as payload specialist. His observations may.strve to remind us,of the!global context of ecocritical work:

> Looking outward to the blackness of space, sprinkled with the glory of a universe of lights, I saw majesty bit no welcome. 'Below was a welcoming planet. There, contained 'm die thin, moving, incredibly fragile' shell of the biosphere is everything that d dear to you, all the human drama and comedy. That's where life is; that's where all the good stuff is.[14]

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