PERIYAR UNIVERSITY

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SALEM - 636 011, Tamil Nadu, India.

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION

(CDOE)

M.A ENGLISH

SEMESTER - III

CORE VII - LITERARY THEORY

(Candidates admitted from 2024 onwards)

PERIYAR UNIVERSITY

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION (CDOE)

M.A 2024 admission onwards

CORE VII

LITERARY THEORY

CORE VII - LITERARY THEORY

Subject Code	Subject Name	Category	L	T	P	S	Credits	Inst Hours	Marks		
		Core	Y	Y	-	-	5	5	25	75	100

Course Objectives	
LO1	To familiarize learners with how unique experiences of Theorist influence their writings
LO2	To help learners analyze representations of Literary Theories.
LO3	To enable learners to be familiar with various contexts that influences the representation of Literary Theories.
LO4	To enable learners apply appropriate formal conventions when writing about literature
LO5	To help learners in understanding how and on what grounds Literary Theoriescan be considered as aseparate genre.

Syllabus

Unit	Details	No. of Hours	Course Objectives
I	John Keats : From *The Letters* – 1,4,5,7 Maud Bodkin : Archetypes in *The Ancient Mariner*	5	C1
II	Virginia Woolf : Modern Fiction I.A.Richards : The Two Uses of Language	5	C2
III	M.H.Abrams : Orientation of Critical Theories George Orwell : Politics and the English Language	5	C3
IV	Helen Gardiner : The Sceptre and the Torch Roland Barthes : The Death of the Author	5	C4

V	Geoffrey Hartman: The Interpreter's Freud Juliet Mitchell: Femininity, Narrative and PsychoanalysisAnalysis – Themes- Techniques	5	C5
	TOTAL	25	

COURSE OUTCOMES

Course outcomes	On completion of the course, the student will,	Program outcomes
CO1	develop new perspectives and critical outlook for performing literary research CO2	PO1
CO1	develop new perspectives and critical outlook for performing literary research CO2	PO1,PO2
CO1	develop new perspectives and critical outlook for performing literary research CO2	PO4,PO6
CO1	develop new perspectives and critical outlook for performing literary research CO2	PO4,PO5,PO6
CO1	develop new perspectives and critical outlook for performing literary research CO2	PO3,PO8

Text Books (Latest Editions)

1.	Books Prescribed: 1. Lodge, David, editor. Twentieth Century Literary Criticis: A Reader. 1st ed., Longman, 1989.
2.	Books Prescribed: 1. Lodge, David, editor. Twentieth Century Literary Criticis: A Reader. 1st ed., Longman, 1989.
3.	Nigel Wood, editors. Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader. 3rd ed., Routledge,
4.	Nayar ,Pramod K. Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: From Structuralism and Ecocriticim. Pearson, 2022
5.	Nayar ,Pramod K. Literary Theory Today. Asia Book Club, 2017.6.Ramaswamy,S. and V.S. Seturaman.English Critical Tradition: An Anthology of English
6.	Literary Criticism.Vol. 1, Macmillan, 1986.

7.	English Critical Tradition: An Anthology of English Literary Criticism. Vol. Macmillan, 1986.
References Books (Latest editions, and the style as given below must be strictly adhered to)	
1.	Abrams, M.H. The Mirror and the Lamp. Oxford University Press, 1953.
2.	Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin, editors. Post Colonial Studies Reader. Routledge, 1995.
3.	Barry, Peter. Beginning Theory. Manchester University Press, 1995.
4.	Daiches, David. Critical Approaches to Literature. Revised Edition, Orient Longman, 1984
5.	Dorsch, T.S., translator.Classical Literary Criticism. Penguin Books, 1965. (two volumes)
6.	Seturaman, V.S., editor.Contemporary Criticism. Macmillan, 1989.
7.	Wimsatt and Brooks, editors.Literary Criticism - A Short History. Prentice-Hall, 1957.
Web Resources	
1.	http://kamarajcollege.ac.in/Department/English/III%20Year/002%20Core%20%2012%20Literary%20Critics%20and%20Approaches%20-%20V%20Sem%20BA%20English.pdf
2.	https://www.litcharts.com/lit/poetics/summary
3.	https://study.com/learn/lesson/poetics-aristotle-summary-analysis.html
4.	https://maulanaazadcollegekolkata.ac.in/pdf/open-resources/The-Metaphysical-Poets-Essay.pdf
5.	http://albertsliterature.blogspot.com/2012/02/northrop-frye-archetypes-of-literature.html
6.	https://www.jstor.org/stable/27537676
7.	https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/epgpdata/uploads/epgp_content/S000013EN/P001455/M019977/ET/1 519810335Paper11,Module11,EText.pdf III Semester

CORE VII - LITERARY THEORY

UNIT I			
LESSON 1	JOHN KEATS- FROM THE LETTERS	PPT	VIDEO
1.1	AUTHOR INTRODUCTION		
1.2	ON BEING A POET		
1.3	KEAT'S ODES AN OVERVIEW		
1.4	INTRODUCTION OF KEATS' LETTERS		
1.5	LET US SUM UP		
1.6	CHECK YOUR PROGRESS		
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LESSON 2	MAUD BODKIN: ARCHETYPES IN THE ANCIENT MARINER		
2.1	AUTHOR INTRODUCTION		
2.2	AN INTRODUCTION TO ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS IN POETRY		
2.3	LET US SUM UP		
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UNIT II			
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3.2	SUMMARY		
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LESSON 4:	I.A.RICHARDS- THE TWO USES OF LANGUAGE		
4.1	AUTHOUR INTRODUCTION		
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UNIT I

LESSON 1: JOHN KEATS- FROM THE LETTERS

1.1 AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

English Romantic lyric poet John Keats was dedicated to the perfection of poetry marked by vivid imagery that expressed a philosophy through classical legend.

If Poetry comes not as naturally as Leaves to a tree it had better not come at all. —John Keats

Born in London, England, on October 31, 1795, John Keats devoted his short life to the perfection of poetry marked by vivid imagery, great sensuous appeal and an attempt to express a philosophy through classical legend. In 1818 he went on a walking tour in the Lake District. His exposure and overexertion on that trip brought on the first symptoms of the tuberculosis, which ended his life.

1.1.1 EARLY YEARS

A revered English poet whose short life spanned just 25 years, John Keats was born October 31, 1795, in London, England. He was the oldest of Thomas and Frances Keats' four children. Keats lost his parents at an early age. He was eight years old when his father, a livery stable-keeper, was killed after being trampled by a horse.

His father's death had a profound effect on the young boy's life. In a more abstract sense, it shaped Keats' understanding for the human condition, both its suffering and its loss. This tragedy and others helped ground Keats' later poetry—one that found its beauty and grandeur from the human experience. In a more mundane sense, Keats' father's death greatly disrupted the family's financial security.

His mother, Frances, seemed to have launched a series of missteps and mistakes after her husband's death; she quickly remarried and just as quickly lost a good portion of the family's wealth. After her second marriage fell apart, Frances left the family, leaving

her children in the care of her mother. She eventually returned to her children's life, but her life was in tatters. In early 1810, she died of tuberculosis.

During this period, Keats found solace and comfort in art and literature. At Enfield Academy, where he started shortly before his father's passing, Keats proved to be a voracious reader. He also became close to the school's headmaster, John Clarke, who served as a sort of a father figure to the orphaned student and encouraged Keats' interest in literature.

Back home, Keats' maternal grandmother turned over control of the family's finances, which was considerable at the time, to a London merchant named Richard Abbey. Overzealous in protecting the family's money, Abbey showed himself to be reluctant to let the Keats children spend much of it. He refused to be forthcoming about how much money the family actually had and in some cases was downright deceitful.

There is some debate as to whose decision it was to pull Keats out of Enfield, but in the fall of 1810, Keats left the school for studies to become a surgeon. He eventually studied medicine at a London hospital and became a licensed apothecary in 1816.

1.1.2 EARLY POETRY

But Keats' career in medicine never truly took off. Even as he studied medicine, Keats' devotion to literature and the arts never ceased. Through his friend, Cowden Clarke, whose father was the headmaster at Enfield, Keats met publisher, Leigh Hunt of The Examiner.

Hunt's radicalism and biting pen had landed him in prison in 1813 for libeling Prince Regent. Hunt, though, had an eye for talent and was an early supporter of Keats poetry and became his first publisher.

Through Hunt, Keats was introduced to a world of politics that was new to him and had greatly influenced what he put on the page. In honor of Hunt, Keats wrote the sonnet, "Written on the Day that Mr. Leigh Hunt Left Prison." In addition to affirming Keats' standing as a poet, Hunt also introduced the young poet to a group of other English poets, including Percy Bysshe Shelley and Williams Wordsworth.

In 1817 Keats leveraged his new friendships to publish his first volume of poetry, Poems by John Keats. The following year, Keats' published "Endymion," a mammoth four-thousand line poem based on the Greek myth of the same name. Keats had written the poem in the summer and fall of 1817, committing himself to at least 40 lines a day. He completed the work in November of that year and it was published in April 1818.

Keats' daring and bold style earned him nothing but criticism from two of England's more revered publications, Blackwood's Magazine and theQuarterly Review. The attacks were an extension of heavy criticism lobbed at Hunt and his cadre of young poets. The most damning of those pieces had come from Blackwood's, whose piece, "On the Cockney School of Poetry," shook Keats and made him nervous to publish "Endymion."

Keats' hesitation was warranted. Upon its publication the lengthy poem received a lashing from the more conventional poetry community. One critic called the work, the "imperturbable driveling idiocy of Endymion." Others found the four-book structure and its general flow hard to follow and confusing.

1.1.3 RECOVERING POET

How much of an effect this criticism had on Keats is uncertain, but it is clear that he did take notice of it. But Shelley's later accounts of how the criticism destroyed the young poet and led to his declining health, however, have been refuted. Keats in fact, had already moved beyond "Endymion" even before it was published. By the end of 1817, he was reexamining poetry's role in society. In lengthy letters to friends,

Keats outlined his vision of a kind of poetry that drew its beauty from real world human experience rather than some mythical grandeur. Keats was also formulating the thinking behind his most famous doctrine,Negative Capability, which is the idea that humans are capable of transcending intellectual or social constraints and far exceed, creatively or intellectually, what human nature is thought to allow.

In effect Keats was responding to his critics, and conventional thinking in general, which sought to squeeze the human experience into a closed system with tidy labels and rational relationships. Keats saw a world more chaotic, more creative than what others he felt, would permit.

1.1.4 THE MATURE POET

In the summer of 1818, Keats took a walking tour in Northern England and Scotland. He returned home later that year to care for his brother, Tom, who'd fallen deeply ill with tuberculosis. Keats, who around this time fell in love with a woman named Fanny Brawne, continued to write. He'd proven prolific for much of the past year. His work included his first Shakespearean sonnet, "When I have fears that I may cease to be," which was published in January 1818.

Two months later, Keats published "Isabella," a poem that tells the story of a woman who falls in love with a man beneath her social standing, instead of the man her family has chosen her to marry. The work was based on a story from Italian poet Giovanni Boccaccio, and it's one Keats himself would grow to dislike.

His work also included the beautiful "To Autumn," a sensuous work published in 1820 that describes ripening fruit, sleepy workers, and a maturing sun. The poem, and others, demonstrated a style Keats himself had crafted all his own, one that was filled with more sensualities than any contemporary Romantic poetry.

Keats' writing also revolved around a poem he called "Hyperion," an ambitious Romantic piece inspired by Greek myth that told the story of the Titans' despondency after their losses to the Olympians. But the death of Keats' brother halted his writing. He finally returned to the work in late 1819, rewriting his unfinished poem with a new title, "The Fall of Hyperion," which would go unpublished until more than three decades after Keats' death.

This, of course, speaks to the small audience for Keats' poetry during his lifetime. In all, the poet published three volumes of poetry during his life but managed to sell just a combined 200 copies of his work by the time of his death in 1821. His third and final volume of poetry, Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems, was published in July 1820.

Only with the help of his friends, who pushed hard to secure Keats' legacy, and the work and style of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, the Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom during the latter half of the 19th century, did Keats' stock rise considerably.

1.1.5 FINAL YEARS

In 1819 Keats contracted tuberculosis. His health deteriorated quickly. Soon after his last volume of poetry was published, he ventured off to Italy with his close friend, the painter Joseph Severn, on the advice of his doctor, who had told him he needed to be in a warmer climate for the winter. The trip marked the end of his romance with Fanny Brawne.

His health issues and his own dreams of becoming a successful writer had stifled their chances of ever getting married. Keats arrived in Rome in November of that year and for a brief time started to feel better. But within a month, he was back in bed, suffering from a high temperature. The last few months of his life proved particularly painful for the poet. His doctor in Rome placed Keats on a strict diet that consisted of a single anchovy and a piece of bread per day in order to limit the flow of blood to the stomach.

He also induced heavy bleeding, resulting in Keats suffering from both a lack of oxygen and a lack of food. Keats' agony was so severe that at one point he pressed his doctor and asked him, "How long is this posthumous existence of mine to go on?" Keats' death came on February 23, 1821. It's believed he was clutching the hand of his friend, Joseph Severn, at the time of his passing.

1.2 ON BEING A POET

“I have asked myself so often why I should be a Poet more than other Men, – seeing how great a thing it is, – how great things are to be gained by it – What a thing to be in the Mouth of Fame – that at last the Idea has grown so monstrously beyond my seeming Power of attainment that the other day I nearly consented with myself to drop into a Phaeton – yet ’tis a disgrace to fail even in a huge attempt, and at this moment I drive the thought from me.”

Poetry was clearly the dominant power and driving force behind Keats’ short life. He writes passionately to his friends about his ambitions, about poetry and death, and his dedication to literary achievement. At one point he writes, “I read and write about eight hours a day.” and expresses his dedication to perfection when he states, “…truth is I have been in such a state of Mind as to read over my Lines and hate them.” In his letters to his

colleagues and his brother, his poetic outlook on life and nature is outstanding and shows that it is possible to achieve the most perfect representation of poetic existence.

On June 25-27, 1818, John Keats writes to his brother: “I shall learn poetry here and shall henceforth write more than ever, for the abstract endeavor of being able to add a mite to that mass of beauty which is harvested from these grand materials, by the finest spirits, and put into ethereal existence for the relish of one’s fellows.” Keats is seemingly aware of his gift and strives to perfect his existing talents in order to achieve and exude what it truly is to be, in his mind, an enlightened poet.

1.2.1“NEGATIVE CAPABILITY”

Keats defines negative capability as, “when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.” On a personal level, poetry is shaped by a writer’s personal interests and beliefs. Objectively, however, the poet is receptive to “uncertainties” of experience, like death, sickness or unknowing. Any contrariness is overcome by Beauty. (Norton p 942 footnote) He believed Shakespeare was a master of seeing the truth in all the honesty of its contradictions.

In a letter to Richard Woodhouse in October, 1818, (Norton p 947) Keats claims that the poet is a “(camelion… is it supposed to be chameleon?),” relishing the dark side as well as the bright “because they both end in speculation.” He has “as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen.” “A poet has to show some truth and pleasure and overcome any unpleasant aspect,” and just as a philosopher or scientist arrives at a conclusion, a poem must be a conclusive work, and Beauty is what enables him to arrive at a complete work of art.

1.2.2 “TRUTH IS BEAUTY AND BEAUTY IS TRUTH”

According to *The Norton Anthology*, this expression could also be known as “beauty is reality” or “beauty is real” which basically breaks down to the fact that beauty is all around us. “O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts!” Since the publication of “Ode to Grecian Urn,” in 1819, one of the most widely and deeply discussed lines has been, “‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty,’ -that is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.” This statement becomes “true” for every person when beautiful moments occur.

These instants of beauty are associated with life actions, and are consequently interpreted in an infinite amount of ways.

The message Keats wishes to convey is that poetry may be the mode for the expression of beauty. In a letter to his brother and sister in 1819, he wrote, “The great beauty of Poetry is, that it makes every thing every place interesting.” A few years prior to “Grecian Urn,” Keats wrote a letter to Benjamin Bailey (1817) which documented the beginnings of the beauty/ truth theology, “What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth.” If beauty is true, it raises a good question. What is beauty? It is no definitive thing. We might be able to find examples of beauty, but beauty itself is merely a concept. This concept is truthful to each human, individually. This transcendent view of beauty is something that marked the Romantic period of British literature.

Keats believed that experience was the key to finding our souls, that our hearts and minds arrive at a divinity in this world. He did not believe that we struggle in this “vale of tears” and are taken to heaven by God. “What a little circumscribed and straightened notion,” he writes to his brother and sister-in-law in 1819. Our intelligences are “sparks of the divinity..atoms of perception” that know, see and are God. They ‘become’ souls “by the medium of a world like this.” The world is like a school of learning in which our heart through circumstances learns to have a soul. Man’s heart is tested by his experience and his altered nature is his soul. (Norton p 952)

1.3 KEAT’S ODES AN OVERVIEW

Taken together, the odes do not exactly tell a story—there is no unifying “plot” and no recurring characters—and there is little evidence that Keats intended them to stand together as a single work of art. Nevertheless, the extraordinary number of suggestive interrelations between them is impossible to ignore. The odes explore and develop the same themes, partake of many of the same approaches and images, and, ordered in a certain way, exhibit an unmistakable psychological development. This is not to say that the poems do not stand on their own—they do, magnificently; one of the greatest felicities of the sequence is that it can be entered at any point, viewed wholly or partially from any perspective, and still prove moving and rewarding to read. There has been a great deal of critical debate over how to treat the voices that speak the poems—are they meant to

be read as though a single person speaks them all, or did Keats invent a different persona for each ode?

There is no right answer to the question, but it is possible that the question itself is wrong: The consciousness at work in each of the odes is unmistakably Keats's own. Of course, the poems are not explicitly autobiographical (it is unlikely that all the events really *happened* to Keats), but given their sincerity and their shared frame of thematic reference, there is no reason to think that they do not come from the same part of Keats's mind—that is to say, that they are not all told by the same part of Keats's reflected self. In that sense, there is no harm in treating the odes a sequence of utterances told in the same voice. The psychological progress from "Ode on Indolence" to "To Autumn" is intimately personal, and a great deal of that intimacy is lost if one begins to imagine that the odes are spoken by a sequence of fictional characters. When you think of "the speaker" of these poems, think of Keats as he would have imagined himself while writing them. As you trace the speaker's trajectory from the numb drowsiness of "Indolence" to the quiet wisdom of "Autumn," try to hear the voice develop and change under the guidance of Keats's extraordinary language.

Keats's intoxication of Poetry can be illuminated if we begin by observing his "Ode on Indolence". Poetry, personified as Poesy, is described as she "whom [Keats] love[s] more, the more of blame / is heap'd upon her, maiden most unmeek" (28-29). This reveals his admiration and respect for Poetry, as opposed to the other two figures in "Indolence", who are described less adoringly. Love is, rather simply, a fair woman, while Ambition is pale and weary. The fact that Keats later refers to Poesy as his "demon" also demonstrates his bittersweet notions of poetry as a guiding force in life as well as a fatal attraction (30). It is a 'curse' that he seems unable to rid himself of.

In "Ode on Melancholy", this curse is illustrated using Roman mythology, which Keats often alludes to throughout the odes. The speaker warns one suffering from melancholy to not "be kissed / by nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine" (3-4). Proserpine, or Persephone in Greek mythology, was the goddess of spring and daughter of Ceres, the Olympian goddess of the harvest and fertility ("Persephone"). According to

Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Proserpine was kidnapped by Pluto, god of the Underworld, who saw her in a grove and grew mad with lust (V. 386-400). Ceres killed off all the crops of humanity and spread famine until her daughter would return (V. 464-483). Jupiter, king of the gods, promised she could return if she had not eaten anything while in the Underworld. Seeing as she had been tempted to eat some pomegranate seeds, Proserpine was cursed to remain in the Underworld for four months every year, during which Ceres would prevent the growing of crops (V. 535-551). It can be argued that this curse or "intoxication" is reminiscent of the affliction Keats feels from poetry. Just as she must remain in the Underworld, Keats must continue in his poetry. The fact that Proserpine experienced and tasted the cause of her curse also emphasizes the notions that poetry originates from the senses for Keats. The speaker in "Melancholy" warns those who are suffering from melancholy not to poison themselves, as Proserpine and Keats have, but to enjoy the emotions and experiences of the mind which has been gained through the senses.

The image of ingesting and experiencing reoccurs in "To Autumn", in which the season of Autumn is personified as a goddess that fills up the objects of nature with a sort of ripeness or fulfillment. She is described as having her "hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind, / or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep, / drowsed with the fume of poppies…" (15-17). Here, Nature is intoxicated by the scent of poppies, which is an obvious allusion to opium. Britain was introduced to the opium trade in the 18th century and soon became one of the leaders in opium cultivation ("Opium Trade"). Opium was also popular amongst literary circles (Berridge), and so Keats may have consumed opium at some point in his life. Autumn, like Proserpine, takes part in pleasures of the world of the senses; however the former is also the source of Keats's poetry. By extension, Keats's poetry can thus be seen as deriving from the senses on many levels; his muse is Nature, who herself indulges in the pleasures of Nature.

In "Ode to a Nightingale", the world of the senses is somewhat rejected; the speaker wishes to leave behind sight, taste, smell and touch for the sound of the nightingale's melody (31-33). The song of the nightingale is an immortal and inspirational tune (61-62), which can be a metaphor for how Keats thinks about art; it is both eternal

and able to make things eternal, however this is seen more clearly in “Ode on a Grecian Urn”.

In the second stanza of “Nightingale”, the speaker wishes to taste wine “with beaded bubbles winking at the brim, / and purple-stained mouth; / that [he] might dink, and leave the world unseen” (17-19). Alcohol, here, is the inspiration for his poetry and brings him closer to the song of the nightingale (20). The use of the word “stained” to describe his mouth also holds connotations of pleasure and gluttony (18).

This description of sensual pleasures as a “staining” experience foreshadows the dismissal of the senses in the fourth stanza, in which the speaker wishes to reach the nightingale’s song, “not charioted by Bacchus and his pards, but on the viewless wings of Poesy” (32-33). Although the senses are undoubtedly linked to Keats’s poetry, his art ultimately lies in the abstract dimensions of his own mind.

This abstraction is most evident in “Ode to Psyche”, in which Keats literally transforms his own mind into a temple for the contents of his poetry’s narrative. “Psyche” imagines the goddess lying in a bed of grass next to her lover Cupid, who is referred to as Love (20-21).

In the third stanza, the speaker observes and laments the fact that Psyche seems to have no shrine or altar to worship her, no choir to sing for her, no incense burnt in her name and no oracles to prophesy through her (28-34). In the final stanza, the speaker takes it upon himself to be her “priest, and build a fane / in some untrodden region of [his] mind, / where branched thoughts . . . shall murmur in the wind” (50-52). The poet acknowledges that the prime seat of poetry should be in the mind; the imagination is, after all, what poetry fundamentally requires.

This “rosy sanctuary [will be dressed] / with the wreath’d trellis of a working brain … / and a bright torch…to let the warm Love in” (59-67). Here, the poet himself is submitted into the narrative of Cupid and Psyche; Cupid will enter the mind of the poet, attracted by Psyche. In simpler terms, Psyche, or Keats’s poetry in general, literally and

metaphorically rest in his own brain, housed by the 'temple' that he has created in order to enter and *become* Poetry itself.

*"*Ode to Psyche*"* provides an example of the way in which poetry is ultimately a mental event for Keats. This mentality can be first observed in "Ode to a Nightingale*"*, which initially demonstrates how the senses are linked to poetry, but concludes with focus being placed on the mind. "To Autumn*"* makes the senses explicit as the starting point of Keats's poetry and the intoxication of the poet as necessarily having to write poetry is illustrated through images from Roman mythology in "Ode on Melancholy*".* The "Ode on Indolence*",* however, personifies poetry into a goddess, Poesy, in order to speak directly to the figure that, fortunately for us, plagued Keats all throughout his life.

1.4 INTRODUCTION OF KEATS' LETTERS

Keats' contemporaries wrote specific essays and prefaces in defense of poetry, but Keats did not. He is known for the luxurious and sensational quality of his poems. These works of "art for art's sake" leave an impression of a young sensual poet who lacks depth. When his biography was published almost thirty years after his death, his letters revealed the depth to which he had thought about poetry and life. Norton claimed that Keats explored every seed of thought that he and his friends Cole and Hazlitt discussed, and these letters do indeed show that no examination of any subject was final. He was always pursuing new meaning. (p 940)

T. S. Eliot believed his judgment of poetry to be "genius" for a man so young. His 'philosophic mind' allowed him to shed his ego and "let the mind be a thoroughfare for all thoughts." Walter Jackson Bate believed that this saved him from not having to reject any thought that cannot be "wrenched into a …systematic structure of one's own making" (Modern Library). Lionel Trilling wrote that in Keats "we have the wisdom of maturity arising from the preoccupations of youth." (p 5)Keats spent his short life discussing and pursuing the "burden of the mystery.' (Keats liked to use Wordsworth's phrase)

John Keats was a famous English poet who lived during the Romantic period, which was a time when people emphasised emotions, imagination, and individualism.

Keats wrote many letters throughout his life that provide insight into his thoughts, feelings, and experiences as a poet.

One thing that we can learn from Keats' letters is how important personal experience was to his poetry. Keats often drew on his own emotions and life events to create his poetry. For example, he wrote a famous poem called "Ode to a Nightingale" that reflects his feelings of illness and the fear of death.

Keats was also interested in philosophy and how it related to his poetry. He explored ideas about beauty, truth, and the nature of existence in his writing. He was particularly influenced by classical literature, such as Greek mythology and the works of Plato.

Despite being a famous poet today, Keats faced criticism during his lifetime, particularly for his poem "Endymion." His letters show how he dealt with this criticism and how it influenced his poetry.

Overall, Keats' letters provide a unique window into the life and work of one of the most

important poets of the Romantic era. They reveal his dedication to his craft, his relationships with other writers, and his thoughts on literature, philosophy, and personal experience.

Keats' relationships with other writers: Keats had close relationships with other writers of his time, including Percy Shelley and William Wordsworth. His letters reveal the extent to which

these relationships influenced his work and creative process. By examining Keats' correspondence with other writers, we can gain a deeper understanding of the collaborative nature of literary creation.

Keats' writing process: Keats' letters provide insight into his writing process, including his methods for generating ideas, his approach to revising his work, and his thoughts on the role of inspiration in artistic creation. By examining Keats' letters on the writing process, we can gain a better understanding of how a great poet approached his craft.

Keats' thoughts on poetry: Keats was deeply committed to poetry as an art form and wrote extensively about his thoughts on its importance and purpose. His letters reveal his ideas about the role of poetry in society, its relationship to truth and beauty, and its ability to capture and express human experience. By studying Keats' letters on the subject of poetry, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the power and significance of this art form.

Keats' personal life: Keats' letters also reveal details about his personal life, including his relationships with family and friends, his thoughts on love and romance, and his struggles with illness and mortality. By examining Keats' personal letters, we can gain a deeper understanding of the man behind the poetry and the ways in which his personal experiences shaped his work.

Keats' impact on literature: Keats is considered one of the most important poets of the Romantic era, and his influence can be seen in the work of many writers who came after him. By studying Keats' letters alongside his poetry, we can gain a better understanding of his impact on English literature and the ways in which his ideas and techniques continue to influence writers today.

Overall, the letters of John Keats offer a wealth of insights into the life and work of a great poet. By examining these letters, we can gain a deeper appreciation for Keats' creative process,his thoughts on literature and poetry, and the impact of his personal life on his work.

The role of the Romantic movement: Keats was one of the most prominent poets of the Romantic era, which emphasised emotion, imagination, and individualism. His letters reveal his own commitment to these ideals, as well as his relationships with other Romantic writers such as Shelley and Wordsworth. By studying Keats' letters, we can gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the Romantic movement on English literature.

The importance of personal experience: Keats often drew upon his own experiences and emotions in his poetry, and his letters reveal the extent to which his personal life influenced his work. For example, his feelings of illness and mortality are evident in his poetry, particularly in works such as "Ode to a Nightingale." By examining

Keats' letters alongside his poetry, we can gain a greater appreciation for the role of personal experience in artistic expression.

The relationship between poetry and philosophy: Keats was deeply interested in philosophical ideas, particularly those related to beauty, truth, and the nature of existence. His letters reveal his engagement with these concepts, as well as his efforts to incorporate them into his poetry. By studying Keats' letters alongside his poetry, we can gain insight into the complex relationship between literature and philosophy.

The influence of classical literature: Keats was heavily influenced by the literature and philosophy of the ancient world, particularly Greek mythology and the works of Plato. His letters reveal the extent to which these influences informed his own writing, and the ways in which he sought to incorporate classical ideas and imagery into his poetry. By studying Keats' letters, we can gain a deeper understanding of the impact of classical literature on English Romanticism.

The reception of Keats' work: Keats faced harsh criticism from some of his contemporaries, particularly in response to his poem "Endymion." His letters reveal the ways in which he coped with this criticism, as well as the extent to which it influenced his own artistic development. By examining Keats' letters alongside his poetry, we can gain a better understanding of the impact of critical reception on literary creativity.

Overall, the letters of John Keats offer a rich and multifaceted perspective on one of the most important poets of the Romantic era. They reveal his dedication to poetry, his relationships with other writers and artists, his engagement with philosophical and literary ideas, and his struggle with illness and mortality. By examining Keats' letters in literary criticism, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the complexity and beauty of his work, and for the impact of the Romantic movement on English literature.

1.4.1 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF LETTER TO J.H. REYNOLDS (3 MAY 1818):

John Hamilton Reynolds (1794-1852) met Keats at Leigh Hunt’s home in October 1816. Reynolds later introduced Keats to Charles Brown, James Rice, Benjamin Bailey, Charles Wentworth Dilke (among others), as well as his future publisher, John Taylor.

Reynolds had dabbled in poetry himself but abandoned it for a career in law. He was a passionate advocate of Keats's work and a devoted friend. They discussed poetry and planned several works together.

This letter, written when Keats was 22 years old and nursing his brother Tom, is justly famous. He discusses the Reformation, Milton, his contemporary Wordsworth, and even quotes Lord Byron. The letter also contains his 'Mansion of Many Apartments' metaphor

The letter begins by talking about the acquisition of knowledge. The more you acquire, the more you realize that every area of study -- "every department" -- is in the service of a "great" general whole. Keats is, therefore, happy that he kept his medical books, so that he can continue to study them from time to time. He then notes that knowledge balances one during experiences of "high Sensations" -- i.e. emotional upheaval.

Keats notes that Reynolds seems to be making his way through the same mental/emotional "labyrinth" that he (Keats) has explored, except that Reynolds appears to have been experiencing even more dismal emotions. Wordsworth has been a help for Keats in this area. Calling forth another famed English poet, Keats wonders whether John Milton's comparatively "less anxiety for Humanity" is a result of his not seeing as far as the "epically passionate" Wordsworth. Wordsworth's humanity-bound philosophy seems to have personally resonated with Keats, as Keats writes, "Axioms in philosophy are not axioms until they are proved upon our pulses." Mentioning Byron's adage, "Knowledge is sorrow" (a sentiment which, after all, goes back to the Hebrew Bible), Keats takes the idea of knowledge a couple of steps further, arguing that "Sorrow is wisdom" and that "Wisdom is folly."

As a way of showing "how tall I [Keats] stand by the giant [Wordsworth]," Keats describes his view of "human life" (although his view seems mainly to be a reflection of intellectual life only). Life is a "Mansion of Many Apartments," of which Keats knows only two. The first is the "infant or thoughtless chamber," where we remain as long as we do not think. Eventually, through the "awakening of the thinking principle within us," we continue on to the second chamber, "Maiden Thought." At first, we are enchanted with

the "light" of new knowledge. However, with that knowledge comes increasingly sharp awareness of "the heart and nature of Man." We learn that "the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression." The room darkens then, and the doors begin to open, but it is impossible to tell now where any of them lead. This, naturally, leads to a feeling of disorientation, as "in a Mist." Such is "the burden of the Mystery."

Keats believed that Wordsworth had certainly reached the second chamber and been led beyond by his curiosity. He points out that Wordsworth's poem "Tintern Abbey" retraces this intellectual journey. "Tintern Abbey", for its part, is a poem about the inevitable passage of time. Wordsworth returns to a beloved place from childhood and reflects on how his memory of the place, over the past five years, has helped him cope with unpleasant feelings about the chaos of the world.

Wordsworth himself describes what he calls "the burden of the mystery" as the "heavy and the weary weight/ Of all this unintelligible world." Keats suggests that it may not be Wordsworth's individual genius that allows him to be "deeper" than Milton; it may be a function of the different eras in which they were writing. Milton, who wrote in the seventeenth century, was writing in the midst of the Age of Enlightenment that followed the schism between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. He wrote during a time when "Men had got hold of certain points and resting places in reasoning which were too newly born to be doubted."

Because "Milton, as a Philosopher, had sure as great powers of Wordsworth," Keats concludes that "a mighty providence subdues the mightiest minds to the service of the time being, whether it be in human knowledge or Religion." In other words, a writer's mode of thought is undoubtedly shaped, and in some cases repressed, by his or her environment.

1.4.2 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF LETTER TO RICHARD WOODHOUSE (27 OCTOBER 1818):

First, Keats describes the "poetical character itself," which is marked by its *not* having a character and a sense of self. The poet is like a "cameleon" (chameleon) which reflects whatever environment it finds itself in. Bound up with this, the poet

speculates on positive as well as negative things, and does no harm, because the poet's ultimate aim is speculation itself. Keats argues, somewhat paradoxically, that "A poet is the most unpoetical thing in existence, because he has no Identity." He writes that he himself has an almost "porous" relationship to other people: when he is socializing, "the identity of every one in the room begins to so press upon me that I am...annihilated." He goes on to say that this phenomenon is not limited to his interactions with adults; he would be the same when spending time among children.

Keats then speaks of his ambition "to do the world some good." He hopes to "be spared" from illness, since he thinks that his most ambitious work will come in his "maturer years." He also writes that it is not admiration or acclaim which pushes him to do his work; it is "the mere yearning and fondness I have for the Beautiful" that propels him. But, as a "chameleon poet" himself, he points out that "even now I am not speaking from myself."

1.4.3 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF LETTER TO GEORGE AND TOM KEATS (21 DECEMBER 1817):

In this letter, for the first and only time, Keats mentions his now-famous theory of *negative capability*. This capability is described as "when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason." Keats mentions the poet Coleridge as an example of someone without this capability, someone who, because he was "incapable of remaining content with half knowledge," would let a "fine isolated verisimilitude" (truth) go by in pursuit of a higher logical system.

Keats did not favor such a reductive approach; he himself was more inclined to pursue what he called “the beautiful” without feeling any special need to place it within a higher rational or logical system. He would encourage poets to be purely receptive and to "negate" themselves in order to "receive" the beautiful and poetic. The objective is to fuse emotional intensity with the object, so that the object becomes representative of the emotion -- as in Keats' odes, such as "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to a Nightingale". The origin of the term *negative capability* is not clear, but some scholars have suggested that Keats' education in chemistry and medicine may have influenced him. The "negative pole" of an electric current is passive and receptive, much as the ideal poet is.

1.5 LET US SUM UP

Keats is an icon of romantic age. His poems were all identity of his intellectual journey. He is a master of Odes. Keats believed that experience was the key to finding our souls, that our hearts and minds arrive at a divinity in this world. All his odes are well constructed and defined piece of literature. His letters express his curiosity towards writing. They also highlight his poetic talent as a distinct component of writing in his period. They also identify him, as a well versed critic in his own style. His letters are not mere literary pieces but his critical approach to towards literature and the art of writing poetry. By examining Keats' letters alongside his poetry, we can gain a greater appreciation for the role of personal experience in artistic expression.

1.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. **Name the theory that Keats speak about for the only and first time in his letters.**
   a) Negative capability
   b) Negative stability
   c) Negative portability
   d) Negative strategy

2. **To which of the following reptiles does Keats associates a poet**
   a) snake
   b) chameleon
   c) lizard
   d) honey bee

1.7 REFERENCE

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LESSON 2 - MAUD BODKIN : ARCHETYPES IN THE ANCIENT MARINER

2.1AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Amy Maud Bodkin (1875 in Chelmsford, Essex – 1967 in Hatfield, Hertfordshire) was an English classical scholar, writer on mythology, and literary critic. She is best known for her 1934 book *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination* . It is generally taken to be a major work in applying the theories of Carl Jung to literature. She lectured at Homerton College, Cambridge from 1902 to 1914.

2.1.1 OTHER WORKS OF THE AUTHOUR

Bodkin's other main works are *The Quest for Salvation in an Ancient and a Modern Play* and*Studies of Type-Images in Poetry, Religion.* Bodkin did not limit herself to the classics nor to Jung, however. She was also an astute reader of other important philosophers of the time. The July 1938 issue of *Philosophy*, for example, published a letter Bodkin wrote.

Bodkin's later thought and writings, which may also have been influenced by her readings of Martin Buber, Gilbert Ryle, and Karl Jaspers (among others), as her 1944 letter to the editor of *Philosophy*, "Our Knowledge of One Another," and a 1956 article in the same journal, "Knowledge and Faith," seem to show. The title of Bodkin's short book, *The Quest for Salvation in an Ancient and a Modern Play*, substantiates one of her chief concerns. This book compares Aeschylus's Eumenides with themes in T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion*, the "modern play" which Bodkin had reviewed two years earlier, in May 1939.

2.2 AN INTRODUCTION TO *ARCHETYPAL PATTERNS IN POETRY*

In *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, Bodkin applies Jung's theory of the collective unconscious to poetry, discovering a deep-seated primitive meaning behind recurring poetic images, symbols, and situations. She tried, as Boswell (1936: 553) quotes, "to bring psychological analysis and reflection to bear upon the imaginative experience communicated by great poetry, and to examine those forms or patterns in which the universal forces of our nature there find objectification."

Among the forms or archetypal patterns Bodkin presented, according to Boswell, may be included: the “Oedipus complex," the "rebirth archetype," the "archetype of Heaven and Hell," and "images of the Devil, the Hero, and God." Boswell goes on to write that Bodkin's "analyses and presentation are excellent; but the explanations, where any are attempted, seem inadequate to account for some very significant facts which the analyses have brought out"

On the other hand, Willcock (1936: 92) states that "the final impression left by Bodkin's book is one of unusual sensitiveness in reading and sincerity in recording experience." In addition, "Bodkin's pursuit of primordial symbols serves her determination to show, at least from one angle of approach, what poetry is and how it works. She holds herself back from slipping down the easy slope of paraphrase and prose meanings; neither does she drift into allegories and typifiyings" (Willcock 1936: 91).

Finally, Hooke called *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, "a distinguished book; distinguished by acute reasoning, wide and deep learning, and a fine sensitiveness to poetic values. It is a courageous and, to a great extent, successful attempt to apply the technique of analytical psychology to the cloudy and elusive emotional patterns brought up into consciousness by the magic of great poetry.” The texts Bodkin discusses in *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* include those of Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton,

and Coleridge; Goethe and Euripides; and Aeschylus, Shelley, T. S. Eliot, as well as the Christian Gospels.

2.2. 1 EXLOBORATE EXPLANATION

At work in the poems of Milton and Aeschylus, for example, as well as in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, is a fatherlike figure that Bodkin identifies as the **Divine Despot.** The Divine Despot seems to be involved in the **Heaven-and-Hell archetype**, the kernel of which contains a "vital aspect" that is both positive and negative, and appears in space "as an image of loveliness with an ever attendant threatening shadow, a desolation beneath or around it" (Bodkin 1934: 122; cited in Shmiefsky 1967: 721).

Heaven, Hell, and the Divine Despot may descend to earth and have offspring in the **Hamlet theme** which involves a child's "ambivalent attitude" toward its parents and off of which are spun such variants as Oedipus and Orestes (Bodkin 1934: 11–15, cited in Williams 1973: 221), or all may remain at the divine level, as in the situation with Milton's God and Satan, or Aeschylus's Zeus and Prometheus:

"The antagonism between Prometheus and Zeus can partly be traced to a very general psychological tension, between the instinct of self-expression and rebellion against group values, and the opposite instinct to sustain those group values, and to merge personal claims in a greater power. Bodkin shows how Milton's Satan represents both these psychological forces at different times. Sometimes he is the heroic antagonist of tyranny, and sometimes a devilish enemy of group values, conceived to reside in the protection of God. In the mind of the reader there are these forces, sometimes inherited from very ancient times, and they may determine his response to the poetry quite independently of his conscious thinking about God, fate, and morality.

As in the mind of poet or percipient the character of Satan alternates, so inversely the character of God must alternate too. In the Prometheus of Aeschylus are remembered dim fears that progress is wrong, inimical to the group; but also there are present instincts of self-assertion and rebellion. These instincts are connected with the infantile wishes and fears which still lurk in our minds. A poet may 'recall an infantile type of religious fear,' suggesting 'the Freudian doctrine of the father complex or *imago*, in relation to God.' 'The Freudian school of psychologists has asserted that the religious life represents a

dramatisation on the cosmic plane of emotions which arose in the child's relation to his parents' " (Knight 1938: 53–54; citing Bodkin 1934: 191, 232 ff., 239, 242).

Complicating matters is the **Rebirth archetype** which, like the Heaven-and-Hell archetype, also involves a "vital aspect" that is simultaneously positive and negative, but which appears, not static, but rather "as a passage in time, from life to desolate death and beyond, to life renewed" (Bodkin 1934: 122; cited in Shmiefsky 1967: 721). In addition, there is a "**night-journey stage** within the pattern of Rebirth" (Bodkin 1934: 136; cited in Shmiefsky 1967: 735).

2.2.2 CONCEPT OF REBIRTH

Rebirth for Bodkin is "a movement, downward, or inward toward the earth's centre, or a cessation of movement—a physical change which … appears also as a transition toward severed relation with the outer world, and, it may be, toward disintegration and death. This element in the pattern is balanced by a movement upward and outward—an expansion or outburst of activity, a transition toward redintegration and life-renewal"

Rebirth starts with frustration and has as its goal transcendence; between these two extends the "process of growth, or 'creative evolution,' in the course of which the constituent factors are transformed" Heaven, Hell, and Rebirth are related: "Heaven is mainly a garden in spring, Hell the scape of winter or a desert, and Rebirth an April viole.t"

Milton's *Paradise Lost* is an example of this interrelation of the two archetypes, where Bodkin claims that "it is as though the poet's feeling divined the relation of the concepts of Heaven and Hell to the images of spring's beauty and of the darkness under the earth whence beauty comes forth and to which it returns."

Further interpatterning of the two archetypes, spatially and temporally, occurs when Satan emerges "upwards from his tremendous cavern below the realm of Chaos, to waylay the flower-like Eve in her walled Paradise and make her an inmate of his Hell, even as Pluto rose from beneath the earth to carry off Proserpine from her flowery meadow" Above everything, the **Star image** "shines clear, for a moment between the opposites, between man and woman, between day and night; [it] fades and returns like the bloom of a flower, as the world's rhythms sweep on"

2.2.3 SUMMMARY

Anthropological studies (of Sir Edward Taylor and Sir James Fraser) as well as psycho-analytical studies (of Freud and Jung) formed the basis of the Archetypal approach to the study of literature, in the 20's and 30's of the 20th century. The British scholars who were among the first to work in this field were D. H. Lawrence, Gilbert Murray, Andrew Lang and G. Wilson Knight.

The principal premise of the method is that the secret of the appeal of great art is to be traced to the archetypes or patterns of values, personages, beliefs and attitudes which survive (as a "stored achievement") in the collective unconscious, i.e. racial memory. Maud Bodkin's Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (1934) is a classic study in the field. The subtitle of the book is: Psychological Studies of Imagination. "An attempt is here made", claims Bodkin in the Preface, "to bring psychological analysis and reflection to bear upon the imaginative experience communicated by great poetry," and to examine the recurrent forms or patterns, across the world-wide spectrum of cultures, of certain primordial forces (primordial images or ache types embedded in the collective unconscious) which have dictated human behavior at all ages.

Archetypal criticism, therefore, seeks to discover in literature the dramatization of these continuing themes, which show men in all parts of the world and at all ages as members of the ancient race of man. Maud Bodkin explains further that the term "archetypal pattern" is used to refer to that within us which, in Gilbert Murray's phrase, leaps in response to the effective presentation in the poetry of an ancient theme.

Bodkin, in her first chapter, titled 'Archetypal Patterns in Tragic great deeds or imaginative flights: that is, as Muse (Muse - Mother) or divine Mother or guardian of heroes (e.g. Thetis of Achilles and Venus of Aeneas). The Earth-Mother (Ceres), worshipped in ancient Greece, belongs to the same category. The image that Paradise Lost presents of Eve has affinity with different Type-figures: the Proserpine figure of virginal youth, transient and frail; the inviolable and immortal Diana or Minerva; and the Beatrice of Dante — "the sun of my eyes" and "She who imparadises my soul"—the Lady who is at once human companion and divine guide, and who brings about in the lover a

transition from personal desire to ideal aspiration. An extension of the same is “the Immortal Woman in woman” portrayed by Goethe—the Francesca type.

A parallel type is the Prometheus or Faust male figure who thirsts for knowledge, adventure, experience, and is defiant of human limitations. As St. Bernard represents the tender father figure, Homer’s Hector represents the Hero - archetype. (Even Milton’s Satan, in a sense, is hero). God too is imaged under a double figure: as Divine Despot and benevolent Father. The Devil-archetype is to be seen in the Iago of Othello, the Mephistopheles of Goethe’s Faust, and the Satan of Milton’s Paradise Fost, representing, as he does, the enemy of group values.

The archetype of the God-man is to be met with, generally, in Sacred literature, outside of which we find an exemplar in the Christ of Paradise Regained and in St. Bernard of Dante’s Divine Comedy. Considering the poems of Milton (Paradise Regained) and Shelley (Prometheus Unbound), in connection with the Hero, God and Devil images, Bodkin observes that they are intimately related interchanging, with change of standpoint, within a process of conflict and transition.

As a specimen of the static Paradise-Hades archetype (whose counterpart is the Rebirth type, in tenns of the time-dimension i.e. descent into Hell and ascent to Heaven), Bodkin examines the Sons and Lovers of D. H. Lawrence (since fiction, not poetry, is the representative form of 20th century literature). She takes up for examination the episode of the lovers’ stoning of the moon image.

In Lawrence’s writing there is to be seen as an effort to discern some kind of harmony between the opposites of flesh and spirit. The Rebirth pattern dominates The Plumed Serpent, as it did the earlier Rainbow. Charles Morgan’s The Fountain also is built round the same theme. The book projects an image of Rebirth—Narwitz’s death letting him into another dimension of life. The pattern of the book communicates a transition from dream to reality. The glory of the lover’s dream of Paradise on earth fades away, and in its place comes a realization that man could still build a spiritual heaven amidst the winter of earth and of the flesh.

A counterpart of man’s image of Woman is exemplified by reference to Virginia Woolf’s Orlando, a Biography—a counterpart to the Beatrice type, who is both inspiration

and guide.

In the category of Poetry, Bodkin refers to that aspect of The Waste Land of T. S. Eliot which exemplifies the pattern of Rebirth. The poem, notably, fuses images from the remote past with those of the present and translates them into a contemporary idiom. There is no story, no concrete dramatic situation, in The Waste Land, remarks Bodkin, to bind associations together. As such, it is no surprise if critics have seen it as a "juxtaposition of fragments."

For Bodkin, this poem, again, exemplifies the initiation or rebirth pattern (Images of the Holy Grail Legend also intermingle, unsurprisingly, because its symbolism speaks of a faith in resurrection.)

Maud Bodkin undertakes to answer some of the objections that have been raised, or might be raised: One, that the types or patterns of images — say, of God and Devil, Heaven and Hell, which reflect the religious beliefs of the times are part of the content of the particular poems taken up for analysis, they are not distinctive of all poetry, i.e. not all poetry contains such conceptions.

To this objection, Bodkin's answer is: that the poems were chosen as present experiences which are not bound by the beliefs of the poet s time. At the same time, Bodkin admits that other images and themes might have been selected. That, however, does not negate the validity of her basic assumption: that great poetry, in all ages, shows universal correspondences, in terms of theme and imagery, because they articulate memory complexes or experiences stored in the "collective unconscious" of the race.

Two, there is the objection that there is nothing new in the results of such an approach. All experience shows certain general characteristics, which philosophers formulate in contrasting terms like tension and release, rest and renewal. If literature also does the same, what is so special about it?

Bodkin's reply is that she is not seeking to prove anything new as to the nature of poetry. All that she contends is that poetry presents these universal characteristics of experience, and images convey them, in a unique way and with great effectiveness. The study of poetry from this point of view can shed new light on the images of our religious

experience, as well as supplement and modify the data for the psychologist and the philosopher.

A third objection, which Bodkin thinks she must answer before developing her argument about the relations of poetry, religion and philosophy, is that voiced by A. E. Houseman (in ids The Name and Nature of Poetry, Cambridge University Press, 1933). It is Houseman's plea that the essence of poetry is not realized in its intellectual content. The attempt to draw out, or analyze, the meaning often destroys the poetry. In other words, reflective analysis is the very enemy of poetic experience. A poem's music and magic are not to be subjected to logical thought.

And, often, in poetry of the kind of Blake's lyrics, there is so little meaning that nothing except poetic emotion is perceived. Houseman quotes, as an example of a poem where meaning is virtually non-existent, this particular poem: Here the voice of the Bard who present, past and future sees But, Bodkin argues, it depends. Under certain conditions, intellectual analysis may enhance, rather than destroy, the enjoyment of poetry. Her method is not simply one of "labeling", nor one of paraphrasing.

One basic objection (not anticipated by Bodkin), however, as pointed out by Wilbur Scott, is that Archetypal Criticism does not lead to evaluation of literature so much as to an explanation of the fundamental appeal of certain writing. Being an "eclectic" approach to the study of literature, it calls for "a mind of Europe", a global consciousness on the part of the reader, as much as on that of the poet. It does certainly help broaden the experience of reading a poem within the structure of his (the reader's) sensibility.

2.3 LET US SUM UP

Maud Bodkin's "Archetypal Patterns in Poetry" is a classic, ground-breaking exploration of exemplary arrays of psychological meaning in poetry from the European tradition from a Jungian perspective. Written in prose as deep as it is erudite, this study draws upon the works, as have been mentioned, of the analytical school of psychology. In fact, Ms. Bodkin analyzes most of the major works of Western literature, including Dante's "Divine Comedy," Goethe's "Faust," D.H. Lawrence's "The Plumed Serpent," and a wide variety of other works. And all of these works are dissected under the lens of the great Swiss psychoanalyst who is the founder of that school. However, this book is not

for the faint of heart, for it suborns the dictates of traditional literary analysis to a deconstruction by which primal, elemental elements are brought to the forefront. Additionally, the prose is equal to its subject matter, with a level of complexity that is, at times, difficult to process, yet is necessary to explain the difficult material at hand. So, for a classic analytical study of great poetry from a specific psychological perspective, this is your book.

2.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) **How does rebirth starts as prescribed by the writer.**
    a) Up gradation
    b) Frustration
    c) Imagination
    d) Comprehension

2) **Who are the two male figures those parallel the female in the archetypes of tragedy**
    a) Zeus and Prometheus
    b) Prometheus and Faustus
    c) Faustus and Zeus
    d) Zeus and Achilles

2.5 REFERENCE

file:///D:/complete%20text%20in%20criticism/Maud%20Bodkin%20%20Archetypal-Patterns-In-Poetry.pdf

ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.6CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) **Name the theory that Keats speak about for the only and first time in his letters.**

a) Negative capability

b) Negative stability

c) Negative portability

d) Negative strategy

2) To which of the following reptiles does Keats associates a poet

a) snake

b) chameleon

c) lizard

d) honey bee

2.4CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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c) Faustus and Zeus

d) Zeus and Achilles

UNIT II

LESSON 3 - VIRGINIA WOOLF-MODERN FICTION

3.1 AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Considered one of the best of the Modernist writers, Virginia Woolf's personal life is almost as intriguing as her fiction. Troubled by mental instability for most of her life, Virginia composed her great works in bursts of manic energy and with the support of her brilliant friends and family. However, upon completion of a book, Virginia fell into a dangerously dark depression in anticipation of the world's reaction to her work. Despite her personal difficulties, Virginia Woolf's fiction represented a shift in both structure and style. The world was changing; literature needed to change too, if it was to properly and honestly convey the new realities.

Virginia Woolf was born into an intellectually gifted family. Her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, is the author of the massive *Dictionary of National Biography,* a sixty-two volume compilation of the lives of important British citizens. Virginia's sister Vanessa was a gifted painter, and her two brothers Thoby and Adrian were intelligent, dynamic University men. Despite this heady environment-and having the key to her father's library-Virginia was not afforded the opportunity to attend school like her brothers. This wasn't unusual for the time, but it was something Virginia never quite seemed able to forget. Despite becoming perhaps one of the most intelligent writers of the Twentieth Century, Virginia Woolf always thought of herself as ill educated.

After her parents' deaths, Virginia and her siblings moved out of their family home in Kensington and into a rather shabby London neighborhood called Bloomsbury, where they enjoyed the intellectual stimulation of socialists, artists and students. Thoby, who had made a number of extremely interesting friends while at Cambridge, instituted Thursday night get togethers with his old college buddies and other great London minds: Lytton Strachey, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Leonard Woolf, Duncan Grant, Desmond MacCarthy and John Maynard Keyes. Virginia and Vanessa sat in on these conversations, which ranged from Art to philosophy to politics, and soon became a part of the Bloomsbury Group themselves.

As she came into her own, and comfortable in her new environment, Virginia began to write. She first produced short articles and reviews for various London weeklies. She then embarked on her first novel, *The Voyage Out,* which would consume nearly five years of her life and go through seven drafts. When that book came out to good reviews, she continued producing novels, each one a more daring experiment in language and structure, it seemed, than the last one. After a botched marriage proposal from Lytton Strachey, and after turning down two other proposals in the meantime, Virginia accepted Leonard Woolf's proposal of marriage, after recovering from a mental breakdown in a country nursing home.

Although she had affairs of the heart with other women like Vita Sackville-West and Violet Dickinson, Virginia remained very much in love with Leonard for her entire life. He was her greatest supporter, half-nursemaid, half-cheerleader. He was also a good novelist in his own right, and a publishing entrepreneur, having founded Hogarth Press with Virginia. Together, they scouted great unknown talents like T.S. Eliot, Katherine Mansfield and E.M. Forster. Hogarth also began publishing Virginia's novels.

When Virginia published *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves* in 1927 and 1931 respectively, she had turned a corner and could now be considered more than simply avant-garde; she was now, by most critic's accounts, a literary genius. However, until the end, she remained insecure and fearful of the public's reaction to her work.

Virginia didn't only publish fiction; she was also an insightful and, at times, incisive literary and social critic. She was at her best when she took society to task for limiting the opportunities of gifted female writers. *A Room of One's Own* was a compilation of lectures Virginia gave at Cambridge on the topic of women and fiction, and in this slender volume she argues that talented female writers face the two impediments to fully realizing their potentials: social inferiority and lack of economic independence. Virginia proposed five hundred pounds a year and a private room for female writers with talent. She also published criticism, including two volumes of *The Common Reader.*

Despite her success, Virginia battled her own internal demons, and although she could quiet them through rest, sometimes she found it impossible to escape the voices in her head. She likely suffered from manic-depression, though doctors knew little about

that disorder at the time. Leonard tried to monitor his wife's activities, going so far as to limit the number of visitors she had and to prescribe different kinds of food for her to eat. His efforts likely enabled Virginia to achieve as much as she did. However, he couldn't ultimately save her from herself. On March twenty-eight, 1941, Virginia wrote her husband two notes, both of which told him that if anyone could have saved her, it would have been him. However, she didn't feel she'd be able to come back from this latest episode of what was then called "madness" so she thought it best to end it all. She then picked up her walking stick and headed to the River Ouse. Once on the banks, she filled her pockets with stones, waded into the water, and drowned herself. She was fifty-nine years old.

3.1.1 HER MAJOR NOVELS

From the appearance of her first novel in 1915, Virginia Woolf's work was received with respect—an important point, since she was extremely sensitive to criticism. Descendant of a distinguished literary family, member of the avant-garde Bloomsbury Group, herself an experienced critic and reviewer, she was taken seriously as an artist. Nevertheless, her early works were not financially successful; she was forty before she earned a living from her writing.

From the start, the rather narrow territory of her novels precluded broad popularity, peopled as they were with sophisticated, sexually reserved, upper-middle-class characters, finely attuned to their sensibilities and relatively insulated from the demands of mundane existence. When in *Jacob's Room* she first abandoned the conventional novel to experiment with the interior monologues and lyrical poetic devices which characterize hermaturemethod, she also began to develop a reputation as a "difficult" or "high-brow" writer, though undeniably an important one.

Not until the brilliant fantasy *Orlando* was published did she enjoy a definite commercial success. Thereafter, she received both critical and popular acclaim; *The Years* was even a bona fide best-seller.

During the 1930's, Woolf became the subject of critical essays and two book-length studies; some of her works were translated into French. At the same time, however, her novels began to be judged as irrelevant to a world beset by growing economic and political chaos. At her death in 1941, she was widely regarded as a pioneer of modernism but also

reviewed by many as the effete, melancholic “invalid priestess of Bloomsbury,” a stereotype her friend and fellow novelist E. M. Forster dismissed at the time as wholly inaccurate; she was, he insisted, “tough, sensitive but tough.”

Over the next twenty-five years, respectful attention to Woolf’s work continued, but in the late 1960’s, critical interest accelerated dramatically and has remained strong. Two reasons for this renewed notice seem particularly apparent. First, Woolf’s feminist essays *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas* became rallying documents in the growing women’s movement; readers who might not otherwise have discovered her novels were drawn to them via her nonfiction and tended to read them primarily as validations of her feminist thinking.

Second, with the appearance of her husband Leonard Woolf’s five-volume autobiography from 1965-1969, her nephew Quentin Bell’s definitive two-volume biography of her in 1972, and the full-scale editions of her own diaries and letters commencing in the mid-1970’s, Woolf’s life has become one of the most thoroughly documented of any modern author. Marked by intellectual and sexual unconventionality, madness, and suicide, it is for today’s readers also one of the most fascinating; the steady demand for memoirs, reminiscences, and photograph collections relating to her has generated what is sometimes disparagingly labeled “the Virginia Woolf industry.”

At its worst, such insatiable curiosity is morbidly voyeuristic, distracting from and trivializing Woolf’s achievement; on a more responsible level, it has led to serious, provocative reevaluations of the political and especially the feminist elements in her work, as well as to redefinitions of her role as an artist.

In one of her most famous pronouncements on the nature of fiction—as a practicing critic, she had much to say on the subject—Virginia Woolf insists that “life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.” In an ordinary day, she argues, “thousands of ideas” course through the human brain; “thousands of emotions” meet, collide, and disappear “in astonishing disorder.”

Amid this hectic interior flux, the trivial and the vital, the past and the present, are constantly interacting; there is endless tension between the multitude of ideas and

emotions rushing through one's consciousness and the numerous impressions scoring on it from the external world. Thus, even personal identity becomes evanescent, continually reordering itself as "the atoms of experience . . . fall upon the mind."

It follows, then, that human beings must have great difficulty communicating with one another, for of this welter of perceptions that define individual personality, only a tiny fraction can ever be externalized in word or gesture. Yet, despite—in fact, because of—their frightening isolation as unknowable entities, people yearn to unite both with one another and with some larger pattern of order hidden behind the flux, to experience time standing still momentarily, to see matches struck that briefly illuminate the darkness.

Given the complex phenomenon of human subjectivity, Woolf asks, "Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit . . . with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible?" The conventional novel form is plainly inadequate for such a purpose, she maintains.

Dealing sequentially with a logical set of completed past actions that occur in a coherent, densely detailed physical and social environment, presided over by an omniscient narrator interpreting the significance of it all, the traditional novel trims and shapes experience into a rational but falsified pattern. "Is life like this?" Woolf demands rhetorically. "Must novels be like this?"

In Woolf's first two books, nevertheless, she attempted to work within conventional modes, discovering empirically that they could not convey her vision. Although in recent years some critics have defended *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day* as artistically satisfying in their own right, both novels have generally been considered interesting mainly for what they foreshadow of Woolf's later preoccupations and techniques.

3.1.1.1 THE VOYAGE OUT

The Voyage Out is the story of Rachel Vinrace, a naïve and talented twenty-four-year-old amateur pianist who sails from England to a small resort on the South American coast, where she vacations with relatives. There, she meets a fledgling novelist, Terence Hewet; on a pleasure expedition up a jungle river, they declare their love. Shortly thereafter, Rachel falls ill with a fever and dies. The novel's exotic locale, large cast of

minor characters, elaborate scenes of social comedy, and excessive length are all atypical of Woolf's mature work. Already, however, many of her later concerns are largely emerging. The resonance of the title itself anticipates Woolf's poetic symbolism; the "voyage out" can be the literal trip across the Atlantic or up the South American river, but it also suggests the progression from innocence to experience, from life to death, which she later depicts using similar water imagery.

Her concern with premature death and how survivors come to terms with it prefigures *Jacob's Room, Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse,* and *The Waves*. Most significant is her portrayal of a world in which characters are forever striving to overcome their isolation from one another. The ship on which Rachel "voyages out" is labeled by Woolf an "emblem of the loneliness of human life." Terence, Rachel's lover, might be describing his creator's own frustration when he says he is trying "to write a novel about Silence, the things people don't say. But the difficulty is immense."

Yet moments of unity amid seemingly unconquerable disorder do occur. On a communal level, one such transformation happens at a ball being held to celebrate the engagement of two English guests at the resort's small hotel. When the musicians go home, Rachel appropriates the piano and plays Mozart, hunting songs, and hymn tunes as the guests gradually resume dancing, each in a newly expressive, uninhibited way, eventually to join hands in a gigantic round dance.

When the circle breaks and each member spins away to become individual once more, Rachel modulates to Bach; her weary yet exhilarated listeners sit quietly and allow themselves to be soothed by the serene complexity of the music. As dawn breaks outside and Rachel plays on, they envision "themselves and their lives, and the whole of human life advancing nobly under the direction of the music." They have transcended their single identities temporarily to gain a privileged glimpse of some larger pattern beyond themselves.

If Rachel through her art briefly transforms the lives of a small community, she herself privately discerns fleeting stability through her growing love for Terence. Yet even love is insufficient; although in the couple's newfound sense of union "divisions disappeared," Terence feels that Rachel seems able "to pass away to unknown places

where she had no need of him." In the elegiac closing scenes of illness (which Woolf reworked many times and which are the most original as well as moving part of the novel), Rachel "descends into another world"; she is "curled up at the bottom of the sea."

Terence, sitting by her bedside, senses that "they seemed to be thinking together; he seemed to be Rachel as well as himself." When she ceases breathing, he experiences "an immense feeling of peace," a "complete union" with her that shatters when he notices an ordinary table covered with crockery and realizes in horror that in this world he will never see Rachel again. For her, stability has been achieved; for him, the isolating flux has resumed.

3.1.1.2 NIGHT AND DAY

Looking back on *The Voyage Out*, Woolf could see, she said, why readers found it "a more gallant and inspiring spectacle" than her next and least known book *Night and Day*. This second novel is usually regarded as her most traditional in form and subject—in its social satire, her obeisance to Jane Austen. Its dancelike plot, however, in which mismatched young couples eventually find their true loves, suggests the magical atmosphere of William Shakespeare's romantic comedies as well.

References to Shakespeare abound in the book; for example, the delightfully eccentric Mrs. Hilbery characterizes herself as one of his wise fools, and when at the end she presides over the repatterning of the couples in London, she has just arrived from a pilgrimage to Stratford-upon-Avon. Coincidentally, *Night and Day* is the most conventionally dramatic of Woolf's novels, full of dialogue, exits and entrances; characters are constantly taking omnibuses and taxis across London from one contrived scene to the next.

Like *The Voyage Out, Night and Day* does point to Woolf's enduring preoccupations. It is, too, a novel depicting movement from innocence to maturity and escape from the conventional world through the liberating influence of love. Ralph Denham, a London solicitor from a large, vulgar, middle-class family living in suburban Highgate, would prefer to move to a Norfolk cottage and write. Katharine Hilbery measures out her days serving tea in her wealthy family's beautiful Chelsea home and

helping her disorganized mother produce a biography of their forebear, a great nineteenth century poet. Her secret passions, however, are mathematics and astronomy.

These seeming opposites, Ralph and Katharine, are alike in that both retreat at night to their rooms to pursue their private visions. The entire novel is concerned with such dualities—public selves and private selves, activity and contemplation, fact and imagination; but Woolf also depicts the unity that Ralph and Katharine can achieve, notwithstanding the social and intellectual barriers separating them. At the end, as the couple leaves Katharine's elegant but constraining home to walk in the open night air, "they lapsed gently into silence, travelling the dark paths side by side towards something discerned in the distance which gradually possessed them both."

The sustained passages of subtle interior analysis by which Woolf charts the couple's growing realization of their need for each other define her real area of fictional interest, but they are hemmed in by a tediously constrictive traditional structure. Except for her late novel, *The Years,* also comparatively orthodox in form, her first two books took the longest to finish and underwent the most extensive revisions, undoubtedly because she was writing against her grain. Nevertheless, they represented a necessary apprenticeship; as she would later remark of *Night and Day*, "You must put it all in before you can leave out."

3.1.1.3 JACOB'S ROOM

Woolf dared to leave out a great deal in the short experimental novel she wrote next. Described in conventional terms, *Jacob's Room* is a *Bildungsroman* or "novel of formation" tracing its hero's development from childhood to maturity: Jacob Flanders is first portrayed as a small boy studying a tide pool on a Cornish beach; at twenty-six, he dies fighting in World War I. In structure, style, and tone, however, *Jacob's Room* defies such labeling. It does not move in steady chronological fashion but in irregular leaps. Of the fourteen chapters, two cover Jacob's childhood, two, his college years at Cambridge, the remainder, his life as a young adult working in London and traveling abroad. In length, and hence in the complexity with which various periods of Jacob's existence are treated, the chapters range from one to twenty-eight pages. They vary, that is, as the process of growth itself does.

Individual chapters are likewise discontinuous in structure, broken into irregular segments that convey multiple, often simultaneous perspectives. The ten-page chapter 8, for example, opens with Jacob slamming the door of his London room as he starts for work in the morning; he is then glimpsed at his office desk. Meanwhile, on a table back in his room lies his mother's unopened letter to him, placed there the previous night by his lover, Florinda; its contents and Mrs. Flanders herself are evoked.

The narrator then discourses on the significance of letter-writing. Jacob is next seen leaving work for the day; in Greek Street, he spies Florinda on another man's arm. At eight o'clock, Rose Shaw, a guest at a party Jacob attended several nights earlier, walks through Holburn, meditating bitterly on the ironies of love and death. The narrator sketches London by lamplight. Then, Jacob is back in his room reading by the fire a newspaper account of the Prime Minister's speech on Home Rule; the night is very cold. The narrator abruptly shifts perspective from congested London to the open countryside, describing the snow that has been accumulating since mid-afternoon; an old shepherd crossing a field hears a distant clock strike.

Back in London, Jacob also hears the hour chiming, rakes out his fire, and goes to bed. There is no story here in any conventional sense, no action being furthered; in the entire ten pages, only one sentence is direct dialogue. What Woolf delineates is the *texture* of an ordinary day in the life of Jacob and the world in which he exists. Clock time moves the chapter forward, while spatially the chapter radiates outward from the small area Jacob occupies. Simultaneously, in the brief reference to the Prime Minister, Woolf suggests the larger procession of modern history that will inexorably sweep Jacob to premature death.

Such indirection and understatement characterize the whole novel: "It is no use trying to sum people up," the narrator laments. "One must follow hints." Thus, Jacob is described mainly from the outside, defined through the impressions he makes on others, from a hotel chambermaid to a Cambridge don, and by his surroundings and possessions. Even his death is conveyed obliquely: Mrs. Flanders, half asleep in her Yorkshire house, hears "dull sounds"; it cannot be guns, she thinks, it must be the sea. On the next page,

she stands in her dead son's London room, holding a pair of Jacob's old shoes and asking his friend pathetically, "What am I to do with these, Mr. Bonamy?" The novel ends.

To construct Jacob's ultimately unknowable biography out of such fragments, Woolf evolves not only a new structure but a new style. Long, fluid sentences contain precise physical details juxtaposed with metaphysical speculations on the evanescence of life and the impossibility of understanding another person. Lyrical descriptions of nature—waves, moths, falling snow, birds rising and settling—are interspersed to suggest life's beauty and fragility. Images and phrases recur as unifying motifs: Jacob is repeatedly associated with Greek literature and myth and spends his last fulfilling days visiting the Parthenon. Most important, Woolf begins to move freely in and out of her characters' minds to capture the flow of sense impressions mingling with memory, emotion, and random association, experimenting with that narrative method conveniently if imprecisely labeled "stream of consciousness."

Jacob's Room is not a mature work, especially with its intrusive narrator, who can be excessively chatty, archly pedantic, and sententious. Woolf protests the difficulties of her task ("In short, the observer is choked with observations") and cannot quite follow the logic of her new method; after an essay-like passage on the necessity of illusion, for example, she awkwardly concludes, "Jacob, no doubt, thought something in this fashion. . . ."

Even the lovely passages of poetic description at times seem self-indulgent. The book definitely shows its seams. Woolf's rejection of traditional novel structure, however, and her efforts to eliminate "the alien and the external" make *Jacob's Room* a dazzling advance in her ability to embody her philosophic vision: "Life is but a procession of shadows, and God knows why it is that we embrace them so eagerly, and see them depart with such anguish, being shadows."

3.1.1.4 MRS. DALLOWAY

Within three years, Woolf had resolved her technical problems superbly in *Mrs. Dalloway*. The intruding narrator vanishes; though the freedom with which point of view shifts among characters and settings clearly posits an omniscient intelligence, the narrator's observations are now subtly integrated with the thoughts of her characters, and

the transitions between scenes flow organically. Woolf's subject is also better suited to her method: Whereas *Jacob's Room* is a story of youthful potential tragically cut off, *Mrs. Dalloway* is a novel of middle age, about what people have become as the result of choices made, opportunities seized or refused. Jacob Flanders had but a brief past; the characters in *Mrs. Dalloway* must come to terms with theirs, sifting and valuing the memories that course through their minds.

The book covers one June day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway, fifty-two years old, an accomplished London political hostess and wife of a Member of Parliament. A recent serious illness from which she is still recovering has made her freshly appreciate the wonder of life as she prepares for the party she will give that evening. Peter Walsh, once desperately in love with her, arrives from India, where he has had an undistinguished career; he calls on her and is invited to the party, at which another friend from the past, Sally Seton, formerly a romantic and now the conventional wife of a Manchester industrialist, will also unexpectedly appear. Running parallel with Clarissa's day is that of the mad Septimus Warren Smith, a surviving Jacob Flanders, shell-shocked in the war; his suicide in the late afternoon delays the arrival of another of Clarissa's guests, the eminent nerve specialist Sir William Bradshaw. Learning of this stranger's death, Clarissa must confront the inevitability of her own.

Mrs. Dalloway is also, then, a novel about time itself (its working title at one point was *The Hours*). Instead of using chapters or other formal sectioning, Woolf structures the book by counterpointing clock time, signaled by the obtrusive hourly tolling of Big Ben, against the subjective flow of time in her characters' minds as they recover the past and envision the future. Not only does she move backward and forward in time, however; she also creates an effect of simultaneity that is especially crucial in linking Septimus's story with Clarissa's. Thus, when Clarissa Dalloway, buying flowers that morning in a Bond Street shop, hears "a pistol shot" outside and emerges to see a large, official automobile that has backfired, Septimus is standing in the crowd blocked by the car and likewise reacting to this "violent explosion" ("The world has raised its whip; where will it descend?"). Later, when Septimus's frightened young Italian wife Rezia guides him to Regents Park to calm him before their appointment with Bradshaw, he has a terrifying hallucination of his dead friend Evans, killed just before the Armistice; Peter Walsh, passing their bench,

wonders, “What awful fix had they got themselves in to look so desperate as that on a fine summer morning?” This atmosphere of intensely populated time and space, of many anonymous lives intersecting briefly, of the world resonating with unwritten novels, comic and tragic, accounts in part for the richly poignant texture of nearly all Woolf’s mature work.

In her early thinking about *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf wanted to show a “world seen by the sane and the insane, side by side.” Although the novel definitely focuses on Clarissa, Septimus functions as a kind of double, representing her own responses to life carried to an untenable extreme. Both find great terror in life and also great joy; both want to withdraw from life into blissful isolation, yet both want to reach out to merge with others. Clarissa’s friends, and indeed she herself, sense a “coldness” about her, “an impenetrability”; both Peter and Sally believe she chose safety rather than adventure by marrying the unimaginative, responsible Richard Dalloway.

The quiet attic room where she now convalesces is described as a tower into which she retreats nunlike to a virginal narrow bed. Yet Clarissa also loves “life; London; this moment of June”—and her parties. Though some critics condemn her partygiving as shallow, trivial, even corrupt (Peter Walsh could make her wince as a girl by predicting that she would become “the perfect hostess”), Clarissa considers her parties a form of creativity, “an offering,” “her gift” of bringing people together. For Septimus, the war has destroyed his capacity to feel; in his aloneness and withdrawal, he finds “an isolation full of sublimity; a freedom which the attached can never know”—he can elude “human nature,” “the repulsive brute, with the blood-red nostrils.”

Yet just watching leaves quivering is for him “an exquisite joy”; he feels them “connected by millions of fibres with his own body” and wants to reveal this unity to the world because “communication is health; communication is happiness.”Desperate because of his suicide threats, Septimus’s wife takes him to see Sir William Bradshaw. At the center of the novel, in one of the most bitter scenes in all of Woolf’s writing (certainly one with strong autobiographical overtones), is Septimus’s confrontation with this “priest of science,” this man of “lightning skill” and “almost infallible accuracy” who “never spoke of ‘madness’; he called it not having a sense of proportion.”

Within three minutes, he has discreetly recorded his diagnosis on a pink card ("a case of complete breakdown . . . with every symptom in an advanced stage"); Septimus will be sent to a beautiful house in the country where he will be taught to rest, to regain proportion. Rezia, agonized, understands that she has been failed by this obtuse, complacently cruel man whom Woolf symbolically connects with a larger system that prospers on intolerance and sends its best young men to fight futile wars. Septimus's suicide at this point becomes inevitable.

The two stories fuse when Bradshaw appears at the party. Learning of the reason for his lateness, Clarissa, deeply shaken, withdraws to a small side room, not unlike her attic tower, where she accurately imagines Septimus's suicide: "He had thrown himself from a window. Up had flashed the ground; through him, blundering, bruising, went the rusty spikes. . . .So she saw it."

She also intuits the immediate cause: Bradshaw is "capable of some indescribable outrage, forcing your soul, that was it"; seeing him, this young man must have said to himself, "they make life intolerable, men like that." Thus, she sees, "death was defiance," a means to preserve one's center from being violated, but "death was an attempt to communicate," and in death, Septimus's message that all life is connected is heard by one unlikely person, Clarissa Dalloway. Reviewing her own past as she has reconstructed it this day, and forced anew to acknowledge her own mortality, she realizes that "he had made her feel the beauty." Spiritually regenerated, she returns to her party "to kindle and illuminate" life.

3.1.1.5 TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

In her most moving, complexly affirmative novel, *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf portrays another woman whose creativity lies in uniting people, Mrs. Ramsay. For this luminous evocation of her own parents' marriage, Woolf drew on memories of her girlhood summers at St. Ives, Cornwall (here transposed to an island in the Hebrides), to focus on her perennial themes, the difficulties and joys of human communication, especially as frustrated by time and death.

The plot is absurdly simple: An expedition to a lighthouse is postponed, then completed a decade later.Woolf's mastery, however, of the interior monologue in this

novel makes such a fragile plot line quite sufficient; the real "story" of *To the Lighthouse* is the reader's gradually increasing intimacy with its characters' richly depicted inner lives; the reader's understanding expands in concert with the characters' own growing insights.

Woolf again devises an experimental structure for her work, this time of three unequal parts. Approximately the first half of the novel, entitled "The Window," occurs during a single day at the seaside home occupied by an eminent philosopher, Mr. Ramsay, his wife, and a melange of children, guests, and servants, including Lily Briscoe, an amateur painter in her thirties, unmarried. Mrs. Ramsay's is the dominant consciousness in this section. A short, exquisitely beautiful center section, "Time Passes," pictures the house succumbing to time during the family's ten-year absence and then being rescued from decay by two old women for the Ramsays' repossession. Periodically interrupting this natural flow of time are terse, bracketed, clock-time announcements like news bulletins, telling of the deaths of Mrs. Ramsay, the eldest son Andrew (in World War I), and the eldest daughter Prue (of childbirth complications). The final third, "The Lighthouse," also covers one day; the diminished family and several former guests having returned, the lighthouse expedition can now be completed. This section is centered almost entirely in Lily Briscoe's consciousness.

Because Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay are both strong personalities, they are sometimes interpreted too simply. Particularly in some readings by feminist critics, Mr. Ramsay is seen as an insufferable patriarch, arrogantly rational in his work but almost infantile emotionally, while Mrs. Ramsay is a Victorian Earth Mother, not only submitting unquestioningly to her husband's and children's excessive demands but actively trying to impose on all the other female characters her unliberated way of life. Such readings are sound to some extent, but they undervalue the vivid way that Woolf captures in the couple's monologues the conflicting mixture of motives and needs that characterize human beings of either sex. For example, Mrs. Ramsay is infuriated that her husband blights their youngest son James's anticipation of the lighthouse visit by announcing that it will storm tomorrow, yet his unflinching pursuit of truth is also something she most admires in him. Mr. Ramsay finds his wife's irrational habit of exaggeration maddening, but as she sits alone in a reverie, he respects her integrity and will not interrupt, "though it hurt him that she should look so distant, and he could not reach her, he could do nothing

to help her." Lily, a shrewd observer who simultaneously adores and resists Mrs. Ramsay, perceives that "it would be a mistake . . . to simplify their relationship."

Amid these typical contradictions and mundane demands, however, "little daily miracles" may be achieved. One of Woolf's finest scenes, Mrs. Ramsay's dinner, provides a paradigm (though a summary can scarcely convey the richness of these forty pages). As she mechanically seats her guests at the huge table, Mrs. Ramsay glimpses her husband at the other end, "all in a heap, frowning": "She could not understand how she had ever felt any emotion of affection for him." Gloomily, she perceives that not just the two of them but everyone is separate and out of sorts. For example, Charles Tansley, Mr. Ramsay's disciple, who feels the whole family despises him, fidgets angrily; Lily, annoyed that Tansley is always telling her "women can't paint," purposely tries to irritate him; William Bankes would rather be home dining alone and fears that Mrs. Ramsay will read his mind. They all sense that "something [is] lacking"—they are divided from one another, sunk in their "treacherous" thoughts. Mrs. Ramsay wearily recognizes that "the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her."

She instructs two of her children to light the candles and set them around a beautiful fruit centerpiece that her daughter Rose has arranged for the table. This is Mrs. Ramsay's first stroke of artistry; the candles and fruit compose the table and the faces around it into an island, a sheltering haven: "Here, inside the room, seemed to be order and dry land; there, outside, a reflection in which things wavered and vanished, waterily." All the guests feel this change and have a sudden sense of making "common cause against that fluidity out there." Then the maid brings in a great steaming dish of *boeuf en daube* that even the finicky widower Bankes considers "a triumph." As the guests relish the succulent food and their camaraderie grows, Mrs. Ramsay, serving the last helpings from the depths of the pot, experiences a moment of perfect insight: "There it was, all around them. It partook . . . of eternity." She affirms to herself that "there is a coherence in things, a stability; something, she meant, that is immune from change, and shines out . . . in the face of the flowing, the fleeting." As is true of so much of Woolf's sparse dialogue, the ordinary words Mrs. Ramsay then speaks aloud can be read both literally and symbolically: "Yes, there is plenty for everybody." As the dinner ends and she passes out of the room triumphantly—the inscrutable poet Augustus Carmichael, who usually

resists her magic, actually bows in homage—she looks back on the scene and sees that "it had become, she knew . . . already the past."

The burden of the past and the coming to terms with it are the focus of part 3. Just as "a sort of disintegration" sets in as soon as Mrs. Ramsay sweeps out of the dining room, so her death has left a larger kind of wreckage. Without her unifying artistry, all is disorder, as it was at the beginning of the dinner. In a gesture of belated atonement for quarreling with his wife over the original lighthouse trip, the melodramatically despairing Mr. Ramsay insists on making the expedition now with his children James and Cam, although both hate his tyranny and neither wants to go. As they set out, Lily remains behind to paint. Surely mirroring the creative anxiety of Woolfherself, she feels "a painful but exciting ecstasy" before her blank canvas, knowing how ideas that seem simple become "in practice immediately complex." As she starts making rhythmic strokes across the canvas, she loses "consciousness of outer things" and begins to meditate on the past, from which she gradually retrieves a vision of Mrs. Ramsay that will permit her to reconstruct and complete the painting she left unfinished a decade ago, one in which Mrs. Ramsay would have been, and will become again, a triangular shadow on a step (symbolically echoing the invisible "wedge-shaped core of darkness" to whichMrs. Ramsay feels herself shrinking during her moments of reverie). Through the unexpectedly intense pain of recalling her, Lily also comprehends Mrs. Ramsay's significance, her ability "to make the moment something permanent," as art does, to strike "this eternal passing and flowing . . . into stability." Mrs. Ramsay is able to make "life stand still here."

Meanwhile, Mr. Ramsay and his children are also voyaging into the past; Cam, dreamily drifting her hand in the water, begins, as her mother did, to see her father as bravely pursuing truth like a tragic hero. James bitterly relives the childhood scene when his father thoughtlessly dashed his hopes for the lighthouse visit, but as they near the lighthouse in the present and Mr. Ramsay offers his son rare praise, James too is reconciled. When they land, Mr. Ramsay himself, standing in the bow "very straight and tall," springs "lightly like a young man . . . on to the rock," renewed. Simultaneously, though the boat has long since disappeared from her sight and even the lighthouse itself seems blurred, Lily intuits that they have reached their goal and she completes her painting. All of them have reclaimed Mrs. Ramsay from death, and she has unified them; memory can

defeat time. “Yes,” Lily thinks, “I have had my vision.” Clearly, Woolf had achieved hers too and transmuted the materials of a painful past into this radiant novel.

Although Woolf denied intending any specific symbolism for the lighthouse, it resonates with almost infinite possibilities, both within the book and in a larger way as an emblem of her work. Like the candles at the dinner party, it can be a symbol of safety and stability amid darkness and watery flux, its beams those rhythmically occurring moments of illumination that sustain Mrs. Ramsay and by extension everyone. Perhaps, however, it can also serve as a metaphor for human beings themselves as Woolf portrays them. The lighthouse signifies what can be objectively perceived of an individual—in Mrs. Ramsay’s words, “our apparitions, the things you know us by”; but it also signals invisible, possibly tragic depths, for, as Mrs. Ramsay knew, “beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading, it is unfathomably deep.”

3.1.1.6 THE WAVES

In *The Waves,* widely considered her masterpiece, Woolf most resolutely overcomes the limits of the traditional novel. Entirely unique in form, *The Waves* cannot perhaps be called a novel at all; Woolf herself first projected a work of “prose yet poetry; a novel and a play.” The book is a series of grouped soliloquies in varying combinations spoken by six friends, three men and three women, at successive stages in their lives from childhood to late middle age. Each grouping is preceded by a brief, lyrical “interlude” (Woolf’s own term), set off in italic type, that describes an empty house by the sea as the sun moves across the sky in a single day.

The texture of these soliloquies is extremely difficult to convey; the term “soliloquy,” in fact, is merely a critical convenience. Although each is introduced in the same straightforward way (“Neville said,” “Jinny said”), they obviously are unspoken, representing each character’s private vision. Their style is also unvarying—solemn, formal, almost stilted, like that of choral figures. The author has deliberately translated into a rigorously neutral, dignified idiom the conscious and subconscious reality her characters perceive but cannot articulate on their own. This method represents Woolf’s most ambitious attempt to capture the unfathomable depths of separate human personalities which defy communication in ordinary life, and in ordinary novels. The

abstraction of the device, however, especially in combination with the flow of cosmic time in the interludes, shows that she is also concerned with depicting a universal pattern which transcends mere individuals. Thus, once more Woolf treats her theme of human beings' attempts to overcome their isolation and to become part of a larger stabilizing pattern; this time, however, the theme is embodied in the very form of her work.

It would be inaccurate, though, to say that the characters exist only as symbols. Each has definable qualities and unique imagery; Susan, as an example, farm-bred and almost belligerently maternal, speaks in elemental images of wood smoke, grassy paths, flowers thick with pollen. Further, the characters often evoke one another's imagery; the other figures, for example, even in maturity picture the fearful, solitary Rhoda as a child rocking white petals in a brown basin of water. They are linked by intricately woven threads of common experience, above all by their shared admiration for a shadowy seventh character, Percival. Their gathering with him at a farewell dinner before he embarks on a career in India is one of the few actual events recorded in the soliloquies and also becomes one of those miraculous moments of unity comparable to that achieved by Mrs. Ramsay for her dinner guests; as they rise to leave the restaurant, all the characters are thinking as Louis does: "We pray, holding in our hands this common feeling, 'Do not move, do not let the swing-door cut to pieces this thing that we have made, that globes itself here. . . .'" Such union, however, is cruelly impermanent; two pages later, a telegram announces Percival's death in a riding accident. Bernard, trying to make sense of this absurdity, echoes the imagery of encircling unity that characterized their thoughts at the dinner: "Ideas break a thousand times for once that they globe themselves entire."

It is Bernard—identified, significantly, throughout the book as a storyteller—who is given the long final section of *The Waves* in which "to sum up," becoming perhaps a surrogate for the author herself. (As a young man at school, worrying out "my novel," he discovers how "stories that follow people into their private rooms are difficult.") It is he who recognizes that "I am not one person; I am many people," part of his friends as they are part of him, all of them incomplete in themselves; he is "a man without a self." Yet it is also he who on the novel's final page, using the wave imagery of the universalizing interludes, passionately asserts his individuality: "Against you I will fling myself,

unvanquished and unyielding, O Death!" Life, however obdurate and fragmented, must be affirmed.

The Waves is without doubt Woolf's most demanding and original novel, her most daring experiment in eliminating the alien and the external. When she vowed to cast out "all waste, deadness, and superfluity," however, she also ascetically renounced some of her greatest strengths as a novelist: her wit and humor, her delight in the daily beauty, variety, and muddle of material existence. This "abstract mystical eyeless book," as she at one point envisioned it, is a work to admire greatly, but not to love.

The six years following *The Waves* were a difficult period for Woolf both personally and artistically. Deeply depressed by the deaths of Lytton Strachey and Roger Fry, two of her oldest, most respected friends, she was at work on an "essay-novel," as she first conceived of it, which despite her initial enthusiasm became her most painfully frustrating effort—even though it proved, ironically, to be her greatest commercial success.

3.1.1.7 THE YEARS

In *The Years,* Woolf returned to the conventional novel that she had rejected after *Night and Day*; she planned "to take in everything" and found herself "infinitely delighting in facts for a change." Whereas *The Waves* had represented the extreme of leaving out, *The Years* suggests the opposite one of almost indiscriminate putting in. Its very subject, a history of the Pargiter clan spanning fifty years and three generations, links it with the diffuse family sagas of John Galsworthy and Arnold Bennett, whose books Woolf was expressly deriding when she demanded, "Must novels be like this?"

Nevertheless, *The Years* is more original than it may appear; Woolf made fresh use of her experimental methods in her effort to reanimate traditional form. The novel contains eleven unequal segments, each standing for a year; the longest ones, the opening "1880" section and the closing "Present Day" (the 1930's), anchor the book; the nine intermediate sections cover the years between 1891 and 1918. Echoing *The Waves,* Woolf begins each chapter with a short panoramic passage describing both London and the countryside. Within the chapters, instead of continuous narrative, there are collections of vignettes, somewhat reminiscent of *Jacob's Room,* depicting various

Pargiters going about their daily lives. Running parallel with the family's history are larger historical events, including Edward VII's death, the suffrage movement, the Irish troubles, and especially World War I. These events are usually treated indirectly, however; for example, the "1917" section takes place mainly in a cellar to which the characters have retreated, dinner plates in hand, during an air raid. It is here that Eleanor Pargiter asks, setting a theme that suffuses the rest of the novel, "When shall we live adventurously, wholly, not like cripples in a cave?"

The most pervasive effect of the war is felt in the lengthy "Present Day" segment, which culminates in a family reunion, where the youngest generation of Pargiters, Peggy and North, are lonely, cynical, and misanthropic, and their faltering elders are compromised by either complacency or failed hopes. Symbolically, Delia Pargiter gives the party in a rented office, not a home, underscoring the uprooting caused by the war. Yet the balancing "1880" section is almost equally dreary: The Pargiters' solid Victorian house shelters a chronically ailing mother whose children wish she would die, a father whose vulgar mistress greets him in hair curlers and frets over her dog's eczema, and a young daughter traumatized by an exhibitionist in the street outside. One oppressive way of life seems only to have been superseded by another, albeit a more universally menacing one.

The overall imagery of the novel is likewise unlovely: Children recall being scrubbed with slimy washcloths; a revolting dinner of underdone mutton served by Sara Pargiter includes a bowl of rotting, flyblown fruit, grotesquely parodying Mrs. Ramsay's *boeuf en daube* and Rose's centerpiece; London is populated with deformed violet-sellers and old men eating cold sausages on buses. Communication in such a world is even more difficult than in Woolf's earlier books; the dialogue throughout is full of incomplete sentences, and a central vignette in the "Present Day" section turns on one guest's abortive efforts to deliver a speech toasting the human race.

Despite these circumstances, the characters still grope toward some kind of transforming unity; Eleanor, the eldest surviving Pargiter and the most sympathetic character in the novel, comes closest to achieving such vision on the scale that Lily Briscoe and Clarissa Dalloway do. At the reunion, looking back over her life, she wonders

if there is “a pattern; a theme recurring like music . . . momentarily perceptible?” Casting about her, trying to connect with her relatives and friends but dozing in the process, she suddenly wakes, proclaiming that “it’s been a perpetual discovery, my life. A miracle.” Answering by implication her question posed fifteen years earlier during the air raid, she perceives that “we’re only just beginning . . . to understand, here and there.” That prospect is enough, however; she wants “to enclose the present moment . . . to fill it fuller and fuller, with the past, the present and the future, until it shone, whole, bright, deep with understanding.”

Even this glowing dream of eventual unity is muted, though, when one recalls how Eleanor’s embittered niece Peggy half pities, half admires her as a person who “still believed with passion . . . in the things man had destroyed,” and how her nephew North, a captain in the trenches of World War I, thinks, “We cannot help each other, we are all deformed.” It is difficult not to read the final lines of this profoundly somber novel ironically: “The sun had risen, and the sky above the houses wore an air of extraordinary beauty, simplicity and peace.”

3.1.1.8 BETWEEN THE ACTS

Woolf’s final work, *Between the Acts,* also deals with individual lives unfolding against the screen of history, but her vision and the methods by which she conveys it are more inventive, complex, and successful than in *The Years*. Covering the space of a single day in June, 1939, as world war threatens on the Continent, *Between the Acts* depicts the events surrounding a village pageant about the history of England, performed on the grounds of Pointz Hall, a country house occupied by the unhappily married Giles and Isa Oliver. The Olivers’ story frames the presentation of the pageant, scenes of which are directly reproduced in the novel and alternate with glimpses of the audience’s lives during the intervals between the acts. The novel’s title is hence richly metaphorical: The acts of the drama itself are bracketed by the scenes of real life, which in turn can be viewed as brief episodes in the long pageant of human history. Equally ambiguous, then, is the meaning of “parts,” connoting clearly defined roles within a drama but also the fragmentation and incompleteness of the individuals who play them, that pervasive theme in Woolf’s work.

In *The Years,* Woolf had focused on the personal histories of her characters; history in the larger sense made itself felt as it impinged on private lives. This emphasis is reversed in *Between the Acts.* Though the novel has interesting characters, Woolf provides scant information about their backgrounds, nor does she plumb individual memory in her usual manner. Instead, the characters possess a national, cultural, *communal* past—finally that of the whole human race from the Stone Age to the present. That Woolf intends her characters to be seen as part of this universal progression is clear from myriad references in the early pages to historical time. For example, from the air, the "scars" made by the Britons and the Romans can be seen around the village as can the Elizabethan manor house; graves in the churchyard attest that Mrs. Haines's family has lived in the area "for many centuries," whereas the Oliver family has inhabited Pointz Hall for "only something over a hundred and twenty years"; Lucy Swithin, Giles's endearing aunt, enjoys reading about history and imagining Piccadilly when it was a rhododendron forest populated by mastodons, "from whom, presumably, she thought . . . we descend."

The pageant itself, therefore, functions in the novel as more than simply a churchfund-raising ritual, the product of well-meaning but hapless amateurs (though it exists amusingly on that level too). It is a heroic attempt by its author-director, the formidable Miss La Trobe, to make people see themselves playing parts in the continuum of British history. Thus, the audience has an integral role that blurs the lines "between the acts"; "Our part," says Giles's father, Bartholomew, "is to be the audience. And a very important part too." Their increasing interest in the pageant as they return from the successive intermissions signals their growing sense of a shared past and hence of an identity that both binds and transcends them as individuals.

The scenes of the pageant proceed from bathos to unnerving profundity. The first player, a small girl in pink, announces, "England am I," then promptly forgets her lines, while the wind blows away half the words of the singers behind her. Queen Elizabeth, splendidly decorated with six-penny brooches and a cape made of silvery scouring pads, turns out to be Mrs. Clark, the village tobacconist; the combined applause and laughter of delighted recognition muffle her opening speech. As the pageant progresses from a wicked though overlong parody of Restoration comedy to a satiric scene at a Victorian

picnic, however, the audience becomes more reflective; the past is now close enough to be familiar, triggering their own memories and priming them for the last scene, Miss La Trobe's inspired experiment in expressionism, "The Present Time. Ourselves." The uncomprehending audience fidgets as the stage remains empty, refusing to understand that they are supposed to contemplate their own significance. "Reality too strong," Miss La Trobe mutters angrily from behind the bushes, "Curse 'em!" Then, "sudden and universal," a summer shower fortuitously begins. "Down it rained like all the people in the world weeping." Nature has provided the bridge of meaning Miss La Trobe required. As the rain ends, all the players from all the periods reappear, still in costume and declaiming fragments of their parts while flashing mirrors in the faces of the discomfited audience. An offstage voice asks how civilization is "to be built by orts, scraps and fragments like ourselves," then dies away.

The Reverend Streatfield, disconcerted like the rest of the audience, is assigned the embarrassing role of summing up the play's meaning. Tentatively, self-consciously, he ventures, "To me at least it was indicated that we are members of one another. . . . We act different parts; but are the same. . . . Surely, we should unite?" Then he abruptly shifts into a fund-raising appeal that is drowned out by a formation of war planes passing overhead. As the audience departs, a gramophone plays a valedictory: "Dispersed are we; we who have come together. But let us retain whatever made that harmony." The audience responds, thinking "There is joy, sweet joy, in company."

The qualified optimism of the pageant's close, however, is darkened by the bleak, perhaps apocalyptic postscript of the framing story. After the group disperses, the characters resume their usual roles. Lucy Swithin, identified earlier as a "unifier," experiences a typically Woolfian epiphany as she gazes on a fishpond, glimpsing the silver of the great carp below the surface and "seeing in that vision beauty, power and glory in ourselves." Her staunchly rational brother Bartholomew, a "separatist," goes into the house. Miss La Trobe, convinced that she has failed again, heads for the local pub to drink alone and plan her next play; it will be set at midnight with two figures half hidden by a rock as the curtain rises. "What would the first words be?"

It is the disaffected Giles and Isa, loving and hating each other, who begin the new play. In a remarkable ending, Woolf portrays the couple sitting silently in the dark before going to bed: “Before they slept, they must fight; after they had fought they would embrace.” From that embrace, they may create another life, but “first they must fight, as the dog fox fights the vixen, in the heart of darkness, in the fields of night.” The “great hooded chairs” in which they sit grow enormous, likeMiss La Trobe’s rock. The house fades, no longer sheltering them; they are like “dwellers in caves,” watching “from some high place.” The last lines of the novel are, “Then the curtain rose. They spoke.”

This indeterminate conclusion implies that love and hate are elemental and reciprocal, and that such oppositions on a personal level are also the polarities that drive human history. Does Woolf read, then, in the gathering European storm, a cataclysm that will bring the pageant of history full circle, back to the primitive stage of prehistory? Or, like W. B. Yeats in “The Second Coming,” does she envision a new cycle even more terrifying than the old? Or, as the faithful Lucy Swithin does, perhaps she hopes that “*all* is harmony could we hear it. And we shall.”

Eight years earlier, Virginia Woolf wrote in her diary, “I think the effort to live in two spheres: the novel; and life; is a strain.” Miss La Trobe, a crude alter ego for the author, is obsessed by failure but always driven to create anew because “a vision imparted was relief from agony . . . for one moment.” In her brilliant experimental attempts to impart her own view of fragmented human beings achieving momentary harmony, discovering unity and stability behind the flux of daily life, Woolf repeatedly endured such anguish, but after *Between the Acts* was done, the strain of beginning again was too great. Perhaps the questions Virginia Woolf posed in this final haunting novel, published posthumously and unrevised, were answered for her in death.

3.2 SUMMARY

Some authors have permanently altered the terrain of storytelling in the wide and enthralling world of literature. Virginia Woolf is one such illustrious author whose ground-breaking works forever changed the direction of contemporary literature. Woolf, who was born in London, England, on January 25, 1882, exhibited a singular capacity to transcend

the rules of writing by delicately incorporating stream-of-consciousness, introspection, and psychological depth into her storytelling.

Her creative skill, which explores the depths of the human mind and tests the limits of imagination, continues to serve as a source of inspiration for both writers and readers. Woolf battled personal setbacks and cultural constraints throughout her life, seeking refuge and freedom in her art. Let's explore Virginia Woolf's captivating world of contemporary fiction as we travel through the rich tapestry of her literary works, where reality and perception interact and the complex dance of the human mind is revealed.

Virginia Woolf was raised in a famous intellectual and artistic household, where her writing career first began. She was the daughter of Julia Prinsep Jackson, a well-known beauty and photographer, and Sir Leslie Stephen, a distinguished historian, novelist, and editor. Woolf was exposed to literature at a young age since she grew up in a notable literary community that included family friends like Thomas Hardy and Henry James. Despite the sadness of losing her mother when she was just 13 years old, Woolf's tenacious spirit and passion for writing grew.

As she got older, Woolf became steadfastly determined to escape the limitations of traditional narrative. She aimed to portray the core of human consciousness?the finer distinctions in thinking and feeling that lie under the surface of everyday life. She co-founded the Bloomsbury Group, a group of like-minded intellectuals and artists who shared a dedication to innovation and modernity, in order to further this aesthetic goal. Woolf's urge to experiment with narrative strategies was stoked by the group's gatherings and conversations, which evolved into a fertile field for creative inquiry.

Woolf started to establish herself as a major literary force around the beginning of the 20th century. She used a distinctive narrative style in her books, articles, and short tales that merged the inner thoughts of her characters with the surroundings in which they lived. Woolf's well-known novels, including "Mrs. Dalloway," "To the Lighthouse," and "Orlando," demonstrated her proficiency with the stream-of-consciousness style.

This strategy allowed her to extensively dive into the brains of her characters, giving readers a close-up look at their desires, concerns, and ideas Woolf's examination of time and memory also gave her stories an additional depth of intricacy. She expertly

portrayed how time is flexible, fusing the past, present, and future to provide a seamless and engrossing reading experience. The typical linear storytelling structure was put to the test by this temporal modification, which also highlighted how interrelated human experiences are.

In addition to her unrivalled creative talent, Virginia Woolf was a fierce supporter of social equality and women's rights. Her feminist writings, such "A Room of One's Own," were pillars of the feminist movement and motivated generations of women to achieve their goals and fight for equality in a patriarchal society.

Virginia Woolf's particular language invites us to explore the human psyche and accept the complexities of our own thoughts and feelings as we go further into the core of her modern literature. Her literary legacy continues to be a symbol of bravery, inventiveness, and artistic innovation, resonating with readers all around the world. Join us on this amazing journey through the mysterious universe of Virginia Woolf, where narrative becomes a spiritual experience and imagination has no boundaries.

3.2.1 CHARACTER DYNAMICS

The brilliant literary visionary of the 20th century, Virginia Woolf, was a genius at expressing the nuances of interpersonal relationships in addition to being a master of experimental storytelling approaches. Woolf went in-depth with her characters to create intimate portraits of their thoughts, feelings, and relationships in her ground-breaking works of contemporary literature.

The character interactions in Woolf's books are anything but typical; they are a symphony of intricacies and a kaleidoscope of human relationships that reflect the complicated web of real-life connections. We are drawn into a world where empathy and reflection interweave and the true nature of human nature is exposed as we examine the captivating character dynamics in Virginia Woolf's modern literature.

Woolf was a novelist who was known for her capacity to delve deeply into the complex interior lives of her characters. She descended into the depths of the brains of her protagonists, exposing their most secret thoughts and desires, rather than depending

entirely on external events to drive the story. For instance, Woolf introduces us to Clarissa Dalloway in "Mrs. Dalloway," a high society woman getting ready for a party.

We see Clarissa's views on her past, her regrets, and her longing for a meaningful relationship through a deftly constructed stream-of-consciousness tale. This method not only deepens our comprehension of Clarissa as a person but also paves the way for examining her interpersonal interactions.

In Woolf's contemporary writing, character dynamics frequently reflect the intricacies of interpersonal relationships. Her characters' relationships are influenced by complex feelings, unsaid conflicts, and unmet wants, much like in the real world. In "To the Lighthouse," the dynamics of the Ramsay family are crucial to the story.

While Mrs. Ramsay plays the role of a mediator, striving to maintain harmony within the home, Mr. Ramsay, a self-absorbed philosopher, craves affirmation and adulation from his family. The youngsters struggle with the need to be seen and liked by their parents. Readers may connect on a truly personal level with this detailed representation of a family's problems and goals thanks to these interactions.

Woolf's investigation of character dynamics goes beyond kinship ties. The protagonist's relationships change with time in "Orlando," a novel that spans centuries and tackles issues of gender identity and development. Orlando's experiences with various historical personalities and lovers offer an engrossing look at how people connect and relate to one another in diverse circumstances. The character's gender flexibility also goes against social expectations and adds another level of complexity to the relationships the story portrays.

Additionally, Woolf's characters are not restricted to their own universes; rather, they intricately interconnect and have an impact on one another's lives. Through their common experiences and life reflections, the characters in "The Waves," for example, are related.

Woolf portrays the characters as both distinct individuals and related elements of a broader collective consciousness through a variety of viewpoints. Readers may follow

the ebb and flow of these people' lives as they intersect thanks to the novel's original structure, which results in a captivating and emotionally compelling story.

Virginia Woolf's contributions to contemporary literature are evidence of her unmatched comprehension of people and relationships. Woolf allows readers to get fully immersed in the personal difficulties and achievements of her characters through her innovative use of narrative methods and in-depth investigation of character dynamics.

Woolf's depiction of character interactions reflects the human experience in all its beauty and flaws, from the complexity of familial ties to the complicated web of connections between people. We come to see that the core of her contemporary literature rests in the true and intricate dance of characters that mirror the rich fabric of life itself as we dig further into the compelling worlds she portrays.

3.2.2 PLOT SUMMARY

The thought-provoking essay "Modern Fiction," written by Virginia Woolf, is a compelling examination of the fundamentals of narrative and the development of literature in the 20th century. The article was published in 1921 as a part of a collection called "The Common Reader." In this fascinating essay, Woolf examines the mechanics of fiction writing and exhorts writers to abandon accepted conventions and adopt a more profound and introspective method of telling stories.

The essay starts off with Woolf reflecting on the state of contemporary fiction and the strict literary rules that have constrained authors for generations. She bemoans the predominance of "materialists" who hold to a shallow interpretation of life, only mimicking its outward manifestations. Woolf, on the other hand, longs for authors who have the guts to go into the depths of human awareness and examine the complexities of the human mind.

Using the allegory of a "looking-glass," Woolf argues that the duty of a real fiction writer is to modify and distort the reflections in order to reveal a more profound truth rather than to merely present a mirror of life. She exhorts authors to use cutting-edge "spiritual fiction" approaches that go beyond superficial reality and force the reader to examine their own views and beliefs.

Woolf fervently supports the development of a literary style that better portrays the spontaneity and flow of human mind. She thinks that employing a "stream-of-consciousness" style will enable writers to portray reality more accurately by revealing the thoughts and feelings of their characters. Writers may create a strong bond between the reader and the characters by engrossing them in the unfiltered flow of thinking, resulting in a more engaging and emotionally resonant reading experience.

Woolf muses throughout the article about the great writers who have adopted this modernistic style of fiction. She extols the brilliance of authors like Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Marcel Proust who delved into the intricate maze of the human psyche and gave readers a close-up view of the human condition. According to Woolf, these writers are the forerunners of contemporary fiction because they dared to experiment with narrative devices and go into new areas of literary study.

In "Modern Fiction," Woolf places a strong emphasis on the value of personal experience and the distinctiveness of each reader's viewpoint. By arguing that everyone's vision of the world is influenced by their subjective experiences and emotions, she undermines the idea of an objective reality. Because of this range of viewpoints, fiction as art should celebrate the variety of human thought and feeling.

Woolf leaves her readers with an open-ended inquiry about the promise of modern fiction in the essay's final sentences. She exhorts authors to break free from social restrictions, harness the unbridled force of their imaginations, and explore the depths of their subconscious. They will be able to discover the actual meaning of contemporary fiction?a complex web of interwoven lives where fantasy and reality coexist in perfect harmony.

Finally, Virginia Woolf's "Modern Fiction" offers an in-depth examination of the craft of storytelling and the development of literature. Woolf urges authors to go beyond the bounds of traditional fiction through her fervent support for the stream-of-consciousness style and her condemnation of materialistic representations of reality.

She challenges authors to usher in a new age of fiction that embraces the ever-evolving intricacies of contemporary life by embracing the complexity of the human mind and appreciating the diversity of human experience. "Modern Fiction" is more than simply

an essay; it's a stirring call to action for both authors and readers to go on a journey of creative invention and contemplation.

3.2.3 THEMES EXPLORED

The visionary writer of the 20th century known as Virginia Woolf was recognised for her capacity to dig deeply into the complexity of human existence. In her groundbreaking essay "Modern Fiction," which was included in the book "The Common Reader" in 1921, Virginia Woolf launches a challenging investigation of the principles that have guided the development of literature in the modern period.

She questions the accepted standards of fiction writing through her astute analysis and advocates for a more reflective and creative approach to narrative. Come with me as I explore the mysterious world of Virginia Woolf's "Modern Fiction" and explore the profound issues that still have an impact on readers and authors alike.

The concept of the flexibility of human mind is one of the major issues covered in "Modern Fiction." According to Woolf, a truthful representation of life and the human experience must accept the subjective and constantly shifting character of individual thinking and perception rather than being constrained by objective realism.

She promotes the use of the stream-of-consciousness storytelling approach, which immerses the reader in a character's thoughts and feelings in their unfettered flow. By blending the boundaries between the characters' inner worlds and the world they live in, this method fosters a closer relationship with the characters. Woolf emphasizes the diversity of viewpoints and the depth of human reflection via this examination of consciousness.

Individuality and the distinctiveness of each person's experience are two additional major themes in the essay. According to Woolf, genuine modern fiction should acknowledge the variety of human thinking and emotion and the fact that each person sees the world from their own unique perspective.

This celebration of uniqueness is entwined with a critique of life's materialistic representations, in which people are reduced to simple imitations of their outward looks.

Woolf exhorts authors to go into the depths of their characters' brains in order to unearth the complexity and inconsistencies that truly define them as human.

In "Modern Fiction," Woolf also struggles with the concepts of time and memory. She rejects the conventional linear structure of storytelling in favour of embracing the fluidity of time, where the past, present, and future are all intertwined. This investigation of temporality reflects how memories affect how we perceive the world and how the effects of the past still resonate in the present. Woolf creates a more dynamic and emotionally engaging story that captures the core of the human experience by overcoming the limitations of chronological time.

The article also explores the idea of literary originality and the author's position as an artist. Woolf emphasises the significance of stretching the bounds of fiction and rejecting accepted standards. She extols the writings of authors who explored new literary waters, such as Leo Tolstoy and Marcel Proust. Through this topic, Woolf inspires authors to follow their creative impulses and explore the world of fantasy, ultimately changing the face of contemporary literature.

In addition, "Modern Fiction" explores how human lives are intertwined and the need of empathy in narrative. Woolf emphasizes that fiction should not only celebrate the connections that unite people, but also represent how those connections shape individual lives.

Greater knowledge of the human condition may be achieved through writing stories that resonate with common feelings and experiences by encouraging empathy between characters and readers. This helps to bridge the gap between different people.

3.2.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Virginia Woolf's "Modern Fiction" is a timeless and provocative credo that has a lasting impact on the literary world. Woolf exhorts authors and readers to embrace the unbridled power of imagination and liberate themselves from the constraints of traditional narrative through her lyrical words and perceptive analysis. A new generation of authors is being inspired by her appeal for a more imaginative and

introspective approach to fiction to push the boundaries of storytelling and delve into the depths of the human mind.

3.3 LET US SUM UP

In "Modern Fiction", Woolf elucidates upon what she understands modern fiction to be. Woolf states that a writer should write what inspires them and not follow any special method. She believed writers are constrained by the publishing business, by what society believes literature should look like and what society has dictated how literature should be written. Woolf believes it is a writer's job to write the complexities in life, the unknowns, not the unimportant things.

She criticizes H.G. Wells, Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy of writing about unimportant things and called them materialists. She suggests that literature should turn its back on them so it can move forward, for better or worse. While Woolf criticizes the aforementioned three authors, she praises several other authors for their innovation. This group of writers she names spiritualists, and includes James Joyce who Woolf says writes what interests and moves him.

Woolf wanted writers to focus on the awkwardness of life and craved originality in their work. Woolf's overall hope was to inspire modern fiction writers to write what interested them, wherever it may lead.

3.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) Which of the following writer does the author calls to be materialistic.

a) Mathew Arnold

b) Carl Jung

c) John Galsworthy

d) James Joyce

2) To which of the following does Virginia Woolf insist the writers to focus on

a) Awkwardness of life and craved originality

b) Clumsiness of writing and deviated originality

c) In elegance of reading and unattained originality

d) gaucheness of painting and observed duplicity

3.5 REFERENCE

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I.A.RICHARDS- THE TWO USES OF LANGUAGE

4.1 AUTHOUR INTRODUCTION

Richards was interested in semantics. His first book, The Foundation of Aesthetics (1922) was co-authored with C.K.Ogden and James Wood. Later, he collaborated with C.K.Ogden, the inventor of Basic English, which is a simplified form of English with a limited vocabulary of about eight hundred and fifty words, intended for international communication. Their book The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism (1923) created new technical terms for literary discussion such as the “symbolic use of language and science” and its “emotive” use in poetry.

I.A. Richards (born Feb. 26, 1893, Sandbach, Cheshire, Eng.—died Sept. 7, 1979, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire) was an English critic, poet, and teacher who was highly influential in developing a new way of reading poetry that led to the New Criticism and that also influenced some forms of reader-response criticism.

Richards was educated at Magdalene College, Cambridge, and was a lecturer in English and moral sciences there from 1922 to 1929. In that period he wrote three of his most influential books: *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923; with C.K. Ogden), a pioneer work on semantics; and *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924) and *Practical Criticism* (1929), companion volumes that he used to develop his critical method. The latter two were based on experimental pedagogy: Richards would give students poems in which the titles and authors’ names had been removed and then use their responses for further development of their “close reading” skills. Richards is best known for advancing the close reading of literature and for articulating the theoretical principles upon which these skills lead to “practical criticism,” a method of increasing readers’ analytic powers.

During the 1930s, Richards spent much of his time developing Basic English, a system originated by Ogden that employed only 850 words; Richards believed a universally intelligible language would help to bring about international understanding. He took Basic English to China as a visiting professor at Tsing Hua University (1929–30) and as director of the Orthological Institute of China (1936–38).

In 1942 he published a version of Plato's *Republic* in Basic English. He became professor of English at Harvard University in 1939, working mainly in primary education, and emeritus professor there in 1963. His speculative and theoretical works include

Science and Poetry (1926; revised as *Poetries and Sciences*, 1970),

Mencius on the Mind (1932),

Coleridge on Imagination (1934),

The Philosophy of Rhetoric (1936),

Speculative Instruments (1955),

Beyond (1974),

Poetries (1974), and

Complementarities (1976).

His verse has been collected in *Internal Colloquies* (1971) and *New and Selected Poems* (1978).

A student of psychology and philosophy along with literary forms, Richards concluded that poetry performs a therapeutic function by coordinating a variety of human impulses into an aesthetic whole, helping both the writer and the reader maintain their psychological well-being. He valued a "poetry of inclusion" that was able to contain the widest variety of warring tensions and oppositions.

4.2 A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO NEW CRITICISM

New Criticism, post-World War I school of Anglo-American literary critical theory that insisted on the intrinsic value of a work of art and focused attention on the individual work alone as an independent unit of meaning. It was opposed to the critical practice of bringing historical or biographical data to bear on the interpretation of a work.

The primary technique employed in the New Critical approach is close analytic reading of the text, a technique as old as Aristotle's *Poetics*. The New Critics, however, introduced refinements into the method. Early seminal works in the tradition were those of the English critics I.A. Richards' *Practical Criticism*, 1929

and William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 1930. English poet T.S. Eliot also made contributions, with his critical essays "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1917) and "Hamlet and His Problems" (1919).

The movement did not have a name, however, until the appearance of John Crowe Ransom's *The New Criticism* (1941), a work that loosely organized the principles of this basically linguistic approach to literature. Other figures associated with New Criticism include Cleanth Brooks, R.P. Blackmur, Robert Penn Warren, and W.K. Wimsatt, Jr., although their critical pronouncements, along with those of Ransom, Richards, and Empson, are somewhat diverse and do not readily constitute a uniform school of thought. New Criticism was eclipsed as the dominant mode of Anglo-American literary criticism by the 1970s.

To the New Critics, poetry was a special kind of discourse, a means of communicating feeling and thought that could not be expressed in any other kind of language. It differed qualitatively from the language of science or philosophy, but it conveyed equally valid meanings. Such critics set out to define and formalize the qualities of poetic thought and language, utilizing the technique of close reading with special emphasis on the connotative and associative values of words and on the multiple functions of figurative language—symbol, metaphor, and image—in the work.

Poetic form and content could not be separated, since the experience of reading the particular words of a poem, including its unresolved tensions, is the poem's "meaning." As a result, any rewording of a poem's language alters its content, a view articulated in the phrase "the heresy of paraphrase," which was coined by Brooks in his *The Well Wrought Urn* (1947).

4.3 SUMMARY OF THE ESSAY

4.3.1 WHAT OLD CRITICISM MISSED?

In the course of criticism so far, Richard finds that the central question, 'what kind of activity is poetry and what is its value' almost untouched. This is due to the absence of the availability of psychological information for the critic. Psychology is 'the indispensable

instrument' for any inquiry concerning art, because of its influence and impact on the reader and society.

4.3.2 HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY AND POETRY

Richard examines first, the working of human mind to explain the nature of poetry. There are moments in a man's life when his impulses respond to a stimulus in such an organised way that the mind has a life's experience. Poetry is a representation of this uniquely ordered state of mind. Poetry means not only verse but all imaginative literature, which is also the product of the same state of mind. A poet is not conscious of embodying any thought in his work. All he is interested in is to record the happy play of impulses on a particular occasion. To approach him therefore for what he says is to misunderstand him. It is to share his experience, the happy play of his impulses that the true reader goes to him. It is all that a poem or poetry is.

4.3.3 COMMUNICATION AND POETRY

A poet makes something which is beautiful in it or satisfying to him personally. Or he is making something expressive of his emotions or of himself. He is making something personal and individual. Other people are going to study it. They are going to receive the experiences from it, in the views of the poet, accidentally. Thus, taking it in this view, the communication of his experience is no part of the poet's work. The extent to which a work accords with a poet's experience can be known only by the extent to which it arouses the same experience in reader. If it fails to do so, the experience has not been accurately embodied in the work. Man is accustomed to communication from infancy. Each of his experience takes a communicative form even without his conscious effort. Thus communication becomes inseparable from poetic experience.

4.3.4 RICHARD'S IDEA ON LANGUAGE

Richards's interest in semantics. His first book, The Foundation of Aesthetics (1922) was co-authored with two fiiends of his undergraduate days, C.K.Ogden and James Wood. He continued his collaboration with C.K.Ogden, the inventor of Basic English. Their book, The Meaning ofMeaning (1923) created new technical terms for

literary discussion; they drew attention to the "symbolic" use of language in science and its "emotive" use in poetry.

Chapter Thirty-four of *Principles of Literary Criticism* is devoted to "The Two Uses of Language". Richards observes that the terms we use to discuss poetry are ambiguous and fail to record the correct distinctions. In this book, he has used words like causes, characters and consequences when analyzing mental activity, in place of thought, feeling, and will. Richards distinguishes between two kinds of causation for "mental events". The first kind is represented by the stimuli affecting the mind through the senses immediately, and also combining with what survives from comparable stimuli in the past. The second kind of causation lies in the mind itself, its needs and its receptiveness.

In the scientific field, the impulse should be derived from what is external. ?he scientific use of language thus relies on reference undistorted by the receiving mind. By contrast there is an emotive use of language which is designed to arouse emotions. Richards says, "A statement may be used for the sake of reference, true or false, which it causes.

This is the scientlfzc use of language. But it may also be used for the sake of the effects in emotion and attitude produced by the reference . . . This is the emotive use of language. The distinction once clearly grasped is simple. We may use words for the sake of the references they promote, or we may use them for the sake of the attitudes and emotions which ensue" (p.211). These two uses of languages are analogous to the denotative and connotative functions of words; the scientific use should avoid ambiguity, it should have a fixed, single meaning. But the emotive use encourages multiple meanings; various connotations of the word are brought into play.

The scientific and emotive use have different criteria for success. For science, the connections and relations of references to one another must be logical. The references should not contradict one another. But a logical arrangement is not necessary for emotive purposes. They can reject logic in favour of their own internal emotional connection; as long as they have a coherent organization, it does not matter even if they contradict each other. Richards goes on to illustrate his proposition by discussing the way the word "truth" is used.

In the scientific sense, a reference is true "when the things to which it refers are actually together in the way it refers to them" (p.212). In criticism, the most usual sense is of acceptability. Truth may also be used in the sense of sincerity, when we are discussing art. In Science and Poetry, Richards uses the term "pseudo-statement" for poetical statements. Truth in a scientific statement is a matter of laboratory verification; "a pseudo-statement is 'true' if it suits and serves some attitude or links together attitudes which on other grounds are desirable".

Richards uses the word "symbolistic" for the referential use of language, but there is a difference between his views of language and Saussure's. You would learn about Saussure in the next block, so it would be a good idea .to come back to this unit after you are acquainted with semiotics. Like Saussure's Cours, The Meaning of Meaning starts with the proposition that there is an essential disjunction between language and reality, that it is wrong to believe that "words are in some way parts of things" (to use the words of Ogden and Richards in The Meaning of Meaning). From this common starting point, their ideas develop in different directions.

For Saussure, the meaning of words does not depend in any way on their relationship with things, it is wholly determined by the arbitrary and conventional structure of language. Ogden and Richards, in contrast, stress that words are used to "point to" things, and that their meaning does depend on the things they are used to point to, their referents. Language may be different fiom reality, but it reflects it. Their position is thus an empiricist one, in that it rests on the principle that knowledge is the product of experience.

Richards continues his discussion of language in Practical Criticism, when he analyses the "Four Kinds of Meaning". All articulate speech can be regarded fiom four points of view:

1. Sense -- the state of affairs or the items presented for consideration.

2. Feeling -- By feeling he means the whole range of emotional attitudes, desire, pleasure etc. that the words evoke. Feeling does not enter into some types of discourse -- mathematics, for example.

3. Tone: the attitude of the speaker to the audience.

4. Intention -- the speaker's conscious or unconscious intention, the effect he is trylng to promote.

4.4 THE TWO USES OF LANGUAGE

Richard examines, what kind of language poetry uses. According to Richard, there are two uses of language – referential or scientific, and emotive. Referential or scientific is the way of science in using words. It is the usage of words for the sake of the references they promote. Using the word ‘fire’ in this way is no more than a reference to a corresponding object in life.

The word faithfully recalls the object. Using words in emotive manner means using them for the sake of attitudes and emotions which ensue. This is the way of poetry. In poetry, the word fire may denote ‘with heart on fire’, where ‘on fire’ means ‘in an excited state’. Instead of recalling the object, the word stands to evoke an emotion.

While science makes statements, poetry makes ‘pseudo-statements’. A statement says something and ‘is justified by its truth’. It can always be verified by a reference to its original, outside it. A pseudo-statement, on the other hand, is only a statement in name. What it says is not literally true. Therefore, in the normal sense of a word, a pseudo-statement says nothing at all.

What it apparently says has the larger purpose of evoking an emotion or attitude of mind which the poet considers valuable but for which there are no verbal equivalents. So he adopts this indirect method of evoking it. Poetry speaks not to the mind but to the impulses. Its speech, literal or unliteral, logical or illogical, is faithful to its experience to the extent to which it induces the experience in others.

Among these experiences, naturally, some must be good and some bad. It is only the good ones that can be said to be valuable. Experience results from the play of impulses (mentioned before). The mind unconsciously decides which impulses are valuable for it should therefore be satisfied to the full, and which are not valuable and should therefore be suppressed.

The impulses are of two kinds – 'appetencies and aversions' (or desires and dislikes). The mind instinctively seeks for the satisfaction of appetencies which are more important (eg. Eating, drinking etc). In the same way, it prefers elevating appetencies to those that are depraving. The normal satisfaction of the impulses therefore is involved in almost all the greatest goods of life.

4.5 THE LANGUAGE OF CRITICISM

Criticism uses the language of science. The making of literature is a scientifically analyzable activity. There is a clearly definable reason for every aspects of literature. Through a serious scientific exploration, 'mysteries' of literary art will be mysteries no more. Richard looks forward to this stage of human progress. According to Richard, 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. Only an adequate knowledge of psychology can help the critic understand literature fully, and know that criticism is not meant merely to enjoy literature.

Other Significant Points in the Essay Richards refers to the word 'pseudo-statement' for poetical statements in his work Science and Poetry (1926). Truth in a scientific statement is a matter of laboratory verification. A 'pseudo-statement' is recognised to be true if it is able to link together certain attitudes and suit and serve other attitudes, which are desirable.

Richards uses the work 'symbolistic' for the referential use of language. There is a difference between his view of language and Saussure's. For Saussure, the meaning of words does not depend in any way on the relationship with things; it is completely determined by the arbitrary and conventional structure of language. Richards and Ogden, in contrast, stress that words are used to point to things and that their meaning does not depend on the things they are used to point to, that is their referents.

In *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism* (1923), Ogden and Richards assert that there is an essential distinction between language and reality, and that it is wrong to believe that "words are in some ways parts of things." Language may be different from reality but it

reflects reality. Their position is thus an empiricist one, in that it rests on the principle that knowledge is a product of experience.

4.6 ACHIVEMENTS OF I A RICHARDS

Richards did not recommend unhistorical reading, isolated from the context. But his emphasis on the text as an autonomous entity, and his example of a criticism that is practical rather than pedantically historical, was enthusiastically taken up I the New Critics. A Survey ofModernist Poetry, by Robert Graves and Laura Riding, published in London in 1927, contained a detailed analysis of Shakespeare's 129th sonnet, "Tke expense of spirit in a waste of shame".

They demonstrated how several meanings may be interwoven together within a single line of verse. This inspired Empson, a student of Richards, and formed the model for a study of multiple meanings in his Seven Types of Ambiguity (1 930). William Empson (1 906- 1 984). defines ambiguity as "any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions" and classifies it into seven types representing advancing stages of difficulty.

In his next book, Some Versions of Pastoral (1935), interest shifts to the total meaning of whole works; the close readings present here reveal the influence of Marx and Freud. Empson's later essays, on Shakespeare, Milton and the novel, take due cognizance of the context of the work. He had no hesitation in going against one of the tenets of New Criticism, and declared (in 1955) that “A critic should have insight into the mind of his author, and I don't approve of the attack on ‘The Fallacy, of Intentionalism'.”

Richards's own analysis of specific texts is in the organistic tradition of poetic theory descending from Aristotle through the Germans to Coleridge. But his literary theory was quite original: the radical rejection of aesthetics, the resolute reduction of the work of art to a mental state, the denial of truth-value to poetry, and the defence of poetry as emotive language ordering our mind and giving us equilibrium and mental health. I.A.RIchards was unusual in combining interest in reader response wth scientific aims, but he took a simple psychological view of the reader. Later critics have investigated the role of the reader in much more sophisticated terms.

The Constance school of phenomenologists (Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss) recognize that the reader's cultural and historical situation is a key factor in responding to the text. Some features of Richards's theory, such as his materialistic concept of poetic value, or his theory of communication, lack clarity and sophistication. It remains unclear why a more complex organization of impulses should be better than a less complex one and how a system of balances can be said to contribute to the growth of the mind. Nor is it clear that poetry is communication of specific emotional experiences of an author and that reading a poem enables us to have an identical or very similar experience.

But many features of Richards's criticism have not become outdated. They have become established parts of the Anglo-American critical tradition. These are his empiricism and humanism, and his organicist insistence on close reading, on careful attention to every detail of a text, on the principle that a literary text, like a living organism, functions through the interaction of all its constituent parts.

In *Practical Criticism*, he carefully distinguished between the sense, feeling, tone and intention of a text. The discussion of rhythm and metre in *Principles of Literary Criticism* clearly showed that sound and meaning, metre and sense cannot be separated. .Content is not something that can be discussed in isolation from the expression. In the words of Rene Wellek, "The stimulus that Richards gave to English and American criticism (particularly Empson and Cleanth Brooks) by turning it resolutely to the question of language, its meaning and function in poetry, will always insure his position in any history of modern criticism."

4.7 LET US SUM UP

Richards views the poem as a response to a stimulus, which could render the reader to be important. But this subjectivism leads him to the conclusion that all poetic language is ambiguous and open to different meanings. In this context, David Daiches points out that Richards investigates what imaginative literature is, how it employs language, how its use of language differs from the scientific use of language, and what is its special function and value.

Richards, in *Principles of Literary Criticism* expounds a theory of language, and distinguishes between the two uses of language – the referential or scientific, and the emotive. A statement may be used for the sake of reference, which may be verified as true or false. This is the scientific use of language.

A statement used for the sake of the effects in emotions and attitudes produced by the reference is the emotive or poetic use of language. The poet uses words emotively for the purpose of evoking emotions and attitudes considered valuable by him. For instance, the word 'fire' has only one definite scientific reference to a fact in the real world. When poetry uses a phrase such as 'heart on fire' the word, 'fire', in relation to 'heart' evokes an emotion, that of excitement. While science makes statements, poetry makes pseudo-statements that cannot be empirically tested and proved true or false. A statement is justified by its truth or its correspondence with the fact it points to.

On the other hand, the pseudo statement of poetry is justified in its effect of releasing or organising our impulses or attitudes. Richards says, "The statements in poetry are there as a means to manipulation and expression of feelings and attitudes." Poetry communicates feelings and emotions.

Hence, poetic truth is different from scientific truth. It is a matter of emotional belief rather than intellectual belief. Poetry cannot provide knowledge, and intellectual doctrine in poetry does not exist. Poetry speaks not to the mind but to the impulses. Its speech, literal or figurative, logical or illogical is faithful to its experience as long as it evokes a similar experience in the reader. Thus, a poem, as Richards defines it, is a class of experiences "composed of all experiences, occasioned by the words", which are similar to "the original experience of the poet."

4.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) **The primary technique employed in the New Critical approach is**
    e) Atlantic writing of the text
    f) Analytic reading of the text
    g) Acoustical writing of the text
    h) Atlantic reading of the text

2) **According to Richard, the language of science used in criticism help to**

a) Unearth the secrets of literature is psychology

b) Rediscover the riddles of science as psychology

c) Disclose the question of physics of literature

d) Revive the answer of human mental chemistry

4.9 REFERENCE

https://cec.nic.in/webpath/podcast/audios/LITARARY_CRITICISM/m28.pdf

https://literariness.org/2016/03/18/ia-richards-concept-of-the-two-uses-of-language/

https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/22635/1/Unit-1.pdf

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ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

3.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) Which of the following writer does the author calls to be materialistic.

a) Mathew Arnold

b) Carl Jung

c) John Galsworthy

d) James Joyce

2) To which of the following does Virginia Woolf insist the writers to focus on

a) Awkwardness of life and craved originality

b) Clumsiness of writing and deviated originality

c) In elegance of reading and unattained originality

d) Gaucheness of painting and observed duplicity

4.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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c) Acoustical writing of the text

d) Atlantic reading of the text

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a) Unearth the secrets of literature is psychology

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d) Revive the answer of human mental chemistry

UNIT III

LESSON 5 - M.H.ABRAMS: ORIENTATION OF CRITICAL THEORIES

5. 1 AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Meyer Howard Abrams is one of the most respected scholar-theorists of the twentieth century. His special field is Romantic poetry and poetics, but he has done scholarly work that draws on encyclopedic historical knowledge of literary theory from all periods, and he has engaged in paradigm-level debates in contemporary literary theory. He has also played a major role as an anthologist, serving, among other things, as founding editor of The Norton Anthology of English Literature (1962). With respect to prominence and influence, his peers include Northrop Frye and Harold Bloom. Like Abrams, Frye and Bloom have scholarly specializations in Romanticism, and both have also done major work as literary theorists. Unlike Frye and Bloom, Abrams is not himself intellectually and imaginatively a Romantic, neither of the Blakean mystical cast, like Frye, nor of the Byronic egoistic cast, like Bloom. Abrams' chief intellectual affinities are with the Enlightenment and with neo-classical theorists rather than with the Romantics—with Hume, Johnson, and Burke, rather than with Schlegel, Coleridge, and Shelley.

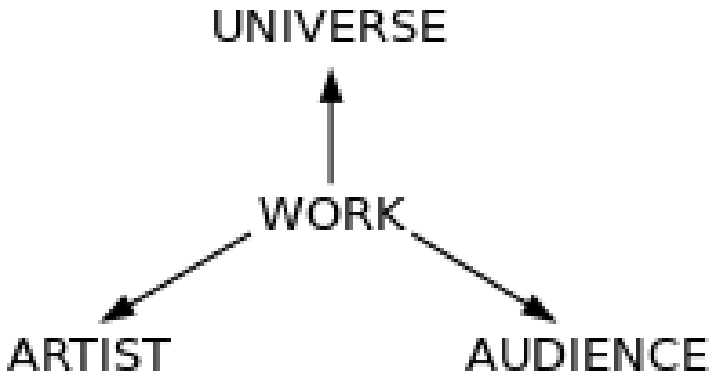
5.2 ESSAY INTRODUCTION

This is the first chapter of the book, **The Mirror and the Lamp,** by Abrams. Abrams explains the title of the book thus: " The title of the book identifies two common and antithetical metaphors of the mind". One of the metaphors compares the mind to a reflector (mirror). The other (lamp) is a radiant projector, which gives light to others. From Plato to the 18th century, creative writers considered mind as a mere reflector of external realities. But during the Romantic period this idea changed and mind is considered as something that illuminates and gives a new appearance to external realities. The principal object of Abram's study is the suppression of the first idea by the second. The first chapter also gives a brief survey of criticism. Thus the essay is a very good introduction to modern criticism

5.3ESSAY SUMMARY

Abhramssays that today art is considered in relation to the artist. Its relation to external nature or to the audience is not given much importance. The field of aesthetic studies is very confusing. I.A. Richards gave the heading “The Chaos of Critical Theories” to the first chapter of his book, **Principles of Literary Criticism.** A good deal of the confusion is caused because of the belief that criticism is a physical or psychological science. The aim of criticism is not to establish correlations between facts. On the other hand it aims to establish principles that will help us to explain, interpret and evaluate the aesthetic facts. Aesthetic facts are different from reality. They are not true in the strict scientific sense.

Some Coordinates of Art Criticism. In all theories of art criticism there are 4 elements. The work or the artistic product (this is a human product). ii. The artist, iii. The subject – (people and their actions, ideas and feelings, material things and events, nature etc). The more comprehensive term universe is better, and iv. Audience – listeners, spectators, or readers to whom the work is addressed



Almost all theories of criticism show an orientation towards one of these elements only. The critic derives his ideas about categorizing, defining and analyzing a work from one of these terms only. Three of these elements – universe, artist and audience explain the work in relation to another thing. The fourth – work – considers it in isolation as an autonomous whole whose importance or value is decided without reference to anything beyond itself. These 4 are variables. They differ in significance according to the theory in which they occur. Take for example the element universe. 1. It may be the moral

elements of the universe. 2.It may be any element of nature the artist is imitating. 3. The artist's world may be one of imagination or of commonsense. 4. It may include (or may not include) gods, witches, chimeras, and Platonic idea.

Abrams now speaks about 4 different types of theories. They are: -

1. Mimetic Theories
2. Pragmatic Theories
3. Expressive Theories
4. Objective theories.

1.Mimetic Theories.

i. (The views of Plato and Socrates)

This theory views art as an imitation of various aspects of the universe. This is the oldest aesthetic theory. This concept makes its first appearance in the dialogues of Plato. The arts of painting, poetry, music, dancing, and sculpture, Socrates says, are all imitations.

Imitation in the dialogues of Plato operates with three categories.

a) The first category is the eternal unchanging Ideas

b) The second reflects this. It is the world of sense, natural or artificial.

c) The third category reflects the second. It comprises of such things as shadows, images in water or mirrors, and the fine arts.

Socrates expounds these ideas further. According to him, in the nature of art there are three beds.

The Idea is the essence of the bed and it is made by God.

Then, there is the bed made by the carpenter.

Lastly, there is the bed found in a painting.

Since art imitates the world of appearance and not of essence, it follows that works of art have a lowly status. Art is at second remove from the truth. It is equally remote from the beautiful and the good.

All things including art are to be judged by their relation to the Ideas. So the poet becomes the competitor of the artisan, the lawmaker and the moralist.

Plato confirms the poor opinion of poetry when he points out that its effect on the auditors are bad because it represents appearances than truth, and nourishes feelings rather than truth.

ii. The views of Aristotle

Aristotle in the Poetics also defines poetry as imitation. “Epic poetry, and tragedy, as also comedy…. and most flute playing and lyre playing are all, viewed as a whole, modes of imitation” and “the objects the imitator represents are actions”.

In Plato and in Aristotle, the work of art is seen as an imitation. It is constructed according to prior models. However Aristotle removed the other world of pure Ideas. He also treated imitation as something specific to the arts. He also introduced supplementary distinctions according to the objects imitated, the medium of imitation and the manner (dramatic, narrative or mixed) in which the imitation is done. Aristotle also distinguished poetry from other kinds of art, and then differentiated the various poetic genres – such as epic and drama, tragedy and comedy. Focusing on tragedy, he differentiates the various elements in it – plot, character, thought and so on.

Imitation continued to be a prominent term for a long time after Aristotle – all the way to 18th century, in fact. The importance given to the term differed from critic to critic. There was a tendency to replace the term ‘action’ as the object of imitation with such elements as human character, or thought, or even inanimate things. Some critics replaced the term imitation itself with such terms like ‘reflection’, ‘representation’, ‘feigning’, ‘copy’, or ‘image’.

iii. Some 18th century discussions of the term imitation

Abrams gives some examples of 18th century discussions of imitation that is of special interest.

a. Charles Batteux. His book - The Arts Reduced to a Single Principle -- was very popular in France and Germany. He wanted to reduce the rules of art to one single principle. He said that imitation is not that of crude everyday reality, but of 'la belle nature', that is a model having all perfections. From this stage, Batteux goes on to extract one by one the rules of taste – general rules for poetry and painting and detailed rules for the genres.

b. Lessing. His book, Laokoon, was published in 1776. He tried to remove the confusion in the relation of poetry with the other graphic and plastic arts. Lessing concludes that poetry, like painting, is imitation. The diversity between poetry and other arts is in the medium. Poetry consists of a number of sounds articulated in time whereas painting is forms and colours fixed in space.

The concept that art is imitation played an important part in neo-classical aesthetics. Art is seen mostly as an imitation that is instrumental in producing effects in an audience. The focus of attention has shifted not from work to universe but from work to audience.

2. Pragmatic Theories

Sidney said that the aim of poetry is to 'teach and delight'. To Sidney poetry has a purpose – to achieve certain effects in an audience. It imitates with the purpose of pleasing and pleases with the ultimate aim of teaching. This is the gist of the arguments of Sidney in Apologie for Poetry.

The poet is elevated from the moral philosopher and the historian by his capacity to move the audience to virtue.

Criticism like Sidney's can be called pragmatic theory. It looks at the practical aspects of a work of art. The central tendency of the pragmatic critic is to conceive a poem as something made to create a particular response in the minds of the readers.

The perspective and much of the basic vocabulary of pragmatism originated from the classical theory of rhetoric. Rhetoric is universally accepted as a way to move

men everywhere. The best example for the application of the theories of rhetoric to poetry is Ars Poetica by Horace. As Richard Mckeon points out, 'Horace's criticism is directed in the main to instruct the poet how to keep his audience in their seats until the end, how to induce cheers and applause, how to please a Roman audience, and by the same token, how to please all audiences and win immortality.'

Horace

Horace advised that the poet's aim is either to profit or to please, or to blend in one the delightful and the useful. Horace held pleasure to the chief purpose of poetry. To teach and to delight and to move (another term taken from rhetoric) summarized the total aesthetic effect on the reader.

For a number of critics of the Renaissance, the moral effect was the terminal aim, to which delight and emotion were added. From the time of Dryden, pleasure tended to become the ultimate end though poetry without profit was considered trivial. Dryden considered the imitation of nature as the means for pleasure. He also stressed the importance of rules.

Dr. Johnson

The great pragmatist of neo-classicism was Dr. Johnson. Abrams takes for consideration "that great monument of neoclassic criticism" – Preface to Shakespeare.

Johnson undertakes in his preface to establish the rank of Shakespeare among poets. To find out the power and excellences of Shakespeare, Johnson addresses himself to a general examination of Shakespeare's dramas. In this attempt he again and again speaks of mimesis or imitation. Repeatedly, he maintains that Shakespeare's drama "is the mirror of life. But Johnson also claims, "the end of writing is to is to instruct by pleasing". If a poem fails to please, as a work of art it is nothing. Johnson was also a moralist and insisted that a work must please without violating the standards of truth and virtue. It is Shakespeare's defect 'that he writes without any moral purpose'.

The pragmatic orientation was important throughout the 18th century. But the seeds of destruction were inherent in pragmatic criticism. Ancient rhetoric had also paid detailed attention to the speaker himself- his nature or innate powers of genius. In the

course of the 18th century, increasing attention was given to the mental constitution of the poet. The focus thus gradually shifted to the poet's natural genius, creative imagination, and emotional spontaneity of the poet. As a result the audience gradually disappeared into the background, giving place to the poet himself. Poet's mental powers, emotional needs became the important cause and even the end of art.

III. EXPRESSIVE THEORIES

"Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", Wordsworth announced in his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads. He thought the formulation to be so important that he repeated the statement twice in one essay. Poetry is the overflow, the utterance, or the projection of the thought and feelings of the poet. This way of thinking in which the artist becomes the major element is the expressive theory of art.

The central ideas of the expressive theory can be summarized in this way. 1. A work of art is the internal made the external. 2. The primary source and subject matter of a poem is the poet's mind. 3. If aspects of external world are the subject, then these are converted from fact to poetry by the feelings and operations of the poet's mind. 4. The primary cause of poetry is the impulse within the poet of feelings and desires seeking expression. 5. A work is not considered as a mirror to reflect nature. Abrams writes, 'the mirror held up to nature becomes transparent and yields the reader insight into the mind and heart of the poet himself'.

John Stuart Mill

Mill wrote two essays of literary criticism in 1833. They are 'What is poetry'? and 'The two kinds of Poetry'. These two essays show the changes that have taken place in expressive theories. Mill's primary proposition is this: - Poetry is 'the expression or uttering forth of feeling'. Exploration of this aesthetic idea takes Mill to a drastic altering of the critical commonplaces.

1. The poetic kinds.

Mill inverts the classical ranking of poetic kinds. He says that lyric poetry is more poetic than other forms because it expresses emotions better. Aristotle considered

tragedy as the greatest form of poetry. In tragedy the plot is given the utmost role. But Mill considers plot as a necessary evil. He says that an epic poem is not poem at all.

2. Spontaneity as criterion.

Mill says that a man's emotional status is innate but his knowledge and skill are acquired. On this basis he divides poets into two kinds: poets who are born and poets who are made. Shelley represents the poet who is born and Wordsworth is the poet who is made. With unconscious irony Mill turns Wordsworth's definition of poetry against Wordsworth himself. "Wordsworth's poetry has little of the appearance of spontaneousness: the well is never so full that it overflows".

3 The external world.

Reference to external world disappears from Mill's theory. He says that poetry is not in the object but in the mind itself. An object provides an occasion for generation of poetry. Mill gives much importance to symbols in poetry. This influenced the Symbolists of the 20th century.

4. The audience.

Mill reduced the poet's audience into a single member, consisting of the poet himself. He says that all poetry is in the form of a soliloquy. Thus Mill reduced the importance of audience. Keats said, "I never wrote one single line of poetry with the least shadow of public thought." Shelley said that the poet is "like a nightingale who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds; his auditors are as men entranced by the melody of an unseen musician…" Carlyle believed that the poet replaced the audience as the generator of aesthetic norms.

This completes an evolution. In mimetic theory the poet was very passive. His work was to hold the mirror up to nature. The pragmatic poet, whatever his abilities are, has to satisfy his audience. Carlyle's poet is the hero, the chosen one, who need not care for his audience.

IV. OBJECTIVE THEORIES

These theories consider the work of art in isolation from all points of external reference. It is seen as a self-sufficient entity. It is judged on the basis of its own intrinsic nature.

This theory has been rare in literary criticism. As an all-inclusive approach to poetry, it began to evolve in the late 18th and 19th centuries. A poem is considered as a heterocosm, a world of its own, independent of the world into which we are born. Its aim is not to instruct or please but simply to exist. A poem, as Poe expressed it, is 'a poem 'per se'… written solely for the poem's sake'. "Art for Art's sake". T.S.Eliot wrote, "When we are considering poetry we must consider it primarily as poetry and not another thing". This is joined with MacLeish's aphorism "A poem should not mean But be." J.C. Ransom called for recognition of 'the autonomy of the work itself as existing for its own sake". In their influential book, Theory of Literature, Wellek and Warren wrote against 'intentional fallacy' and 'affective fallacy'. In America the objective form of criticism has replaced the other forms of criticism.

5.4 LET US SUM UP

M.H. Abrams' essay "Orientation of Critical Theories" categorizes literary theory into four types based on the relationship between a work of art and one of four focal points: the universe, the audience, the artist, and the work itself:

- Mimetic theory: Focuses on the relationship between the work and the universe, or everything in the world outside of the audience, text, and author
- Pragmatic theory: Focuses on the relationship between the work and the audience
- Expressive theory: Focuses on the relationship between the work and the artist
- Objective theory: Focuses on the work as an autonomous object, and analyzes the text itself

Abrams diagrams these theories on a triangular plane, and concludes that the purpose of critical theory is to establish principles for interpreting and evaluating art, rather than to discover truth.

5.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) Which of the following theory focuses on the relationship between the work and the artist?

a) Mimetic theory
b) Pragmatic theory
c) Expressive theory
d) Objective theory

2**) What are the four focal points those categorizes the literary theory.**

a)The art, the philosopher, the artist, and the work itself.
b)The universe, the philosopher, the artist, and the art.
c)The universe, the audience, the philosopher, and the work itself.
d) The universe, the audience, the artist, and the work itself.

5.6 REFERENCE

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LESSON 6

GEORGE ORWELL: POLITICS AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

6.1 AUTHOUR INTRODUCTION

George Orwell is the pen name of Eric Arthur Blair: essayist, novelist, literary critic, advocate and fighter for political change, and man of contradictions. Blair was born on June 25, 1903, in the Bengal region of Eastern India, which was a British territory. He was the son of Richard Walmesley Blair, a civil servant, and Ida Mabel Blair. George, their only son, was the middle child. He moved to England with his mother and sisters at the age of one. He displayed academic talent from a young age, so his mother took pains to ensure his attendance at a well-known boarding school called St. Cyprian's. His family was neither poor nor wealthy, and Blair attended St. Cyprian's on a scholarship.

Blair excelled academically there but faced many hardships in its puritanical, cutthroat environment. In the autobiographical essay "Such, Such Were the Joys," Blair/Orwell describes the social challenges he endured as a scholarship student among England's wealthy elite. (These challenges would inform his satires of social stratification in his literary works, including *Animal Farm*.) In the essay, he describes his child self with much sympathy and feeling for the child's perspective. Such experiments in empathy prepared him to create *Animal Farm*'s brilliantly naive narrator.

Blair's academic prowess continued in secondary school at Eton, a renowned secondary school (more recently famous for Prince William's attendance there). Blair graduated from Eton in 1921. Despite his intelligence, he could not afford to attend college. In 1922, he joined the Indian Imperial Police in Burma. He had spent the first year of his life in a British colony, and this time, he got a thorough experience of British colonial life and despised what he saw. His experiences made him a champion of the poor and downtrodden, a role in which he would continue for the rest of his life. Moreover, he could

not stand the fact that his job put him directly in the position of privileged oppressor. He resigned from the Indian Imperial Police five years later while on leave in England.

Blair/ Orwell thus became devoted to the problems of class and government power long before he wrote *Animal Farm*. As Louis Menand writes, "He turned his life into an experiment in classlessness, and the intensity of his commitment to that experiment was the main reason that his friends and colleagues found him a perverse and sometimes exasperating man." To complete his rejection of elitism, Blair lived after the fashion of the poorest Englanders. This included refusing to wear warm clothing in winter or to display table manners. It is questionable whether his destitute lifestyle contributed to his frequent illnesses, but such choices indubitably influenced his written works.

Blair tried his luck in Paris briefly, but found he could not make a living there as a writer. He returned to England in 1929, where he published essays and continued his fascination with and incorporation into the dregs of society. He began to slip into poverty in earnest, so he took a job as a teacher at Frays College. He also secured himself a literary agent. Blair/Orwell published *Down and Out in Paris* in 1932. Before the book's publication, Blair assumed the pen name under which he would become famous. Accounts of why he chose the pen name "George Orwell" vary. Some say the name is deeply symbolic, while others state that it was merely one of a list of names from which he allowed his publishers to choose.

From 1934 on, Orwell thrust himself fully into the writer's arena. He quit his teaching job and moved to Hempstead, a gathering place for young writers at the time, where he worked in a used-book store. He published his first fictional work, *Burmese Days*, in 1934, and followed with *A Clergyman's Daughter* in 1935. Orwell's presence in Hempstead and his interest in the lower class did not go unnoticed. In 1936, the Left Book Club commissioned him to write an account of the destitute state of Northern England. Orwell threw himself into the project, conducting firsthand research in his quest for authenticity. In his travels, he met and married Eileen O'Shaughnessy. The controversial account was published in 1936 under the name *The Road to Wigan Pier*. He published *Aspidistra Flying* in the same year.

Around the time *The Road to Wigan Pier* was published, Orwell took his campaign against elitism and tyranny a step further, volunteering to fight in the Spanish Civil War on the side of the Republicans. He joined POUM, a Trotskyist, revolutionary socialist party that emphasized the need for a working-class uprising and opposed the Spanish Communist Party's belief in collaborating with the middle class. Orwell's experiences in the war, including being shot almost fatally, cemented his hatred of totalitarianism in its many guises. This included Stalinism, against which he held a lifetime grudge. Ironically, Orwell's neck injury very nearly—and literally—robbed the outspoken writer of his voice. However, he did recover, and while doing so Orwell completed a novel, *Coming Up for Air*. Orwell described his social observations of Spain in *Homage to Catalonia*.

In 1940, Orwell and his wife moved to central London, where he worked as a reviewer. When World War II began, he rose to fight for the cause of freedom again, this time for England. He joined the Home Guard and worked for the BBC to compose and disseminate wartime propaganda. Orwell knew of what he spoke when he skewered propaganda in *Animal Farm* and *1984*. Orwell based his satires not just on hearsay and research but also on personal experience; writing propaganda is said to have made him feel corrupt.

He was also a war correspondent. During wartime, Orwell and his wife adopted a son, but his wife died shortly afterwards. Also during this time, Orwell completed *Animal Farm*, which was published in England in 1945. It was at this point, just when Orwell's personal life was in shambles, that his fame began to grow. The book met with immediate and far-reaching public success, especially since it was so topical.

Orwell continued to write for periodicals while completing his second renowned novel, *1984*. He remarried in 1949, to Sonia Brownell.

Orwell, who was prone to illness, had his career and his life cut short when he died of tuberculosis on January 21, 1950. Orwell's friend, David Astor, saw to it that he was buried in a small county churchyard. Orwell is buried under his birth name. He left a strong literary and political legacy, being one of those artists who influenced not only the literary universe, but also the real world in which he lived. As he wrote in "Politics and the English Language": "In our age there is no such thing as 'keeping out of politics.' All issues are

political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia." This statement also illustrates the pessimism for which Orwell was known. Like some other disillusioned people of his generation, Orwell believed that totalitarian governments would inevitably take over the West.

6.2 INTRODUCTION TO POLITICS AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Fittingly, George Orwell's essay “Politics and the English Language” is accurately described by its title. The essay is about the connection between politics and poor uses of language. It presents an argument for clear, simple, unpretentious language that attempts to represent its meaning—hence the unambiguous title.

The essay is not, as it might at first glance appear, a defense of archaic or traditionally “proper” uses of English. On the contrary, Orwell feels that old, dead words should be abandoned, as he argues for original and independent thinking that comes from asserting agency in language—specifically in political speech. One of his main arguments is that repetitions derive from unoriginal thinking and unoriginal thinking leads to repetitions. He describes a form of indoctrination that happens when people use familiar turns of phrase in political speech. Rather than thinking independently, people pantomime a party line.

Along with hackneyed phrases and meaningless redundancies, abstract or elevated political language is one of his main targets. He demonstrates in clear terms the way that abstract language is a form of lying: namely, when the language used to describe a party’s political agenda is far removed from the violence for which it apologizes.

The essay’s thesis is an evolving one, ultimately aiming to debunk the idea that there’s no hope in resisting the intellectually corrosive effects of political speech, nor the lies produced by highly abstract language for political purpose. He offers a helpful toolkit for the political writer to use in order to resist being indoctrinated by language.

6.3 SUMMARY

6.3.1 SECTION ONE

Orwell opens by discussing the value of working against the decay of the English language. Language is a tool, he argues. Thus, if it is corroding, this is a human-controlled rather than simply natural process. Its corrosion is reversible. In clear terms, Orwell describes the cycle in which the poor use of language becomes reinforced by that poor use. He uses a clear analogy to describe this cycle, stating that "a man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks" (251). Accordingly, "foolish thoughts" are made possible by foolish language (251). As is the case with the cycle of alcoholism, the process of poor writing-poor thinking-poor writing is reversible. Intervention is possible. Clear, honest language will support clear, independent thinking, which in turn will support clear language, and so on.

He moves on to present different examples of language that reflect different habits of thinking. He selects examples from different academic texts, political pamphlets and a letter to the editor of the *Tribune*. While each of the examples is "ugly" in its own right (a feature he claims is fixable), each shares two features: "staleness of imagery… [and] …lack of precision" (252). As he explains, this is the result of the writer in each example either being unable to express their meaning or not caring if they accurately express themselves at all. This particular combination of features (staleness and imprecision) is, according to Orwell, "the most marked characteristic of modern English prose, and especially of any kind of political writing" (251).

Orwell follows with a more specific list of examples of habits or tactics that writers use in order to *avoid* developing meaning in their prose.

The list is as follows:

"*Dying metaphors*" are hackneyed, familiar, unoriginal metaphors, not of the writer's own invention. While original metaphors work by presenting the reader with a new image, dying metaphors are redundant and fail to evoke a new thought. He lists a number of familiar examples, including "toe the line" which he also notes is frequently misspelled as "tow the line" implying that the writer doesn't even know the meaning of the metaphor they're attempting to deploy.

"*Operators,* or *verbal false limbs*" stand in for more clear and accessible meaning. Examples are "render inoperative, militate against, prove unacceptable…" and more.

These are used in the place of other verbs. The reason for this, he suggests, is mostly stylistic-rhythmic, the writer attempting to create a symmetrical sentence by filling it out with an operator. Other examples of this are the use of passive voice in place of active and the replacement of simple conjunctions with complex phrases such as, "*with respect to; having regard to…"* (253).

"*Pretentious diction*." This is an important target in Orwell's broader critique. Use of pretentious diction (of which he gives a long list of examples) has specific political functions. Certain pretentious words aim to stand in for scientific objectivity. Pretentious adjectives are used to turn ugly international political processes into something sophisticated or to glorify war. Foreign words replace familiar English words as a way of giving an air of sophistication. He argues that one reason that political writers resort to the use of foreign words is because it's easier than finding an accurate English word. Pretentious diction, he suggest, is mostly caused by laziness and its effect ultimately muddies the writer's meaning.

Meaningless words. He lists a number of words often used in art history writing and other disciplines that, he says, are ultimately meaningless. But his main targets in this section are political words such as *fascism* used as a general term to refer to something bad and therefore rendered meaningless, and *democracy* used as a reference for good politics and therefore deployed by everyone to favorably label the given regime that they're defending. He shows how other examples lead to a general sloppiness and vagueness, by which writers avoid committing to the meaning of their sentences. Orwell develops a sample of this, paraphrasing a passage from *Ecclesiastes* by using strikingly abstract language to show the evasive effect of modern language.

He summarizes this section with a list of points that he says a "scrupulous writer in every sentence will ask himself…" (255).

6.3.2 SECTION TWO

In the second section of the essay Orwell moves on from the politics of writing to focus specifically on political writing itself. He opens with the claim that political writing is bad writing. The cause of this has to do with writers being a mouthpiece for a general party line and not expressing their autonomous "opinion." He claims that to do this in

political writing is a rebellious act. Political pamphlets, speeches etc. have a commonality between different parties: this is that they never have a “fresh, vivid, homespun turn of speech” (255).

He develops an image of a political speaker pantomiming the party line. He says that when certain political phrases are repeated, the speaker of these phrases has gone out of their way to render themselves into a form of dummy, curtailing their independent thought so as to reiterate accepted party line. He compares the political speechmaker to a churchgoer, reciting litany.

Orwell’s political position begins to emerge at this point, as he says that political speech and writing have become largely a “defense of the indefensible” (255). Here we come to understand his view on the implications of the poor language he’s been discussing (a view that—consistent with his thesis—he refuses to obscure). A pivotal argument arises when he explains the implications of abstract, meaningless language. The indirect aspect and vagueness of political language, he argues, allows for the defense of such things as: “the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan….

All of these can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of political parties” (256). Using concrete, descriptive language he lists the types of atrocities that certain abstract political terms cover up. By using abstract terms in place of concrete or descriptive terms a political writer is able to obscure the reality of the cause they are defending. “*Pacification; transfer of populations or rectification of frontiers; elimination of unreliable elements*” are examples of rhetorical abstractions that can be deployed for political purposes without the user taking responsibility for the often violent reality of the processes they’re describing.

In this part of the discussion, Orwell highlights the defense of Soviet totalitarianism. He examines the style of abstractions used to apologize for Soviet atrocities and ultimately to cover them up. Abstract language, he shows, serves a political agenda by suspending reality from the language of justification.

At this stage of the essay it becomes apparent that all language is implicated in the problem he's discussing. "There's no such thing as 'keeping out of politics'," he claims. "All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia. When the general atmosphere is bad, language must suffer' (256). The feedback loop between language and politics exists not only on level of the individual writer; it pervades the entire political sphere.

A corrupted political "atmosphere" perpetuates itself through poor language. Even "people who should know better," he claims, are implicated. Using slight corruptions or seemingly benign familiar phrases is a weakness that leads to further corrosion of thought. Orwell doesn't exempt himself from these corruptions. He says that his essay likely bears many of them. The point is not to expect some kind of pure transparency. Honesty is a process, an ongoing effort to question the meaning of one's language and think independently and to contribute original thinking rather than mere repetition.

He argues that a reversal of poor uses of language is possible and that there is value in struggling for this. He gives examples of some uses of clichés in political speech at which journalists have recently jeered. He suggests that certain corruptions such as the "*not un-* formation" and others, might be ridiculed away (257).

He then lists the things that a defense of English ***doesn't*** have to do with: preserving archaic terms; proper grammar; oversimplifications. Instead, he says that it *does* have to do with efficiency and clarity, making your language as effective as possible in delivering your meaning. He discusses the process of thinking of an object or idea and attempting represent that object.

He explains how it's possible to think without language when thinking of a concrete thing. In order to represent that thing there's typically a process of visualization. When you think of an abstract idea, however, language begins to flood your thoughts and can easily swamp and ruin the idea "unless you make a conscious effort" to mitigate or control the flow (257). The point is to be the one in charge of that flow and the terms you use to represent your thoughts, rather than the other way around.

Orwell presents a list of rules to allow the writer to avoid vagueness:

i. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.

ii. Never use a long word where a short one will do.

iii. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.

iv. Never use the passive where you can use the active.

v. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent

vi. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous (257)

While these rules may seem simple, Orwell says, the change in attitude that they entail is not.

In concluding, he claims that he's not arguing for a retreat from language or from political struggles. His main point is to draw attention to the connection between "political chaos" and the "decay of language" (258). His essay is also about resisting orthodoxies. "Political language" of all types, he concludes, "is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind" (258). He ends where he began, by arguing for the importance of the effort to resist corrupt language.

6.4 ANALYSIS

In the opening of his essay Orwell establishes his view of the English language as an instrument. This is arguably one of the most foundational concepts for the essay, yet the symbol is not one that he returns to or directly develops. How language works as an instrument, or what kind of instrument it is, seems a vital question to consider. An instrument may easily be reduced to a fixed or concrete image of a tool or a single-use device, but for language it might seem more logical to imagine it as something malleable and flexible or indeed, musical. This view would also be consistent with Orwell's discussion of the possibility of manipulating language as well as it discordant, ugly, or persuasive resonances. Reconsidering and developing his meaning of the concept "instrument" feels necessary for a full appreciation of the essay that follow.

Related to this is the idea that Orwell of course dismisses—that language is a "natural growth," whose apparent decline is natural and thus inevitable. The implicit assumption at the basis of that view is that evolution is degenerate or negative—that the experiences of the past are better, higher, purer. Accordingly, archaic language would also be purer. Orwell's rejection of this is important to his argument, yet it is remarkably understated. Where a conservative critique of language might evaluate its "corruptions" in relation to an idea of pure origins and evolutionary degeneration, Orwell's idea of "corruption" is markedly different.

As he lays out his analysis of corrupt language, the politics of his topic become apparent. The connection between thought and language is the place where he focuses. His argument isn't that there's some correct or pure form of language that writers should use; it's that they need to have full agency in the way that they use language. He shows ways that language is produced, seemingly without the writer thinking about how or why they are using it. That disconnection is how language becomes corrupted. Political writers unthinkingly repeat familiar patterns, use set phrases and make their language sound a certain way rather than use language to deliver a specific intended meaning. He illustrates a process of pantomiming, mimicking or something essentially analogous to baby talk. When writers use *dead metaphors, verbal false limbs, pretentious diction*, or *meaningless words* they seem to do so because they are playing at meaning something rather than actually meaning it. Corruption happens here: when the connection between language and meaning is broken.

Orwell's list of habits to avoid is not intended to be comprehensive, yet it certainly isn't arbitrary. The selected examples he provides reveal aspects of his own political position. It's not by accident that Orwell uses "toe the line" as an example of a *dying metaphor.* This specific example is a politically charged one, most commonly a reference to those who unthinkingly conform to a party line. Orwell thus uses an example of a *dead metaphor* that's intended to refer to the very behavior he despises. His essay is at once a critique of those who "toe the line" and those who use terms like "toe the line." With this example, he simultaneously hints at the kind of politics he's opposes, while showing the way that mindless writing is connected to that kind of politics. On top of this, he also subtly

demonstrates his ability to use new language. Never once, while analyzing the political writers he despises, does he say that he can't stand those who simply "toe the line."

His issue with *pretentious diction* reveals more of his politics by its very name. Throughout the essay we come to understand that Orwell is opposed to the politics of pretentiousness in general. He's against the dishonesty of performing relevance, importance or complexity where actual relevance, importance, complexity don't exist. But his critique of pretentious diction also seems a thinly veiled critique of imperialist diction. As he says, one of the main effects of pretentious diction is to glorify war. One thing that he is certainly politically opposed to here, is the dressing up of the violence of colonialism.

A very important aspect of his political irony is revealed in his discussion of *meaningless words.* It's not by coincidence that his examples of *meaningless words* are two of the most weighted political words in modern history: fascism and democracy. To call these *meaningless words* may seem like pure irony; but this tone is essential to Orwell's politics. He questions the sincerity of other political writers, arguing that their terms are simply *meaningless.*

In the second part of the essay, Orwell reveals the politics of his discussion. His critique of language is in fact a critique of the politics of all language, but most cuttingly, a critique of partisan arguments. His discussion implicates all language use, including his own, but political language is the main target. As becomes clear, the essay is an indictment of explicitly partisan positions and party politics. But unlike familiar angles and identifiably political arguments, his position isn't easily recognizable as a political one. This is no coincidence, though, as familiar political positions are the main thing he's critiquing. He's not targeting a single political opponent or propounding a single party agenda. He's going after party lines and political rhetoric as a whole.

In his critique of dead, unoriginal and abstract language, there's an inherent and totalizing condemnation of the language of party politics. For it would seem difficult, if not impossible, to reiterate a familiar, identifiable "party line" by using fresh, original language, or by thinking independently. If a political writer or speaker thinks independently and asserts agency in articulating their ideas, if they follow Orwell's guidelines, their ideas can't be repetitions of pre-established party positions. Accordingly, it would be hard to

exempt any outright, openly partisan language, or any language that is easily associated with a common political ideal, from Orwell's critique.

Near the end of the essay Orwell states openly that he's going after political speech and writing. But this doesn't mean that he feels that people cannot or should not write politically. On the contrary, as he explains, there's no escape from politics. Everything is, in some sense, political. No one can exempt themselves from it. But *how* people write and speak politically is what is most important. Any political language that conforms to standardized terms or common figures of speech, from the most politically charged to the simplest turn of phrase, reflects laziness, lack of thinking, and the sin of pantomiming the opinions of others.

While hardline, clearly identifiable party positions might be eliminated through his guidelines, it doesn't follow that political writers would be in eternal opposition by never "agreeing" on political doctrine. Independent thinking isn't oppositional thinking. There could easily be similarities between different articulations. But these articulations would be fluid. There would be less in the way of "positions" and more of an evolving, continuous dialectical exchange, rather than static political oppositions.

It's important to note a point that comes near the end of the essay, which is that Orwell isn't advocating perfectionism. At first glance, his rules for independent thinking seem like they might have a silencing effect, in that there would be almost no turn of phrase that would be truly independent. Sentence construction depends on a certain conformity. But Orwell isn't promoting precision or exactness; he's not claiming that every sentence has to be completely "original." Instead, he's calling for writers to check their ideas and language against a set of basic guidelines.

One other important final caveat that he makes is that his discussion doesn't pertain to creative literary expression.

6.5 SYMBOLS

6.5.1 A POOR WRITER AS ADDICT

Throughout "Politics and the English Language," Orwell refers to poor use of language as a vice, implying that the one who uses language poorly acts as an addict,

dependent on the bad habits of poor language, returning to those habits and having their thinking determined by those habits. Early in the essay he compares the use of poor language to drunkenness. The user of poor language would then naturally be the drunk. The symbol of the addict not only implies an inebriated, slurred, sloppy quality to poor political writing, but it also suggest that the political writer is in some way weak willed, unable to get a handle on their habits. Using the symbol of the addict, Orwell says that the cycle of poor thinking-poor writing can be broken; in this way he seems to suggest that all that's needed is some strength of spirit or will power.

6.5.2 LANGUAGE AS AN INSTRUMENT

The concept of language as an instrument is placed in the introduction of the essay, but the symbol isn't developed through the remainder of the piece—at least not explicitly. Orwell calls language an "instrument" when he's refuting the idea of language as a "natural growth," but he doesn't explain what kind of instrument he means. It might be argued, however, that the essay that follows presents a complex and evolving explanation of this symbol. Without describing some device, he develops an idea of an instrument incomparable to any other type. If we run with the idea, the combined examples of his essay would reveal language to be a rare and unique instrument with a variety of effects. If used poorly, it can cause the user to continue to use it poorly. If used well, it can liberate and enlighten the user and others and, it seems, its uses and effects can continue to evolve.

6.6 METAPHORS

6.6.1 ALCOHOLISM AS POOR ENGLISH

Early in the essay Orwell draws an analogy between a drunk and poor English, stating that the drunk "may take a drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks" (251). The cycle of drunkenness is a metaphor for the degeneration of the English language--the alcoholism itself standing in for the process by which poor thinking leads to poor language, and so on. The important implication is that like alcoholism, the process is not inherent or "natural," but can be broken.

6.6.2 POLITICAL SPEECH AS PANTOMIME

Not unlike the above metaphor is the implicit one of political speech as pantomime. The political partisan who reiterates familiar or stock turns of phrase that conform to the given political party, acts as a participant in a pantomime, playing a part, fulfilling a role, again without independent thought or agency. Puppet imagery easily comes to mind in relation to pantomime. While Orwell doesn't refer to political partisan's as puppets, the idea becomes available by the way he describes their minds being controlled by their very use of language.

6.6.3 Poor language as weakness

"A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation, even among people who should and do know better. The debased language that I have been discussing is in some ways very convenient. Phrases like a 'not unjustifiable assumption,' 'leaves much to be desired,' 'would serve no good purpose,' 'a consideration which we should do well to bear in mind,' are a continuous temptation, a packet of aspirins always at one’s elbow" (256).

The quoted metaphor makes an outright comparison between the use of poor language and a form of vice that even decent or thoughtful writers give in to. Comparing the convenient phrase to a packet of aspirins, Orwell suggests that the familiar or prefabricated phrase soothes a literal pain of thinking and the strain of developing prose independently.

6.7 SIMILES

6.7.1 THE POLITICAL PARTISAN AS RELIGIOUS ACOLYTE

Orwell draws comparisons between those who reiterate political lines and religious devotees who recite scripture. He says, "If the speech [the partisan] is making is one that he is accustomed to make over and over again, he may be almost unconscious of what he is saying, as one is when one utters the responses in church. And this reduced state of consciousness, if not indispensable, is at any rate favourable to political conformity" (256). The implication of the comparison is that the political partisan is both obedient and unthinking. They also belong to a flock, or collective to which conformity might be expected on other levels

6.7.2 DEFENCES OF SOVIET TOTALITARIANISM AS COVER UP FOR VIOLENCE

Orwell gives an example a statement in defense of Russian totalitarianism. It's full of abstract and euphemistic language that describes as, "A mass of Latin words [that] falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outlines and covering up all the details" (256). The implication of the simile is that the language that one uses in defense of genocide or specific acts of violence works to blind the audience from the reality and also to soften that reality, to make it almost gentle (like softly falling snow) and therefore acceptable. It's in this way that all political partisans involve themselves in permitting the violence of their party.

6.8 IRONY

Orwell's language throughout the essay is thick with irony. For example, in the following passage in which he gives examples of common uses of poor English, he uses quotes that seem absurdly bad. Ironically, he says that they aren't "especially bad":

"These five passages have not been picked out because they are especially bad—I could have quoted far worse if I had chosen—but because they illustrate various of the mental vices from which we now suffer. They are a little below the average, but are fairly representative samples. I number them so I can refer back to them when necessary:

1. I am not, indeed, sure whether it is not true to say that the Milton who once seemed not unlike a seventeenth-century Shelley had not become, out of an experience ever more bitter in each year, more alien (sic) to the founder of that Jesuit sect which nothing could induce him to tolerate. Professor Harold Laski (Essay in Freedom of Expression)

2. Above all, we cannot play ducks and drakes with a native battery of idioms which prescribes such egregious collocations of vocables as the basic put up with for tolerate or put at a loss for bewilder. Professor Lancelot Hogben (Interglossa). …" The list goes on. (251)

Orwell says,

"The sole aim of a metaphor is to call up a visual image. When these images clash – as in *The Fascist octopus has sung its swan song, the jackboot is thrown into the melting-pot* – it can be taken as certain that the writer is not seeing a mental image of the objects he is naming; in other words he is not really thinking." (255)

Orwell here invents an absurd metaphors and he mixes them in a ridiculous way to demonstrate his point about writers not having a a clear image of the points they are making.

The following quote is a good example of the irony Orwell highlights in bad political writing:

"The attraction of this way of writing is that it is easy. It is easier—even quicker, once you have the habit—to say 'In my opinion it is a not unjustifiable assumption' that than to say 'I think.'" (254)

It seems counterintuitive or even wrong to think that the longer, more complex sentence is easier to use than the simple, direct "I think." Aware of this irony, Orwell places the two sentences together and allows them to make his point for him: namely that clear, direct, honest language is much harder for political writers to use. It's easier for them to hide behind abstract sentences. The complex sentence distances the writer from the opinion that they are about to present.

Throughout the essay, Orwell points out the ironic effect of political writers' lack of critical thought. An example is in the following quote, where he claims that not only do writers' use dead metaphors, they use they use them without even understanding the original meaning:

"…toe the line is sometimes written tow the line. Another example is the hammer and the anvil, now always used with the implication that the anvil gets the worst of it." (253)

6.9 IMAGERY

6.9.1 Image of a political puppet

"When one watches some tired hack on the platform mechanically repeating the familiar phrases—bestial atrocities, iron heel, blood-stained tyranny, free peoples of the world, stand shoulder to shoulder—one often has a curious feeling that one is not watching a live human being but some kind of dummy: a feeling which suddenly becomes stronger at moments when the light catches the speaker's spectacles and turns them into blank discs which seem to have no eyes behind them." (255)

The image of the empty-eyed orator illustrates the description of the political figure as unthinking mouthpiece for party line. With this image, we see political pantomiming in action.

6.9.2 Image of "pacification"

"Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification" (256).

In an essay with very few concrete images, this stands out starkly and illustrates what Orwell means when he speaks of the dishonesty of abstract language. When imperialists apologize for the impacts of colonialism, Orwell argues that there is an agenda in their abstract language. It is easy to defend a concept like "pacification," but hard to get behind the above image, which is what Orwell says "pacification" actually looks like.

6.9.3 Image of "population transfer"

"Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called transfer of population or rectification of frontiers." (256)

As with the previous image, we see the contrast between the material concrete and evasive abstract. The same argument about the sly effect of abstract language holds here: It is much easier for a politician to justify a concept like "transfers of populations" when they only use that abstract language. It's much harder to justify or support the physical experience of a "partition" or "population exchange."

6.9.4 Image of "elimination of unreliable elements"

"People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called elimination of unreliable elements." (256)

Now a familiarly insidious turn of phrase, the idea of "eliminating unreliable elements" used to be a justified concept by supporters of Stalinism and the Soviet purges and gulags. Again Orwell shows the nefariousness of generalized political language. A concept can be defended in the abstract. It's much harder to stand proudly behind the concrete reality. The challenge of writing honestly is thus a personal challenge to stand behind your politics.

6.10 LET US SUM UP

George Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language," begins by refuting common presumptions that hold that the decline of the English language is a reflection of the state of society and politics, that this degeneration is inevitable, and that it's hopeless to resist it. This disempowering idea, he says, derives from an understanding of language as a "natural growth" rather than an "instrument which we shape for our own purposes" (251). As an instrument, language can be manipulated for various purposes. As Orwell will show, language can also manipulate those who use it unconsciously.

He presents a list of corrupting habits that cause writers to think poorly and thus write poorly. The list includes unoriginal or mixed metaphors, pretentious diction, and abstract or meaningless language. When a person becomes lazy they allow their language to think for them. In this way, political writers end up following a party line. By using set phrases, they pantomime ideology without thinking. Independent thinking is necessary for a healthy political life.

As corrupted language smothers independent, original thinking, it thus serves a political purpose. Orwell demonstrates the deceptive effect of various political terms, showing how elevated, complex and abstract language actively disguises ugly and violent concrete realities. In this way, abstract language becomes a means for political writers to "justify unjustifiables." He presents a list of tools that can be used to resist dishonest language.

Orwell sees the use of honest language as political act in itself, a form of resistance against insidious and widespread manipulations of rhetorical structures. He says that in an atmosphere of “terrible politics” (such as the period in which he’s writing), corrupted language is almost inevitable. But this doesn’t make the resistance against it futile. He returns to the claim that he opens with: that language is a tool, and not a natural evolutionary growth. It’s thus possible to manipulate that tool. It does however, take diligent, conscious effort on the part of the political writer or speaker. Orwell thinks that mindless and actively deceptive language can be identified and resisted through ridicule, and, most of all, through a diligent commitment to honest representation.

6.11 CHECK YOR PROGRESS

1. **When was "Politics and the English Language" written?**

a) 1950
b) 1946
c) 1996
d) 1984

2. **How do bad language habits spread, according to Orwell?**

a) By imitation
b) By close contact
c) By decisive action
d) By coercion
e)

6.12 REFERENCE

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ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

5.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) Which of the following theory focuses on the relationship between the work and the artist?

a) Mimetic theory

b) Pragmatic theory

c**) Expressive theory**

d) Objective theory

2**) What are the four focal points those categorizes the literary theory.**

a)The art, the philosopher, the artist, and the work itself.

b)The universe, the philosopher, the artist, and the art.

c) The universe, the audience, the philosopher, and the work itself.

d) The universe, the audience, the artist, and the work itself.

6.11 CHECK YOR PROGRESS

1) When was "Politics and the English Language" written?

a) 1950

b) 1946

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a**) By imitation**

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d) By coercion

UNIT IV

LESSON 7: HELEN GARDNER- THE SCEPTER AND THE TORCH

7.1 AUTHOUR INTRODUCTION

Dame Helen Louise Gardner, DBE, (13 February 1908 – 4 June 1986) was an English literary critic and academic. Gardner began her teaching career at the University of Birmingham, and from 1966 to 1975 was a Merton Professor of English Literature, the first woman to have that position. She was best known for her work on the poets John Donne and T. S. Eliot, but also published on John Milton and William Shakespeare. She published over a dozen books, and received multiple honours.

Her critical stance was traditional and focused on history and biography; it involved the work's historical context, the personal habits of the author, and the relationship of the text to the time period. One of her beliefs was that a literary critic's job is to assist other people in reading for themselves.

Gardner published on T. S. Eliot from early on in her career; F. O. Matthiessen cited her 1942 essay "The Recent Poetry of T.S. Eliot" with approbation.

Her critical methodology included the work's historical context, the personal habits of the author, and the relationship of the text to the time period. She prepared several editions of poetry by John Donne, including *The Divine Poems* (1952), *Selected Prose* (1967) and *The Elegies and the Songs of Sonnets* (1965), all of which attracted commendation for her careful work.

As a scholar of poetry by T. S. Eliot, she wrote three studies on Eliot and said that the poet is a major influence on her own criticism. Gardner also wrote criticism on John Milton and William Shakespeare. Gardner influenced the perceptions of British poetry of many readers, especially poetry from the late sixteenth to the early seventeenth centuries. Gardner was an Anglican Christian and her faith was a subtle part of her writing.

Gardner, it is said, "belonged to no 'school'" of literary criticism. She was critical of the New Criticism and its insistence on multiple interpretations; Gardner disavowed "the rejection of determinate meanings in texts", insisting that despite texts being open to multiple interpretations, there is still "intentional communication" for readers to try to understand. In 1979, when she delivered the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures (published as *In Defence of the Imagination*) Gardner said that she opposed the then-current trend of literary criticism to over-interpreting texts and using technical jargon. Of the function of a critic, she stated that it is to "shine a torch" and not "wield a sceptre", meaning that the function of a critic is "to illuminate rather than attack".

7.1.1 WORKS BY HELEN GARDNER

Gardner wrote more than a dozen books: monographs, critical editions, and anthologies. She edited *The New Oxford Book of English Verse 1250–1950* (published 1972), which replaced Arthur Quiller-Couch's *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. *The New Oxford Book of English Verse 1250–1950* was also published in braille.

Gardner's 1971 book *Religion and Literature* collects two lecture series, the 1966 Ewing Lectures on religious poetry and the 1968 T. S. Eliot Memorial Lectures on tragedy. Diana Fortuna, reviewing the book for the *Modern Language Review*, praised the lectures on tragedy as "an essential introduction to the subject", but was less impressed with the lectures on religious poetry, judging that it covered too much material and consequently did not treat some selections "fully enough".

She also published an anthology of religious poetry, *A Book of Religious Verse*, which according to her 1972 reviewer in the *New York Times* "should be read in conjunction with her provocative lectures on religious poetry printed in her *Religion and Literature*". The reviewer noted Gardner's attempt to find "viable" religious poetry from the 20th century, but found that religious poems by Edwin Muir and W.H. Auden could not compare "with Herbert, Donne or Milton", and thought the volume "end[ed] with a whimper". Other criticism of her work includes her focus on judgments in analyzing literary works.

7.2 SUMMARY

Criticism has increasingly in this century become professionalized. The tone in literary criticism is only professional. The notion that anybody with natural taste, some experience of life, a decent grounding in the classics, and the habit of wide reading can talk profitably on English Literature is highly unfashionable. The cynic might point to other more sinister signs of professionalism: the esoteric and almost unintelligible vocabulary of some critics; the appearance of a Dictionary of Critical Terms, comparable to a legal or medical dictionary and the embittered quarrels of rival sects.

The fact that so many contributions to critical journals consist not of studies of a writer or his works, but of considerations of Mr. X's modifications of Mr. Y's criticism of Mr. Z's article on — shall we say Measure for Measure, or Marvell's 'The Garden?' The ordinary cultured reader, picking up such a journal, feels like someone entering a cinema in the middle of a gangster film, baffled about the antecedents of the battle which is raging, and uncertain who is fighting on whose side.

The amateur is being squeezed out in every field by the immense extensions of knowledge and of the technical means for acquiring it. Problems which did not exist for Johnson confront the modern critic. They have been created by the growth of historical science, with the consequent development of the historical sense, by the growth of psychological science, which has profoundly modified our whole conception of the motivation of human activities, including speech. Further, there is for the literary critic the task of coming to terms with the growth of linguistic studies: the development of the historical study of the English language on the one hand, and of the philosophic study of language on the other.

This widening of the intellectual horizon has gone on side by side with a multiplication of aids to knowledge which makes the task of being well informed on any topic extremely arduous. More and more libraries are catalogued, more and more records calendared; there are bibliographies of bibliographies and indexes of indexes. Most of all, the inventions of the Photostat and the microfilm have made the contents of all the libraries of the world accessible.

An editor today has no excuse, except the weakness of the flesh, for not examining all known manuscripts of a work. A critic can find it only too easy to defer making up his mind while he studies what is rather ironically called 'the literature of the subject'. He cannot plead justifiable ignorance of the researches or opinions of a Chinese or Peruvian professor. He should have known of them if he had kept abreast of the bibliographies and reports of 'work in progress'. Even unpublished theses, which used to lie unread in the stack-rooms of libraries, are now indexed and can be microfilmed.

Some degree of professionalism is, I imagine, unavoidable in all intellectual pursuits today. The primary critical act is a judgment, the decision that a certain piece of writing has significance and value. We must feel that the work 'makes sense', even if at first only in patches, if we are to feel its value. But, of course, in experience we are not conscious of these different kinds of value as distinct. To attempt to measure the amount of value, to declare or attempt to demonstrate that this poem is more valuable than that, or to range writers in an order of merit does not seem to me to be the true purpose of criticism. Such attempts ignore the nature of taste and the nature of values. Good taste is not an absolute.

Two persons of excellent taste and judgement may differ strongly on the relative merits of two works; and the attempt to rank writers in a literary hierarchy ignores the obvious fact that certain writers and certain works mean more to some ages and to some persons than to others, and that our responses vary very greatly with our circumstances and our age. Comparison is a most valuable tool by which to bring out the individuality of the writers compared. When used to attempt to set one up and put another down it usually reveals not objective standards of value by which writers may be ranked, but imperfect sympathies in the critic.

'The rudiment of criticism', wrote Mr. T. S. Eliot, 'is the ability to choose a good poem and reject a bad poem; and its most severe test is of its ability to select a good new poem, to respond properly to a new situation." This suggests that there is in all 'good poems' a kind of essence which the critic, like a sensitive dog, should with one sniff distinguish; and it suggests that poems can be absolutely divided into 'good poems' and 'bad poems', whereas from the universally acknowledged masterpiece to the total failure

there is a whole range where praise or blame, interest or indifference, is quite properly qualified by the critic's personal predilections

The rudiment of criticism is not so much the power to distinguish any good poem from any bad poem, as the power to respond to a good poem and to be able to elucidate its significance, beauty, and meaning in terms which are valid for other readers. If the severest test of criticism is the ability to spot the winners, some of our greatest critics must be judged to have failed the test. But our judgment of Coleridge as probably our greatest literary critic is not qualified by his extravagant admiration when young for the sonnets of the Rev.

William Bowles, or by his failure when old to be excited by the work of his younger contemporaries. Keats, reading the first two cantos of Don Juan on publication, saw in them only 'a paltry originality'. This signal failure to 'respond properly to a new situation' does not affect our admiration for him as a critic of extraordinary insight. Coleridge and Keats are great critics because of what they tell us of the nature of the poetic imagination and of the power of poetry, and because the things they have to say about certain poets, notably Shakespeare, permanently affect our own reading of those poets.

In Johnson's allegory in the third number of *The Rambler* Criticism is the eldest daughter of Labour and Truth, committed at birth to the care of justice and brought up in the palace of Wisdom. She was 'appointed the governess of Fancy, and impowered to beat time to the chorus of the Muses, when they sung before the throne of Jupiter'. When the Muses descended to the lower world she accompanied them. Justice bestowed a sceptre upon her, to be held in her right hand. With this she could confer immortality or oblivion.

'In her left hand, she bore an unextinguishable torch, manufactured by Labour and lighted by Truth, of which it was the particular quality immediately to show everything in its true form, however it might be disguised to common eyes.' But she found herself confronted with so many works in which beauties and faults were equally mingled that, 'for fear of using improperly the sceptre of Justice', she 'referred the cause to be considered by Time', whose proceedings, 'though very dilatory, were, some few caprices

excepted, conformable to justice'. Before returning to heaven she broke her sceptre, one end of which was seized by Flattery, and the other by Malevolence.

Johnson's onslaught on the critics of his own day provides me with a convenient metaphor. I do not feel any call to wield the sceptre. The torch rather than the sceptre would be my symbol for the critic. Elucidation, or illumination, is the critic's primary task as I conceive it. Having made the initial act of choice, or judgement of value, I want to remove any obstacles which prevent the work having its fullest possible effect. Because a poem already speaks to me, I want to find ways to ensure that, as far as possible, it says to me what it has to say and not what I want it to say, and that it says it in its own way and not in mine.

7.3 CRITICAL ANNALYSIS

Profession of critic

The profession of critic that is criticism has become professional.

Professional is someone who speaks with the authority given by certain discipline or training.

The tone in literary criticism is only professional. The notion that anybody with natural taste, some experience of life, a decent grounding in the classics, and the habit of wide reading can talk profitably on English Literature is highly unfashionable. The appearance of a Dictionary of Critical Terms, comparable to a legal or medical dictionary and the embittered quarrels of rival sects. the fact that so many contributions to critical journals consist not of studies of a writer or his works, but of considerations of Mr. X's modifications of Mr. Y's criticism of Mr. Z's article on — shall we say Measure for Measure, or Marvell's 'The Garden?' The ordinary cultured reader, picking up such a journal, feels like someone entering a cinema in the middle of a gangster film, baffled about the antecedents of the battle which is raging, and uncertain who is fighting on whose side.

The amateur is being squeezed out in every field by the immense extensions of knowledge and of the technical means for acquiring it.

The discipline of literary criticism is not certain. Like law and medicine or profession but the Criticism is an art. The primary critical act is a judgment that a certain piece of

writing is significant and valuable. It is the function of the critic to help the reader to find the value of the work which he believes. The work tastes differ but time is determiner of the greatness of work.

All the works cannot stand the test of time.

Young should be daring and inventive and should rejoice in their invention even if correctness and severity are still to be acquired through personal discrimination.

Comparison as literary critical method

Comparison is a most valuable tool by which to bring out the individuality of the writers compared. When used to attempt to set one up and put another down it usually reveals not objective standards of value by which writers may be ranked, but imperfect sympathies in the critic.

Individuality of Text

Individuality, as a particular expression of a personal response to experience, a personal vision of the world. This sense of the work's individuality can be deepened by the reading of the author's other works and can be aided by the knowledge gained by various means of the author's life. To treat a poem purely as an artifact and analyse it solely in terms of its rhetorical structure, is to ignore, in an attempt to make criticism pure, the facts of our experience as readers. In our reading we recognize individual voices and respond to individual visions.

We find in an author's various works the impress of an individual mind whose quality we come to know. The desire to know all we can about this mind — to know Shakespeare, as well as to know Hamlet, King Lear, or The Tempest — is the natural result of contact with it in one work, and indeed an obvious way to understand that work better. The writer's personal history, like the pressure of the age in which he lived, is a context which can help us to focus on the work as it is.

Although much biographical information may be irrelevant, the critic cannot afford to be ignorant of facts which may assist him to learn the habit of an author's mind, or the circumstances in which a work was written, which may, in that particular work, have affected that habit. Biographical knowledge can sharpen the sense of the work's objective

existence, as itself, distinct and meaningful in itself. This sense of the work's originality can be stimulated and enriched also by the study of an author's sources, not merely his direct sources, but also his indirect, that is, his general reading.

I suppose one of the best examples of such enrichment is the effect that reading Livingstone Lowes's The Road to Xanadu has on our response to The Ancient Mariner. This pioneer study not only illustrated the workings of the poetic faculty; it gave a new dimension to the poem. Although it was itself an investigation of the poem's origins, rather than a study of the poem, it called our attention, as no previous criticism had, to certain elements in the structure, narrative details, and diction of the poem, and added to the overtones of the narrative echoes of greatly told stories of adventure and endurance.

The Scepter and Torch:

Johnson's allegory is as follows.

Criticism is the eldest daughter of labour and truth. Justice gave a Sceptre to her. She holds it in her right hand. In her left hand she Hold and extinguishable touch. It was manufactured by labour and lighted by truth. Before returning to Heaven he broke her Sceptre. One was seized by flattery (excessive and insincere praise) and the other by malevolence (hostility, hate).

The torch the symbol for critic

'The rudiment of criticism', wrote Mr. T. S. Eliot, 'is the ability to choose a good poem and reject a bad poem; and its most severe test is of its ability to select a good new poem, to respond properly to a new situation." This suggests that there is in all 'good poems' a kind of essence which the critic, like a sensitive dog, should with one sniff distinguish; and it suggests that poems can be absolutely divided into 'good poems' and 'bad poems', whereas from the universally acknowledged masterpiece to the total failure there is a whole range where praise or blame, interest or indifference, is quite properly qualified by the critic's personal predilections.

The first principle of criticism is not so much the power to distinguish any good poem from any bad poem, as the power to respond to a good poem and to be able to

elucidate its significance, beauty, and meaning in terms which are valid for other readers. If the severest test of criticism is the ability to spot the winners, some of our greatest critics must be judged to have failed the test. Coleridge and Keats are great critics because of what they tell us of the nature of the poetic imagination and of the power of poetry, and because the things they have to say about certain poets, notably Shakespeare, permanently affect our own reading of those poets.

For Helen Gardner torch would be symbol for critique rather than sceptre. The first and the foremost task of the critique is illumination or elucidation. Any obstacle that States the work from having its full effect must be removed. The job of Criticism lies in the recognition of the work of art's objective. It exists not to be used but to be understood and enjoyed. There should be freedom of art. Proper use of historical and geographical information may be made by critic.

Task of Critic:

It is the critic's task, in every age, to fight for the autonomy of the arts, and never under any circumstances allows himself to be seduced into judging the arts, positively or negatively, by their attachments. The fashion for art painting is neither good because painters ought to rediscover content nor bad because they ought not. But an essential part of the critic's strategy, to the extent that the critic is a teacher, is in leading his students to realize that in responding to art without attachments they are at the same time building up a resistance to kinetic stimulus themselves. Literary education is not doing the whole of its proper work unless it marshals the verbal imagination against the assaults of advertising and propaganda that try to bludgeon it into passivity. This is a battle that should be fought long before university, because university comes too late in a student's life to alter his mental habits more than superficially.

7.4 LET US SUM UP

Critics in the modern era have become professionalized, focusing on evaluating the significance and value of writing. This professionalism is evident in the use of esoteric

vocabulary, the rise of a Dictionary of Critical Terms, and the growing complexity of historical and psychological science. The need for adaptability to linguistic studies and the widening intellectual horizon has made it difficult for critics to be well-informed on various topics. The primary purpose of criticism is judgment, not to measure value or rank writers in merit. Critics should focus on responding to a good poem and elucidating its significance, beauty, and meaning in terms that are valid for other readers.

7.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) To which animal does T.S.Eliot compares a critic on explaining the 'rudiment of criticism'?

a) subtle cat

b) sensitive dog

c) complex goat

d) intricate cow

2) The writer's personal history, is a context helps to focus on

a) The writer's style

b) The work's inner meaning

c) The writer's knowledge

d) the work as it is

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LESSON 8

ROLAND BARTHES- THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOUR

8.1 AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Roland Barthes (born November 12, 1915, Cherbourg, France—died March 25, 1980, Paris) was a French essayist and social and literary critic whose writings on semiotics, the formal study of symbols and signs pioneered by Ferdinand de Saussure, helped establish structuralism and the New Criticism as leading intellectual movements.

Barthes studied at the University of Paris, where he took a degree in classical letters in 1939 and in grammar and philology in 1943. After working (1952–59) at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, he was appointed to the École Pratique des Hautes Études. In 1976 he became the first person to hold the chair of literary semiology at the Collège de France.

His first book, *Le Degrézéro de l'écriture* (1953; *Writing Degree Zero*), was a literary manifesto that examined the arbitrariness of the constructs of language. In subsequent books—including *Mythologies* (1957), *Essais critiques* (1964; *Critical Essays*), and *La Tour Eiffel* (1964; *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*)—he applied the same critical apparatus to the "mythologies" (*i.e.,* the hidden assumptions) behind popular cultural phenomena from advertising and fashion to the Eiffel Tower and wrestling. His *Sur Racine* (1963; *On Racine*) set off a literary furor in France, pitting Barthes against traditional academics who thought this "new criticism," which viewed texts as a system of signs, was desecrating the classics. Even more radical was *S/Z* (1970), a line-by-line semiological analysis of a short story by Honoré de Balzac in which Barthes stressed the active role of the reader in constructing a narrative based on "cues" in the text.

Barthes's literary style, which was always stimulating though sometimes eccentric and needlessly obscure, was widely imitated and parodied. Some thought his theories contained brilliant insights, while others regarded them simply as perverse contrivances. But by the late 1970s Barthes's intellectual stature was virtually unchallenged, and his theories had become extremely influential not only in France but

throughout Europe and in the United States. Other leading radical French thinkers who influenced or were influenced by him included the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, socio-historian Michel Foucault, and philosopher Jacques Derrida.

Two of Barthes's later books established his late-blooming reputation as a stylist and writer. He published an "antiautobiography," *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (1975; *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*), and his *Fragments d'un discoursamoureux* (1977; *A Lover's Discourse*), an account of a painful love affair, was so popular it quickly sold more than 60,000 copies in France. Barthes died at the age of 64 from injuries suffered after being struck by an automobile. Several posthumous collections of his writings have been published, including *A Barthes Reader* (1982), edited by his friend and admirer Susan Sontag, and *Incidents* (1987). The latter volume revealed Barthes's homosexuality, which he had not publicly acknowledged. Barthes's *Oeuvres complètes* ("Complete Works") were published in three volumes in 1993–95.

8.2 WRITINGS AND IDEAS

8.2.1 EARLY THOUGHT

Barthes's earliest ideas reacted to the trend of existentialist philosophy that was prominent in France during the 1940s, specifically to the figurehead of existentialism, Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre's *What Is Literature?* (1947) expresses a disenchantment both with established forms of writing and more experimental, avant-garde forms, which he feels alienate readers. Barthes's response was to try to discover that which may be considered unique and original in writing.

In *Writing Degree Zero* (1953), Barthes argues that conventions inform both language and style, rendering neither purely creative. Instead, form, or what Barthes calls "writing" (the specific way an individual chooses to manipulate conventions of style for a desired effect), is the unique and creative act. However, a writer's form is vulnerable to becoming a convention once it has been made available to the public. This means that creativity is an ongoing process of continual change and reaction.

In *Michelet*, a critical analysis of the French historian Jules Michelet, Barthes developed these notions, applying them to a broader range of fields. He argued that Michelet's views of history and society are obviously flawed. In studying his writings, he continued, one should not seek to learn from Michelet's claims; rather, one should maintain a critical distance and learn from his errors, since understanding how and why his thinking is flawed will show more about his period of history than his own observations.

Similarly, Barthes felt that avant-garde writing should be praised for its maintenance of just such a distance between its audience and itself. In presenting an obvious artificiality rather than making claims to great subjective truths, Barthes argued, avant-garde writers ensure that their audiences maintain an objective perspective. In this sense, Barthes believed that art should be critical and should interrogate the world, rather than seek to explain it, as Michelet had done.

8.2.2 SEMIOTICS AND MYTH

Barthes's many monthly contributions, collected in his *Mythologies* (1957), frequently interrogated specific cultural materials in order to expose how bourgeois society asserted its values through them. For example, Barthes cited the portrayal of wine in French society. Its description as a robust and healthy habit is a bourgeois ideal that is contradicted by certain realities (i.e., that wine can be unhealthy and inebriating).

He found semiotics, the study of signs, useful in these interrogations. He developed a theory of signs to demonstrate this perceived deception. He suggested that the construction of myths results in two levels of signification: the "language-object", a first order linguistic system; and the "metalanguage", the second-order system transmitting the myth. The former pertains to the literal or explicit meaning of things while the latter is composed of the language used to speak about the first order.

Barthes explained that these bourgeois cultural myths were "second-order signs," or "connotations." A picture of a full, dark bottle is a signifier that relates to a specific "signified": a fermented, alcoholic beverage. However, the bourgeoisie relate it to a new signified: the idea of healthy, robust, relaxing experience. Motivations for such manipulations vary, from a desire to sell products to a simple desire to maintain the status

quo. These insights brought Barthes in line with similar Marxist theory. Barthes used the term "myth" while analyzing the popular, consumer culture of post-war France in order to reveal that "objects were organized into meaningful relationships via narratives that expressed collective cultural values."

In *The Fashion System* Barthes showed how this adulteration of signs could easily be translated into words. In this work he explained how in the fashion world any word could be loaded with idealistic bourgeois emphasis. Thus, if popular fashion says that a 'blouse' is ideal for a certain situation or ensemble, this idea is immediately naturalized and accepted as truth, even though the actual sign could just as easily be interchangeable with 'skirt', 'vest' or any number of combinations.

In the end Barthes's *Mythologies* became absorbed into bourgeois culture, as he found many third parties asking him to comment on a certain cultural phenomenon, being interested in his control over his readership. This turn of events caused him to question the overall utility of demystifying culture for the masses, thinking it might be a fruitless attempt, and drove him deeper in his search for individualistic meaning in art.

8.2.3 STRUCTURALISM AND ITS LIMITS

As Barthes's work with structuralism began to flourish around the time of his debates with Picard, his investigation of structure focused on revealing the importance of language in writing, which he felt was overlooked by old criticism. Barthes's "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative" is concerned with examining the correspondence between the structure of a sentence and that of a larger narrative, thus allowing narrative to be viewed along linguistic lines.

Barthes split this work into three hierarchical levels: 'functions', 'actions' and 'narrative'. 'Functions' are the elementary pieces of a work, such as a single descriptive word that can be used to identify a character. That character would be an 'action', and consequently one of the elements that make up the narrative. Barthes was able to use these distinctions to evaluate how certain key 'functions' work in forming characters. For example, key words like 'dark', 'mysterious' and 'odd', when integrated together, formulate a specific kind of character or 'action'.

By breaking down the work into such fundamental distinctions Barthes was able to judge the degree of realism given functions have in forming their actions and consequently with what authenticity a narrative can be said to reflect on reality. Thus, his structuralist theorizing became another exercise in his ongoing attempts to dissect and expose the misleading mechanisms of bourgeois culture.

While Barthes found structuralism to be a useful tool and believed that discourse of literature could be formalized, he did not believe it could become a strict scientific endeavour. In the late 1960s, radical movements were taking place in literary criticism. The post-structuralist movement and the deconstructionism of Jacques Derrida were testing the bounds of the structuralist theory that Barthes's work exemplified. Derrida identified the flaw of structuralism as its reliance on a transcendental signifier; a symbol of constant, universal meaning would be essential as an orienting point in such a closed off system. This is to say that without some regular standard of measurement, a system of criticism that references nothing outside of the actual work itself could never prove useful. But since there are no symbols of constant and universal significance, the entire premise of structuralism as a means of evaluating writing (or anything) is hollow.

8.2.4 TRANSITION

Such thought led Barthes to consider the limitations not just of signs and symbols, but also of Western culture's dependency on beliefs of constancy and ultimate standards. He travelled to Japan in 1966 where he wrote *Empire of Signs* (published in 1970), a meditation on Japanese culture's contentment in the absence of a search for a transcendental signifier. He notes that in Japan there is no emphasis on a great focus point by which to judge all other standards, describing the centre of Tokyo, the Emperor's Palace, as not a great overbearing entity, but a silent and nondescript presence, avoided and unconsidered. As such, Barthes reflects on the ability of signs in Japan to exist for their own merit, retaining only the significance naturally imbued by their signifiers. Such a society contrasts greatly to the one he dissected in *Mythologies*, which was revealed to be always asserting a greater, more complex significance on top of the natural one.

In the wake of this trip Barthes wrote what is largely considered to be his best-known work, the essay "The Death of the Author" (1967). Barthes saw the notion of the author, or authorial authority, in the criticism of literary text as the forced projection of an ultimate meaning of the text. By imagining an ultimate intended meaning of a piece of literature one could infer an ultimate explanation for it. But Barthes points out that the great proliferation of meaning in language and the unknowable state of the author's mind makes any such ultimate realization impossible.

As such, the whole notion of the 'knowable text' acts as little more than another delusion of Western bourgeois culture. Indeed, the idea of giving a book or poem an ultimate end coincides with the notion of making it consumable, something that can be used up and replaced in a capitalist market. "The Death of the Author" is considered to be a post-structuralist work, since it moves past the conventions of trying to quantify literature, but others see it as more of a transitional phase for Barthes in his continuing effort to find significance in culture outside of the bourgeois norms. Indeed, the notion of the author being irrelevant was already a factor of structuralist thinking.

8.2.5 TEXTUALITY AND *S/Z*

Since Barthes contends that there can be no originating anchor of meaning in the possible intentions of the author, he considers what other sources of meaning or significance can be found in literature. He concludes that since meaning can't come from the author, it must be actively created by the reader through a process of textual analysis. In his *S/Z* (1970), Barthes applies this notion in an analysis of *Sarrasine*, a Balzac novella.

The result was a reading that established five major codes for determining various kinds of significance, with numerous lexias throughout the text – a "lexia" here being defined as a unit of the text chosen arbitrarily (to remain methodologically unbiased as possible) for further analysis. The codes led him to define the story as having a capacity for plurality of meaning, limited by its dependence upon strictly sequential elements (such as a definite timeline that has to be followed by the reader and thus restricts their freedom of analysis). From this project Barthes concludes that an ideal text is one that is reversible, or open to the greatest variety of independent interpretations and not restrictive in meaning.

A text can be reversible by avoiding the restrictive devices that *Sarrasine* suffered from such as strict timelines and exact definitions of events. He describes this as the difference between the writerly text, in which the reader is active in a creative process, and a readerly text in which they are restricted to just reading. The project helped Barthes identify what it was he sought in literature: an openness for interpretation.

8.2.6 NEUTRAL AND NOVELISTIC WRITING

In the late 1970s, Barthes was increasingly concerned with the conflict of two types of language: that of popular culture, which he saw as limiting and pigeonholing in its titles and descriptions, and neutral, which he saw as open and noncommittal. He called these two conflicting modes the Doxa (the official and unacknowledged systems of meaning through which culture is absorbed) and the Para-doxa. While Barthes had sympathized with Marxist thought in the past (or at least parallel criticisms), he felt that, despite its anti-ideological stance, Marxist theory was just as guilty of using violent language with assertive meanings, as was bourgeois literature.

In this way they were both Doxa and both culturally assimilating. As a reaction to this, he wrote *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975), a study that focused on a subject matter he felt was equally outside the realm of both conservative society and militant leftist thinking: hedonism. By writing about a subject that was rejected by both social extremes of thought, Barthes felt he could avoid the dangers of the limiting language of the Doxa.

The theory he developed out of this focus claimed that, while reading for pleasure is a kind of social act, through which the reader exposes him/herself to the ideas of the writer, the final cathartic climax of this pleasurable reading, which he termed the bliss in reading or jouissance, is a point in which one becomes lost within the text. This loss of self within the text or immersion in the text, signifies a final impact of reading that is experienced outside the social realm and free from the influence of culturally associative language and is thus neutral with regard to social progress.

Despite this newest theory of reading, Barthes remained concerned with the difficulty of achieving truly neutral writing, which required an avoidance of any labels that might carry an implied meaning or identity towards a given object. Even carefully crafted neutral writing could be taken in an assertive context through the incidental use of a word

with a loaded social context. Barthes felt his past works, like *Mythologies*, had suffered from this.

He became interested in finding the best method for creating neutral writing, and he decided to try to create a novelistic form of rhetoric that would not seek to impose its meaning on the reader. One product of this endeavor was *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* in 1977, in which he presents the fictionalized reflections of a lover seeking to identify and be identified by an anonymous amorous other. The unrequited lover's search for signs by which to show and receive love makes evident illusory myths involved in such a pursuit.

The lover's attempts to assert himself into a false, ideal reality is involved in a delusion that exposes the contradictory logic inherent in such a search. Yet at the same time the novelistic character is a sympathetic one, and is thus open not just to criticism but also understanding from the reader. The result is one that challenges the reader's views of social constructs of love, without trying to assert any definitive theory of meaning.

8.2.7 MIND AND BODY

Barthes also attempted to reinterpret the mind–body dualism theory. Like Friedrich Nietzsche and Emmanuel Levinas, he also drew from Eastern philosophical traditions in his critique of European culture as "infected" by Western metaphysics. His body theory emphasized the formation of the self through bodily cultivation. The theory, which is also described as ethico-political entity, considers the idea of the body as one that functions as a "fashion word" that provides the illusion of a grounded discourse. This theory has influenced the work of other thinkers such as Jerome Bel.

8.2.8 PHOTOGRAPHY AND HENRIETTE BARTHES

Throughout his career, Barthes had an interest in photography and its potential to communicate actual events. Many of his monthly myth articles in the 1950s had attempted to show how a photographic image could represent implied meanings and thus be used by bourgeois culture to infer 'naturalistic truths'. But he still considered the photograph to have a unique potential for presenting a completely real representation of the world. When

his mother, Henriette Barthes, died in 1977 he began writing *Camera Lucida* as an attempt to explain the unique significance a picture of her as a child carried for him.

Reflecting on the relationship between the obvious symbolic meaning of a photograph (which he called the studium) and that which is purely personal and dependent on the individual, that which 'pierces the viewer' (which he called the punctum), Barthes was troubled by the fact that such distinctions collapse when personal significance is communicated to others and can have its symbolic logic rationalized. Barthes found the solution to this fine line of personal meaning in the form of his mother's picture.

Barthes explained that a picture creates a falseness in the illusion of 'what is', where 'what was' would be a more accurate description. As had been made physical through Henriette Barthes's death, her childhood photograph is evidence of 'what has ceased to be'. Instead of making reality solid, it serves as a reminder of the world's ever changing nature. Because of this there is something uniquely personal contained in the photograph of Barthes's mother that cannot be removed from his subjective state: the recurrent feeling of loss experienced whenever he looks at it. As one of his final works before his death, *Camera Lucida* was both an ongoing reflection on the complicated relations between subjectivity, meaning and cultural society as well as a touching dedication to his mother and description of the depth of his grief.

8.2.9 POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATIONS

A posthumous collection of essays was published in 1987 by François Wahl, *Incidents*. It contains fragments from his journals: his *Soirées de Paris* (a 1979 extract from his erotic diary of life in Paris); an earlier diary he kept which explicitly detailed his paying for sex with men and boys in Morocco; and *Light of the Sud Ouest* (his childhood memories of rural French life). In November 2007, Yale University Press published a new translation into English (by Richard Howard) of Barthes's little known work *What is Sport*. This work bears a considerable resemblance to *Mythologies* and was originally commissioned by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as the text for a documentary film directed by Hubert Aquin.

In February 2009, Éditions du Seuil published *Journal de deuil* (Journal of Mourning), based on Barthes's files written from 26 November 1977 (the day following his mother's death) up to 15 September 1979, intimate notes on his terrible loss:

The (awesome but not painful) idea that she had not been everything to me. Otherwise I would never have written a work. Since my taking care of her for six months long, she actually had become everything for me, and I totally forgot of ever have written anything at all. I was nothing more than hopelessly hers. Before that she had made herself transparent so that I could write.... Mixing-up of roles. For months long I had been her mother. I felt like I had lost a daughter.

He grieved his mother's death for the rest of his life: "Do not say mourning. It's too psychoanalytic. I'm not in mourning. I'm suffering." and "In the corner of my room where she had been bedridden, where she had died and where I now sleep, in the wall where her headboard had stood against I hung an icon—not out of faith. And I always put some flowers on a table. I do not wish to travel anymore so that I may stay here and prevent the flowers from withering away."

In 2012 the book *Travels in China* was published. It consists of his notes from a three-week trip to China he undertook with a group from the literary journal Tel Quel in 1974. The experience left him somewhat disappointed, as he found China "not at all exotic, not at all disorienting".

8.2.10 INFLUENCE

Roland Barthes's criticism contributed to the development of theoretical schools such as structuralism, semiotics, and post-structuralism. While his influence is mainly found in these theoretical fields with which his work brought him into contact, it is also felt in every field concerned with the representation of information and models of communication, including computers, photography, music, and literature. One consequence of Barthes's breadth of focus is that his legacy includes no following of thinkers dedicated to modeling themselves after him. The fact that Barthes's work was ever adapting and refuting notions of stability and constancy means there is no canon of thought within his theory to model one's thoughts upon, and thus no "Barthesism".

8.2.11 KEY TERMS

Readerly and *writerly* are terms Barthes employs both to delineate one type of literature from another and to implicitly interrogate ways of reading, like positive or negative habits the modern reader brings into one's experience with the text itself. These terms are most explicitly fleshed out in *S/Z*, while the essay "From Work to Text", from *Image—Music—Text* (1977), provides an analogous parallel look at the active–passive and postmodern–modern ways of interacting with a text.

8.2.12 READERLY TEXT

A text that makes no requirement of the reader to "write" or "produce" their own meanings. The reader may passively locate "ready-made" meaning. Barthes writes that these sorts of texts are "controlled by the principle of non-contradiction" (156), that is, they do not disturb the "common sense," or "Doxa," of the surrounding culture. The "readerly texts," moreover, "are products [that] make up the enormous mass of our literature" (5). Within this category, there is a spectrum of "replete literature," which comprises "any classic (readerly) texts" that work "like a cupboard where meanings are shelved, stacked, [and] safeguarded" (200).

8.2.13 WRITERLY TEXT

A text that aspires to the proper goal of literature and criticism: "... to make the reader no longer a consumer but a producer of the text." Writerly texts and ways of reading constitute, in short, an active rather than passive way of interacting with a culture and its texts. A culture and its texts, Barthes writes, should never be accepted in their given forms and traditions. As opposed to the "readerly texts" as "product," the "writerly text is ourselves writing, before the infinite play of the world is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages." Thus reading becomes for Barthes "not a parasitical act, the reactive complement of a writing", but rather a "form of work."

8.2.14 THE AUTHOR AND THE SCRIPTOR

Author and *scriptor* are terms Barthes uses to describe different ways of thinking about the creators of texts. "The author" is the traditional concept of the lone genius creating a work of literature or other piece of writing by the powers of his/her original imagination. For Barthes, such a figure is no longer viable. The insights offered by an array of modern thought, including the insights of Surrealism, have rendered the term obsolete. In place of the author, the modern world offers a figure Barthes calls the "scriptor," whose only power is to combine pre-existing texts in new ways.

Barthes believes that all writing draws on previous texts, norms, and conventions, and that these are the things to which the reader must turn to understand a text. As a way of asserting the relative unimportance of the writer's biography compared to these textual and generic conventions, Barthes says that the scriptor has no past, but is born with the text. He also argues that, in the absence of the idea of an "author-God" to control the meaning of a work, interpretive horizons are opened up considerably for the active reader. As Barthes puts it, "the death of the author is the birth of the reader."

8.2.15 CRITICISM

8.2.16 IN POPULAR CULTURE

Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* was the inspiration for the name of 1980s new wave duo The Lover Speaks.

Jeffrey Eugenides' *The Marriage Plot* draws out excerpts from Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* as a way to depict the unique intricacies of love that one of the main characters, Madeleine Hanna, experiences throughout the novel.

In the film *Birdman* (2014) by Alejandro González Iñárritu, a journalist quotes to the protagonist Riggan Thompson an extract from *Mythologies*: "The cultural work done in the past by gods and epic sagas is now done by laundry-detergent commercials and comic-strip characters".

In the film *The Truth About Cats & Dogs* (1996) by Michael Lehmann, Brian is reading an extract from *Camera Lucida* over the phone to someone he thinks to be a beautiful woman but is actually her more intellectual and less physically desirable friend.

In the film *Elegy*, based on Philip Roth's novel *The Dying Animal*, the character of Consuela (played by Penélope Cruz) is first depicted in the film carrying a copy of Barthes's *The Pleasure of the Text* on the campus of the university where she is a student.

Laurent Binet's novel *The 7th Function of Language* is based on the premise that Barthes was not merely accidentally hit by a van driver but that he was instead murdered, as part of a conspiracy to acquire a document known as the "Seventh Function of Language".

8.3 WORK INTRODUCTION

Barthes' work was influential in the formation of schools of thought such as the view of structuralism, semiology, the theory of existence, Marxism, and post-structuralism. Radical equality ran through Barthes' works like a thread. During his previous Marxist time, Barthes criticized what he saw as a bourgeois cultural fallacy, the capitalist use of signals to create the illusion of a solid, permanent interpretation. In the transitional Death of the Author, he begins to abandon Marxism's illusions, abandoning the concept of the author as a constant source of meaning and thereby evaluating all meaning. In the Recreation of the Text, Barthes abandons the pursuit of meaning entirely in favor of the pursuit of delight. Although not explicitly stated, the foundation of Barthes' ideas seems to be firm atheism. The "Death of the Author" is a metaphor for the death of God, the author of all permanent and definite meanings.

The essay, “The Death of the Author”, written in 1967 and published in 1968, is a stance against the enclosure of Structuralism and the authority of formalism. The Essay makes sense in the context of the intellectual life of Paris; it has been misinterpreted when it was removed from the transitional context of theory passing out of Structuralism into Post-Structuralism as a reaction to the events of May 1968. In this essay, Barthes revolutionized the field of criticism. In a way he argues against the method of criticism that relies on the authors identity – political views, historical contexts, religion, ethnicity, psychology or personal attributes.

8.3.1 SUMMARY

The “Death of the Author” is an extension of the end of the unified subject, and as such, Barthes was expressing the prevailing intellectual stance that was being written and would be expressed among that group of thinkers who were attending the seminars of Jacques Lacan in Paris. If the subject is dissolved into language, then so too the fiction of the author or the independent creator of a work of art. Moreover, from a Marxist perspective, the “author” is a modern invention, derived from capitalist ideology that granted importance to the author’s person that was part of the wider system of ownership, property and privilege. “The Author” is part of capitalist stress on control through authority. He is also part of the enlightenment stress on individuality that inversely prioritized expertise and uniqueness.

An explanation for the work of art would be sought in the person of the producer, his tastes, his history and his passions. In addition it is possible to locate an “origin” for the Romanticism and the stress on the significance of subjectivity. Barthes wanted only to extend and interpretation of the work of art to include the interaction of other texts and the responses of the reader. The German School of Constance will take up this notion of the active reader and develop the role of the reader into “reader-response” criticism and the impact of plural readings upon the acts of interpretation. “The Death of the Author” puts forward a series of ideas far more important than whether or not the Author is “dead”. It is her that Barthes would write of the concept of “intertextuality”.

In Writing Degree Zero (1953), the goal was a neutral and blank language that used words in a material and concrete manner that freed them from social codes. For Barthes, as he had mentioned several times before, it was the nineteenth century poet Stephane Mallarme who understood that language speaks, not the author. In his famous poem “Un coup de des”, Mallarme explained the importance of the gaps between the words that rattled across the white pages like a die rolling across a casino table: “the ensuring words lie out as they are, lead on the last, with no novelty except the spacing of the text.

The ‘blanks’ indeed take on importance, at first glance; the versification demands them, as a surrounding silence, to the extent that a fragment, lyrical or of a few beats, occupies, in its midst, a third of the space of paper: I do not transgress the measure, only

disperse it". In other words, Mallarme equated words with silence or gaps, emphasizing the materiality of language and the nature of reading. And then, several decades later, came Surrealism. Due to the use of psychological games, such as automatic writing, it was Surrealism; Barthes said that "helped desacralize the image of the Author".

After a process of questing and slow unraveling, from a Structuralist perspective, the author's only tool is language itself and therefore trapped in language, authorship is never personal and the author is secondary to language. Compared to the strong pseudo "presence" of the author, writing is neuter and plural, a site of the loss of the subject and of identity. Because, post-enlightenment philosophy challenged the notion of the Cartesian subject, writing is the destruction of every voice and ever origin. When one recounts or writes or represents, Barthes noted, a gap appears and the voice looses its "origin".

On account of the, withdrawal of the author, Barthes wrote, "utterly transforms the modern text" and time is also transformed. When the author is "present", there is the before and after writing time, when writing begins, the author enters into his or her own death. In order to write, one must utilize language, and language, as Lacan asserted, "Speaks the subject". The reader or "the scriptor is born at the same time as his text and every text is written essentially here and now" (168). Therefore "writing" changed from an act of recording or representation to a performance, which Barthes christened as "performative". The term "scriptor" is then linked to "a pure gesture of inscription" (168) which "traces a field without origin".

Barthes elaborated when he stated that the text was "a multi-dimensional space in which are married and contested several writings, none of which is original: the text is fabric of quotations, resulting from a thousand sources of culture". Therefore, certain consequences occur: first, the book itself is but a tissue of signs, endless imitation, infinitely and postponded" and it is "futile" to attempt to "decipher" a text. By the beginning of the 20th century, the idea of the unified subject came under question through Lacan's rereading of Freud through the filter of semiotics in the fifties, and in the sixties semiotics gave way to Structuralism with Roland Barthes as its major spokesperson.

If language speaks the subject, then there can be no pure gesture of inscription. The character Barthes referred to as the “modern scriptor” buried the romantic notion of the Author. The writing has become detached from the voice and writes traces without origin. Therefore, according to Barthes, “the writer can only imitate an ever anterior, never original gesture; his sole power is to mingle writings”. To impose as Author upon a text is to impose a brake on interpretation, to give the work a final signified. Writing becomes closed. The “author” becomes a component of reading, a theoretical designation, a fiction employed for the sake of discursive convenience.

Over the years, Barthes built a case that work could be only of its own time but that in order to exist art was a composite. But as the end of the essay indicated, the death of the author does not mean the demise of the writer and points instead to the agency of the reader in bringing meanings to a text. The reader and the writer co-create a text that in itself cannot be singular as a ‘work”, but is inherently intertextual, that is, a “text” rather than a “work”. The total being of writing is multiple writings that are engaged in a dialogue. Writing is where multiplicity is collected, not by the author, but by the reader. In a way, the unity of the text is not its origin but its destination.

So the author must die in order to allow a space for the reader. It is the reader, after all, who makes meaning. The reader can never get outside of the language any more than the author is an original author and go beyond known language. Barthes took up the question of the breakdown of the boundaries of the “work” into the “text” which has no bounds in his essay “From Work to Text”. At the time he was writing, the old disciplines were breaking down in favor of the trend towards the interdisciplinary, a mixing of fields and professions. Barthes refers to the breakdown of old disciplines as a “mutation” that is part of an “epistemological shift”.

A new objectless object and a new language were formed, as “work” evolved into text, which is located at the intersection of author and reader. Barthes borrowed a distinction from Lacan: “reality” is shown, but “real” is proved. Therefore the text must not be understood as “a computable object” but as “a methodological field”. The work is seen, “held in the hand”, while the text is demonstrated, “held in language” and exists only when

caught up in language. Text is experienced only as an activity in production. The text is "constitutive movement" and cannot stop at "literature" which is formally interpreted.

The text is plural and fulfills the plurality of meaning and depends upon dissemination which Barthes described as 'transversal", and he even emphasized, "Text is experienced only in an activity, in a production". The author cannot be returned except as a guest because the text is a network, a combinative operation. The text is play, task, production and practices, meaning that reading and writing are linked together in the same signifying practice. The pleasure of the text is that text is a social space where languages circulate, because" the theory of the text can coincide only with a practice of reading".

Barthes criticized Structuralism for setting up a meta-language to critique language, claiming that a metalanguage is a linguistic impossibility, for one can never escape the effects of language. In explaining that the text is 'plural', Barthes presented an early explanation of "intertextuality'. He who defined intertextuality and wrote in his characteristic run-on fashion: the intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin to the text; to try to find the 'sources', the 'influences' of work, is to fall in with the myth of filiations; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable and yet already read: they are quotations without inverted commas.

Many of Barthes's works focus on literature. However, Barthes denied being a literary critic, because he did not assess and provide verdicts on works. Instead, he interpreted their semiotic significance. Barthes's structuralist style of literary analysis has influenced cultural studies, to chagrin of adherents of traditional literary approaches. One notable point of controversy is Barthes's proclamation of the death of the author. This 'death' is directed, not at the idea of writing, but at the specifically French image of the auteur as a creative genius expressing an inner vision. He is opposing a view of text as expressing a distinct personality of the author.

Barthes also vehemently opposes the view that authors consciously create masterpieces. He maintains authors such as Racine and Balzac often reproduce emotional patterns about which they have no conscious knowledge. Furthermore through

the end of the essay, he opposes the view that authors should be interpreted in terms of what they think they are doing.

8.3.2 A CRITICAL EXAMINATION

The essay, “Death of the Author” mainly addresses the power of the author in reading and analyzing writing, and the power of the reader or listener and the option to more or less ignore the work’s background and focus more on the work itself. When critically viewing writing, “the author, his person, his life, his tastes, and his passions” (Barthes 383) takes the spotlight; the author is forced to take sole responsibility of the failure or success of the work. Barthes goes on to discuss the text itself appearing as derivative, extracted from other works due to the “innumerable centers of culture” (385).

The direct intent of the author may be muddled due to the translation from author to text to reader, the text ending up more of an “immense dictionary” (385) than anything else. The inability of text to truly capture the “passions, humors, feelings, impressions” (385) of the author are “lost, infinitely deferred” (385) due to the subjectivity of the reader. Barthes leads to the main point that the reader holds more responsibility to the text than the author. The complexity of different connotations and experiences that come from the author into the text are flattened when it arrives to the reader.

The reader comes empty handed and is completely impersonalized with the text. It is as if a sculpture, a three dimensional work, is photographed, and reduced to two dimensions. So much information is condensed and made inaccessible to the viewer. Furthermore, Barthes makes the point that the origin of a work may lie with the author, but its destination is with the reader. That is, “The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author”.

8.3.3 CONCLUSION

Thus to conclude, in “The Death of the Author”, Barthes argues that writing destroys every voice and point of origin, this is because it occurs within a functional

process which is the practice of signification itself. Its real origin is language. A writer, therefore, does not have a special genius expressed in the text, but rather, is a kind of craftsman who is killed in using a particular code. He finally ends up the essay saying, all writers are like copy writers or scribes, inscribing a particular zone of language. In a sense he says, the real origin of a text is not the author, but language. Moreover he insists that the death of the author creates freedom for the reader to interpret the text, so that, the reader can recreate the text through connecting to its meanings as they appear in different contexts.

8.4 LET US SUM UP

Throughout this essay, Barthes argues that to assure the future of writing, the metamorphically death of the author is necessary, which leads to the birth of the reader. According to Barthes, writing can only be seen correctly once the author has died. "To give that text an author" he argues, "is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with final signified, to close the writing." As a result, it is entirely reasonable to state that Roland Barthes made significant contributions to the field of literature.

8.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) Whom of the following does not have a special genius expressed in the text.

a) The actor

b) The dancer

c) The writer

d) The composer

2) Barthes explains that the reader holds more responsibility to

a) The text

b) The author

c) The reader

d) The editor

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ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

7.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) To which animal does T.S.Eliot compares a critic on explaining the 'rudiment of criticism'?

a) subtle cat

b) sensitive dog

c) complex goat

d) intricate cow

2) The writer's personal history, is a context helps to focus on

a) The writer's style

b) The work's inner meaning

c) The writer's knowledge

d) the work as it is

8.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) Whom of the following does not have a special genius expressed in the text.

a) The actor

b) The dancer

c) The writer

d) The composer

2) Barthes explains that the reader holds more responsibility to

a) The text

b) The author

c) The reader

d) The edito

UNIT V

LESSON 9 - GEOFFREY HARTMAN: THE INTERPRETER'S FREUD

9.1 AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Geoffrey H. Hartman (August 11, 1929 – March 14, 2016) was a German-born American literary theorist, sometimes identified with the Yale School of deconstruction, although he cannot be categorised by a single school or method. Hartman spent most of his career in the comparative literature department at Yale University, where he also founded the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies.

Geoffrey H. Hartmann was born in Frankfurt am Main in Germany, in an AshkenaziJewish family. In 1939 he left Germany for England as an unaccompanied *Kindertransport* child refugee, sent away by his family to escape the Nazi regime. He came to the United States in 1946, where he was reunited with his mother, and later became an American citizen. Upon arrival in the US, his mother changed the family surname to "Hartman" to obscure its Germanic origin.

Hartman attended Queens College, City University of New York and received his PhD from Yale. After appointments at the University of Iowa and Cornell in the 1950s, Hartman returned to Yale and was eventually made Sterling Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Yale University. One of his long-term interests was the English poet William Wordsworth.

His work explores the nature of the creative imagination, as well as the interrelationship of literature and literary commentary. He helped found the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale's Sterling Memorial Library, and lectured on issues dealing with the production and implications of testimony.

9.1.2 OTHER WORKS

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9.2 WORK INTRODUCTION

In his essay “The interpreter’s Freud” Geoffrey Hartman discusses some of Freud’s interpretive theories, specifically those expressed in his book *The Interpretation of Dreams,* and then analyzes both an excerpt from that book and a poem by Wordsworth and uses the two to better elaborate on Freud’s theories.

In his essay “The interpreter’s Freud” Geoffrey Hartman uses the role of interpreter to draw connections between Freud’s theories and critical literary theory. To begin with, Hartman states that psychoanalysis “puts the interpreter, not only the text or person interpreted, at risk” (page 375); it both, in his words, “creates new texts as well as transforming our understanding of those already received” (page 378). In the passage from *The Interpretation of Dreams* this is shown in how Freud builds his understanding of

his dream about the three women from prior experiences and interactions, creating the new text of the dream as well as creating new connections and potential views on the influences in his life which appear to have lent themselves to the dream creation. Hartman reads a poem by Wordsworth, and then uses that poem to further expand on his critique of Freud.

It is not sure at this point what is thought of Freud. In all honesty, it is not know much about him beyond very vague facts, or some of his more controversial ideas (like 'penis-envy'). In general, although It is recognized that the validity of a number of his ideas and arguments, much of the more specific information we have read about him makes him seem fairly crazy. The excerpt given from *The Interpretation of Dreams,* for example, perplexes me; Freud, as Hartman says in his book, aimed to propose scientific theories, yet the excerpt reads more like the half connected ramblings of someone who's logic is apparent only to themselves. The fact that he believed there to be a concrete method of interpreting dreams seems anti-scientific to begin with, since (as we have spent so much of this course discussing) meaning is so often dependent on the individual interpreter (reader) and their experiences and connotations they have for things in the world around them. Hartman says near the end of the essay "instead of completing dreamtexts, or by extension literary texts… Freud makes them less complete, less fulfilling" (page 386) and it seems odd to me to celebrate a man who apparently spent most of his time making the world more muddled.

9.3 SUMMARY

Hartman is professor of English and Comparative Literature at Yale. He is a leading member of the deconstructionist school of criticism. Hartman was not happy with the limitations of New Criticism. Like many American's of his generation, he responded eagerly to the stimulus of post-structuralist theory, especially the work of Derrida

Derrida and Lacan speak about the essential instability of language. This is the perpetual sliding of the signified under the signifier or the endless deferral of the determinate meaning.

The above-mentioned features of the language liberate the critic from the obligation to produce interpretive closure. The critic can explore the potential meaning of a text in a style of semantic free play not basically different from poetic composition.

In the essay, Hartman suggests that Freud's analysis of dreams by means of 'free association' led him inexorably to the same conclusion: HUMAN COGNITION IS ESSENTIALLY POLYSEMOUS. Paradoxically, Freud believed in the possibility of a 'scientific discourse of the mind'.

Hartman demonstrates the paradox through an acute reading of a well-known poem of Wordsworth: 'A Slumber did my Spirit Seal'. The analysis shows how the deconstructionist reading of the text can reveal new richness of meaning in it.

The Essay Is Divided Into Three Parts:

Freud wished to found a science of mind. His first major work *The Interpretation of Dreams* planted the banner of rational and methodical enquiry in the very swamp of unreason, where few had ventured and, of those, very few had come back, their sanity intact. Though psychoanalysis is not a religion, it displays many features of past religions, including reasoning about unreason, about the irrational forces we live with and cannot entirely control.What is the role of language in this field of forces?

- The language of the interpreter takes for its subject other language constructs, presenting themselves as textual, like literary artifacts.
- The discourse of the analyst remains within the affective sphere of the discourse it interprets
- It is as much a supplement as a clarification
- Instead of an aseptic and methodological purism. This isolates the interpreter's language form the so-called object-language, creating in effect two monologues.

(The analysand's discourse is a stream of words that …the analyst cannot shut up in a box. The analyst runs after the analysand's words"—Andre Green)

- To understand Freud's power as an interpreter it is necessary to read him with an attention solicited by his own immense culture, in which sensitivity to language stimulated by literature played its part.

- Freud's dream analysis does no more and no less than discloses a life in images or words that has its own momentum.
- Ambiguities, over determined meanings, and strange linkages are more obvious than the coherent design they seem to flee from.
- Freud's interpretative method is not as separate as one might expect from the dream which is its object.
- Both dream and dream analyses are associative structures.
- The only difference between reported dream and analytic commentary is that the dream is more elliptical in the way it passes from sentence to sentence or image to image.
- Freud's interpretation fills up these ellipses or 'absences' in the dream.
- Freud introduces explanatory material that branches off with a digressive life of its own.

An Illustration: In trying to understand a dream about three women, one of them making dumplings (knodel), Freud recalls the ending of the first novel he had ever read, in which the hero goes mad and keeps calling out the names of the three women who had brought him the greatest happiness—and sorrow. One was called *Pelagie*; and by an eccentric path, the three women become the three fates; *Pelagie* becomes a bridge to the word 'plagiarize'.In literary studies we often ask what the genre of a work may be. It is a question when the reader confronts a new or puzzling form; and it certainly arises when we read *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

- It is hard to call the book a work of science, and leave it at that.
- What then is the genre of this book?
  (A long quotation from Freud where he lays bare some of his innermost feelings associated with the term 'knodel'—Freud speaks about his teachers, his feelings of guilt—a chain of other associations intimately connected to the personal life of the man)
- H artman writes, "My quotation from the 'knodel' dream suggests that Freud finds a strange and original way to write a Confession. I mean an autobiography that lays bare what ever it may be—certainly sexual wishes, guilt feelings, and social

envy, as well as the infantile emotions that spur the quest for scientific fame". As Kenneth Burke remarks "…Freud had perfected a method for being frank".

- Freud's way of interpreting dreams becomes a powerful hermeneutics, rivaling that of the great western religions.
- Freud's dream book cannot be called a Scripture. It is more like a Confession. But it fashions a secular key out of phenomena that civilization has repressed by calling it sacred, irrational, or trivial.
- Freud not only redeems this excluded mass from insignificance, he also introduces strange new texts for our considerations: texts that are neither literary not Scriptural but whose discovery throws doubt on the transcription of all previous inner experience.
- Freud reveals much more than a code for the decipherment of dreams: he invents a new textuality by transcribing dreams in his own way. It is not just the dream that is important, but also the dream text.
- Psychoanalysis, thus, creates new texts as well as transforming our understanding of those already received.

Two features that distinguish psychoanalytic interpretation from religious interpretation:

A) The transactive relation of text and commentary.

The dream text is not an object with Scriptural fixity. Scripture itself [the many books or 'biblia' we now call the Bible] had to be edited and fixed by a number of interpretive communities. But Freud allows us to see the commentary entering the text, incorporating itself with the dream. His self-analysis invests and supplements an original version that it becomes less of an object and more of a series of linguistic relays that could lead anywhere. The dream is like a sentence that cannot find closure. Freud keeps coming up with fragments of something already recounted adding meaning to meaning.

This extreme indeterminacy is not available to us in Scriptures.

B) Psychoanalytic interpretation is Kakangelic rather than evangelic in nature.

(Kakangelic is a word coined by Hartman. The New Testament claims to bring good news. If the Gospels emphasize mankind's guilt, they also counter it by the possibility of salvation. But Freud brings bad (kaka) news about the psyche, and offers no cure except through the very activity –analysis-- which reveals the truth)

The dream analysis reflects the Kakangelic vision. The language of the dream is not scientific. It is distinctively vernacular. The chain of associations characterizing the vernacular fails to transform the text into a pure discourse or sacred instrument of the scientist. The dream discloses what infantile jealousies can still occur in a scientific project.

- Behold the dreamer cometh'.
- That is said mockingly of Joseph in the Pentateuch [Pentateuch (Greek penta,"five"; teuch,"book"), collectively, first five books of the Old Testament, that is, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The term was used by the Christian theologian Origen to denote what the Jews of his time called the "Five-Fifths of Torah (teaching)." Pentateuch is the translation of the Hebrew term for this concept. The Torah is the holiest and most beloved of the sacred writings of the Jews.
- Yet Joseph gains fame not as a dreamer but as a dream interpreter. (Joseph won favour with the Pharaoh by correctly interpreting the latter's dreams)
- We see in Freud the dreamer rising to fame not through vainglorious dreams but through the art or science of dream interpretation, which he called 'the royal road'.

Hartman turns to Wordsworth respecting Freud's statement –"the poets were there before me".

Hartman's text is the Lucy poems, a group of short lyrics on the death of a young girl. The poems evoke three highly charged themes: incompleteness, mourning, and memory.

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

'A slumber did my spirit seal': after this line one would expect a dream vision. Yet there is no vision. The boundary between slumber and vision seems elided.

- That the poet had no human fears, that he experienced a curious anaesthesia vis – a – vis the girl's mortality or his own, may be what he names a slumber.
- As out of Adam's fist sleep an Eve arose, so out of this sealed but not unconscious spirit a womanly image arises with the same idolatrous charm. {But Wordsworth's image seems to come from within; it is a delusive daydream, yet still a revision of that original visions}
- There is no sense of an eruption from the unconscious.
- There is an uncanny displacement on the structural level that is consonant with what Freud calls the omnipotence of thoughts.
- This displacement is a transference. In the initial stanza, the poet is sealed in slumber; in the second that slumber has passed over to the girl. She falls asleep for ever. Her death is a quasi-immortality .
- 'Rolled round in earth's diurnal course' she indeed cannot 'feel / The touch of earthly years'.
- This subtle transfer is anticipated by one local condensation. "Human' in 'human fears' is a transferred epithet. [The line should read: 'I had no such fears as would have come to me had I considered her a human –- that is, mortal – being.'
- We do not know which way the transfer goes: from the girl to the poet or vice versa. Surely it might have taken place as an illusion. The poet does not take pains to demystify it.
- The supernatural illusion preserves the girl from a certain kind of touch, 'of earthly years' in the first stanza but in the second she is totally distanced.

(Coleridge surmised that the lyric was an imaginary epitaph for Wordsworth's sister. F.W. Bateson says that the poem arose from incestuous emotions and expressed a death with by the brother against the sister.)

- The poem removes an object of love by moving it beyond touch. Freud says that neurotics evade reality by putting it beyond touch or contact by a widening fear of contagion.
- Hartman says that the poet is using the word ‘slumber’ as a euphemism. The entire second stanza means that ‘she is dead’.
- The ‘slumber’ may remind us of bewitchment or fascination, even of hypnosis. It could be a hypnoid state in which one hears voices without knowing it, or performs actions on the basis of these voices.
- Language is a synthesis not only of sounds but of speech acts, and especially——if we look to infancy ——of threats, promises, admonitions, ‘yeses and nos’ that come to the child as ideas of reference in vocal from even if not every word is understood.

(Ordinary speech is a form of sleep-walking, the replication of internalized phrases or commands without conscious effect; poetic speech is an exposure of that condition, a return to a sense of language as virtually alive.)

The second stanza of ‘A Slumber’ is a periphrasis.

1. The use of overly long or indirect speech in order to say something.

2. an expression that states something indirectly

As a periphrasis for ‘she is dead’, it embellishes and amplifies that reluctant phrase

- The second stanza can be considered as a form of epitaph
- Epitaphs are generally consoling. But here not all the words are consoling. There are 6 negative expressions: ‘no’, ‘neither’ etc.
- Wordsworth’s language is penetrated by inappropriate puns also. So ‘diurnal’ divides into ‘die’ and ‘urn’, ‘course’ may recall the older pronunciation of ‘corpse’.
- The poet closes the poem with ‘trees’. Hartman says that if we read it as ‘ tears’ an anagram of ‘trees’, it will rhyme with ‘fears’, ‘years’ and ‘hears’.[hearse= vehicle in which a decedent is carried]

Pastoral elegy, in which rocks, woods, and streams are called upon to mourn the death of a person or to echo the complaint of a lover, seems too extravagant a genre for this chastely fashioned inscription. Yet the muted presence of the form reminds us what

it means to be a nature poet. From childhood on, as the autobiographical *Prelude* tells us, Wordsworth was aware of 'unknown modes of being' and of strange sympathies emanating from nature. He was haunted by an animistic [the belief that things in nature, for example, trees, mountains, and the sky, have souls or consciousness, the belief that a supernatural force animates and organizes the universe, the belief that people have spirits that do or can exist separately from their bodies] universe that seemed to stimulate, share, and call upon his imagination. The Lucy poems evoked a nature spirit in human form, perhaps modelled after his sister, and the forerunner of Cathy Linton in *Wuthering Heights.*

Freud and Wordsworth

Freud wants to place psychotherapy on a firm, scientific foundation that he exempts himself from an overestimation of psychical acts. At the same time he has made it hard for us to value interpretations not based on the priority of a psychological factor.

Animism is considered as a functional belief only in fiction –in Wordsworth's poems or in Wuthering Heights –but is considered dysfunctional in terms of mental health. Psychoanalysis distrusts the appearance of autonomy in such artifacts.

- Freud's analysis shares the delusional qualities of the superstitions it wants to dispel.
- He was always distrustful towards the eudemonic feelings [a eudemon is a benevolent spirit or demon.], the kind that Wordsworth expressed in 'A Slumber'.
- He considered them a 'thalassal regression' ['Thalassal' means pertaining to the state of marine life. The phrase used by Sandor Ferenczi appears to refer to a reversal of the evolutionary process.
- Wordsworth's attitude was very different. In all his most interesting work he describes a developmental impasse a point at which no further progress can be made or agreement reached, a road or passage that has no way out or through, for example, a dead end or a blockage caused by an accident] centring on eudemonic sensations experienced in early childhood and associated with nature.

- Whether beautiful or frightening, they sustain and nourish him as intimations of immortality; and Wordsworth can be called the first ego psychologist, the first careful observer of the growth of a mind.
- If there is death wish in the Lucy poems, it is insinuated by nature itself and asks lover or growing child not to give up earlier yearnings—to die rather than become an ordinary mortal.

The Developmental Impasse is quite clear in the poem.

- Divided into two parts, separated formally by a blank and existentially by a death, the epitaph does not record a disenchantment.
- The mythic girl dies, but that word seems to wrong her. Her star-like quality is maintained despite her death.
- The poet's sense of her immutability deepens by reversal into an image of participation mystique with the planet earth.
- There is loss, but there is also a calculus of gain and loss which those two stanzas weigh like two sides of a balance.
- Their balancing point is the impasse. Such a death could seem better than dying into the light of common day.
- But if we give too much value to immutability it will eclipse human life.
- Ideas of pre-existence or afterlife arise.

Concluding this part of his argument Hartman says: "My analysis has tried to capture a complex state of affairs that may resemble religious experiences or pathological states but which Wordsworth sees as an imaginative constant, ordinary and incurable. For those who need more closure in interpretation, who wish to know exactly what the poet felt, I can only suggest a phrase from his famous 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood'. The meanest flower, he writes, can give him 'thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears'. The girl has become such a thought.

- Yet even here we meet a euphemism. Naming something 'a thought too deep for tears'—is not that a periphrasis for the inability to grieve?
- This inability seems to be a strength rather than a weakness if we take the figure literally.

- “Too deep for tears” suggests a place -– a mental place — beyond fits of passion or feeling.
- Yet to call the words euphemistic is to acknowledge at the same time that they are so affecting that mourning is not absent but continued in another mode.
- The work of writing seems to have replaced the work of mourning. Is there a link between writing and mourning, such that writing can be shown to detach us from the lost object and reattach us to the world?

Freud’s Kakangelic mode of interpretation and Wordsworth’s euphemism are ordinary rather than artificial aspect of language, especially when the work of mourning is taking place.

The strongest euphemisms in Wordsworth seem to belong to language rather than imposed on it.

Wordsworth’s euphemia is nourished by sources in language or the psyche we have not adequately understood.

They bring us back to an awareness of how much sustaining power language has, even if our individual will to speak and write is assaulted daily by the most trivial as well as traumatic events.

Hartman returns to Wordsworth’s poem again.

The sustaining power of language is not easily placed on the side of goodness or love. Writing has an impersonal, even impersonating quality which brings the poet close to the dead.

It is not surprising that there should be a hint of the involuntary or mechanical in stanza 2 of ‘A Slumber’: a hint of the indifference to which the girl’s difference is reduced, and which, however tragic it may be, obeys a law that supports the stability a survivor’s speech requires. O blessed machine of language!’ Coleridge once exclaimed. The very phrase is symptomatic of the euphemia without which speech would soon cease to be, or turn into an eruptive cursing.

It is here we link up once more to Freud. Freud created new hermeneutics by charting compulsive and forced connections which ‘regarded nothing as sacred’. The

recovered dream thoughts have no connections save in the negative fact that their capacity for profanation is without limit. All other connections are the result of secondary process extending from the dream work's disguises and displacements to more conscious revisions. At times, the manifest dream content may appear saner than an interpretation that reverses the dream's relatively euphemistic bearing or disintegrates its discursive structure. Instead of completing 'dreamtexts' or by extension literary texts, Freud makes them less complete, less fulfilling. The more interpretation, it seems, the less closure.

- If the dream is unholy, as is shown to be so by the above interpretation, the power of that interpretation as it methodizes and universalizes itself is something very near to holy.
- One wonders how else Freud could have continued his work without falling mute, without being overcome by the bad news he brought.
- The dream peculiar to Freud, as interpreter and scientist, a dream which survives all self-analysis, is of a purified language that remains uncontaminated by its materials, that neither fulfils not represses an all-too-human-truth.

"I hope Freud's shade will understand this parting remark as a blessing on the only scientist I have ever been able to read", concludes Hartman

9.4 LET US SUM UP

Professor Hartman at Yale argues that post-structuralist theory, particularly Derrida's work, allows critics to avoid interpretive closure. He suggests that Freud's analysis of dreams led him to believe in the polysemous nature of human cognition. Freud's work, The Interpretation of Dreams, aims to establish a science of mind by examining unreasonable forces within us. Psychoanalysis, a form of psychoanalysis, combines elements of past religions and irrational forces. Freud's dream analysis reveals ambiguities, overdetermined meanings, and strange linkages. Psychoanalytic interpretation differs from religious interpretation in two key aspects: the transactive relation between text and commentary and the Kakangelic vision of dream analysis. Hartman's Lucy poems evoke themes of incompleteness, mourning, and memory. Wordsworth's poem "A Slumber" explores the boundary between slumber and vision, revealing a mysterious transference between the poet and the girl. The poem also

explores the concept of language as a synthesis of sounds and speech acts, particularly in infancy.

Wordsworth's poem "Pastoral Elegy" explores the nature poet's awareness of unknown modes of being and strange sympathies from nature. His Lucy poems evoke a nature spirit in human form, possibly inspired by his sister and the forerunner of Wuthering Heights. Freud's analysis of Wordsworth's poems highlights the developmental impasse, balancing loss and gain, and the importance of immutability in understanding human life. Hartman's analysis of Wordsworth's poems highlights the complex state of affairs, highlighting the sustaining power of language and the poet's euphemia. Freud's hermeneutics focuses on compulsive and forced connections in dreams, resulting in a purified language that neither fulfills nor represses human truth.

9.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) **Freud has created difficulty in valuing interpretation not based on the priority of**
   a) Physiological factor
   b) Phytology factor
   c) psychological factor.
   d) Pathology factor

2) **Hartman's analysis of Wordsworth's poems highlighting the sustaining power of language and**
   a) The poet's Euphemia.
   b) The poet’s Eroumiya
   c) The poet’s Ethipia
   d) The poet’s Etropima

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LESSON 10

JULIET MITCHELL - FEMININITY, NARRATIVE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS.

10.1 AUTHOUR INTRODUCTION

JJuliet Mitchell was born in New Zealand in 1940. Later her family moved to London. She read English at Oxford and taught at the universities of Leeds and Reading. In the 1960s, Mitchell was actively involved in politics and was on the editorial committee of the journal, *New Left Review*. In 1974 she published *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* and subsequently trained at the institute of Psychoanalysis. At present she works as a psychoanalyst in London

10.1.1 LIFE AND WORKS OF JULIET MITCHELL

Juliet Mitchell (born 1940) British psychoanalyst, socialist feminist, research professor and author is born in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1940 and then moved to England in 1944, where she stayed with her grandparents in the midlands. She attended St. Anne's College, Oxford, where she received a degree in English in 1962. She taught English literature from1962to 1970 at Leads University and Reading University. Throughout the 1960s, Mitchell was active in leftist politics and was on the editorial committee of the journal, New Left Review. She was a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge and Professor of Psychoanalysis and Gender Studies at Cambridge University, before in 2010 being appointed to be the Director of the Expanded Doctoral School in Psychoanalytic Studies at Psychoanalysis Unit of University College London (UCC).

She is a retired registrant of the British Psychoanalytic council. Writings Psychoanalysis and Feminism Mitchell is best known for her book Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing and Women 1974, in which she tried to reconcile psychoanalysis and feminism at a time when many considered them incompatible. Peter Gay considered43 it "the most rewarding and responsible contribution" to the feminist debate on Freud, both acknowledging and rising beyond Freud's male chauvinism in its analysis.

Child Rearing A substantial part of the thesis of the book is that Marxism may provide a model within which non-patriarchal structures for rearing children could occur. Liberating women from the consequences of penis envy and the feeling of the being castrated which Mitchell contends is the root cause of women's acceptance that they are inferior. According to Mitchell, children are socialized into becoming the caretakers of their households. Feminine Sexuality In her introduction to Lacan on feminine sexuality, Mitchell stresses that, "in the Freud that Lacan uses, neither the unconscious nor sexuality (are) pre-given facts, they are constructions; that is, they are objects with histories."

10.1.2 HER OTHER WORKS

Women's Estate (1971)

Women, the Longest Revolution (1984)

Mad Men and Medusas: Reclaiming Hysteria (2000)

Siblings Sex: and violence (2003)

10.2 JULIET MITCHELL VIEW ON FEMINISM

'Women: The Longest Revolution' writer *Juliet Mitchell* heralded the emergence of a politically radical feminism in the 1960s. A member of the British Intellectual Left, she is one of the most powerful and controversial voices of the English speaking world. "*Femininity, Narrative and Psychoanalysis",* a transcript of a lecture delivered to a conference on Narrative held in Australia in 1972, assimilates Mitchells' four principal interests, that are, English Literature, politics, psychoanalysis and feminism.

Juliet Mitchel's essay hinges on the issues of *psychoanalysis* and *feminism*. A historical background would serve as a tell-tale to the conglomerate layers of the essay. The see-saw of psychoanalysis and feminism has always been unbalanced. The misogynist trends of Sigmund Freud's oratory and writings are clear as crystal. The concepts of *'penis envy'*, ' *castration complex'*, and the absence of libido in females with 'its own original nature', prove that Freud's outlook was the epitome of chauvinism. The major feminist of the post-Freudean critical scene, *Simone de Beauvoire* considered Freud's theory inadequate to account for women's otherness. Psychoanalysis denied

women's existential freedom, by rendering her as *'other to a subject rather than a subject herself'.*

Mitchell's essay also encompasses *Jacques Lacan's* theory of *'moment of symbolic'*. Lacan re-read and innovated Freud's view, as a 'return to Freud'. Though innovative in nature, his views were not devoid of misogyny to the hilt, which can be seen by the incorporation of the extensive use of phallocentrism in his works. The predominant authors of French Feminism, *Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Helene Cixous, Catherine Clement* and *Sarah Kofman,* critically derided Lacan's phallocentrism.

Mitchell, at the peak of women's movement, nonplussed the contemporary feminists by highlighting the usefulness of Freud's works, which were repudiated for its anti-feminist idiosyncrasy. Mitchell and some of her fellow feminists like *Dorothy Dinnerstein, Gayle Rubin,* and *Nancy Chodorow,* moved beyond the initial rejection of psychoanalysis on the ground of being bourgeois and patriarchal and was considered fatal for feminism, and explored its feminist potential.

Rather than premising less on a denial of misogyny of Freud's Psychoanalysis, the essay comes out as its re-interpretation and depicts how phallic culture domesticates women and the effects of this domestication on women, thus justifying that Freudian theory is a rationalization of women's subordination.

After some initial remarks on narrative in psychoanalytic practice, Mitchell talks about women in the early history of novel and then about psychoanalytic theory, finally illustrating some of her concerns with reference to Wuthering heights.

Freud used the term *'talking cure'* to describe the fundamental work of analysis. Mental health professionals use various talking therapies to deal with patients. So, according to Mitchell, if language is itself phallocentric, while the analyst and the patient can either be male or female, what is the woman analyst or the woman patient doing at all?

The psychoanalysts tell and retell stories by striving through the anarchic carnival, which is the Bakhtinian concept which states that at every strata of society, deception is at play. A constant contradiction of power and resistance avails. The forces of deception

allow people to put on masks and play certain roles. Any form of action is always in a state of flux, restless and unceasingly changing, due to this deception, through multiple retellings of one's history.

Mitchell says, "What can you do but disrupt a history and recreate it as another?"

I think Mitchell is connecting this disruption of history with the process where an analyst and a patient tell, hear, retell, disrupt and create history through a carnivalesque juncture.

Mitchell then proceeds to one 'kind of history'- the novel, the preeminent form of literary narrative. The advent of novels in around the 17th century, were marked by autobiographies written by women. Myriad novels were authored by women though there were men novelists as well. These women writers were trying to create a history from a state of flux, process of becoming women within a new bourgeois society.

Women started to concoct themselves as social subjects under bourgeois capitalism, and this was implemented by the novel. Mitchell, being a leftist, has overpassed the proletariat novels. She agrees that there were working class novels as well but the dominant form is represented by the women in the bourgeoisie. What I think, maybe until the Proletarian Literature Era in the 1930s when socialism crept into the system abridging the intensive biased span between the aristocrat and the working class , there were not really any proletariat women novels, given the strenuous life and little provisions they had, which would not suffice to produce a literary aspect to their working class life. Even if there were any such novel written by working class women, it would have been stowed away into non-existence.

The economic reality and the materialistic approach towards everything in life as proposed by Marx, might lead Mitchell, who has set herself up in a Marxist framework, to call the novel bourgeois in a bourgeois capitalistic world. Regardless of these obligations, I think, proletariat women novelists' works should be widely acknowledged, as yet ghastly, proletariat novels written by women were not ever recognised let alone critically acclaimed as is done for the proletariat men novelists' works. The intertwined web of class-bias and patriarchy is the pedestal for novels written by proletariat women.

Mitchell charges Julia Kristeva's notion of novel as *'the discourse of hysteric'* by concurring to her and redefines the meaning of hysteria which is *"the woman's simultaneous acceptance and refusal of the organization of sexuality under patriarchal capitalism."* The boomerang events of being feminine and refusing femininity within the patriarchal configuration of the novel, is what a hysteric does. The concoction of a woman's world within the masculine world makes the woman novelist recognise the significance of bisexuality.

Mitchell takes reference from Lacan's theory of *moment of symbolic;* the stage where a child psychologically creates the sexes. Before the moment of symbolic, there is the *pre-Oedipal stage*, which according to Lacan and Freud, is heterogeneous and not symbolised. The moment of symbolic is followed by the Oedipal stage where the child organizes the pre-oedipal heterogeneity into two poles: masculine and not masculine, that is feminine.

The pre-oedipal stage is characterised as semiotic, carnivalesque, and disruptive. Before advancing towards the political dimensions of the concept of moment of symbolic, we should be acquainted with the terms 'carnivalesque', 'carnival' and 'church'. Literary theorist and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin originated the word 'carnival' which is a literary mode which liberates and subverts the assumptions of the dominant atmosphere through chaos and humour. The carnivals of medieval Europe were occasions in which the legal , political or ideological authority of both the state and church were transcended, albeit temporarily, during the liberating and anarchic period of the carnival. The carnival furnished the revellers with temporary liberation from the cusps of the rules and regulations of the church. In Mitchell's essay, the church, I think, is the authority or the theory of moment of symbolic. The carnival refers to the refutation of the theory of moment of symbolic on certain grounds that Mitchell says.

From the pe-Oedipal, carnivalesque stage, as Lacan's moment of symbolic suggests, two positions can be derived. The first is that the child has an inborn capacity to recognise itself different from the mother, which means the pre-divided, heterogeneous, pre-oedipal child has its own organization of polyvalence and polyphony. Secondly, the very notion of bisexuality, pre-oedipality or homogeneity arise because of the dyadic

possibility of a child with a mother. What Mitchell means, I think, is the child and the mother are one and different at the same time. It is an image of oneness and heterogeneity as two sides of the same coin.

Mitchell discusses the political dimension of this issue. If we take into consideration the first position, the statement " pre-divided, heterogeneous, pre-oedipal child has its own organization of polyvalence and polyphony" means that the pre-Oedipal world is a separate one. This points a finger to the factual authenticity of the Lacanian moment of symbolic and signifies the refutation of the concept that what was heterogeneous becomes organised and bi-polar.

The pre-Oedipal stage is already organised as the child can recognise himself as separate from his mother. So, the " the carnival can be held on the church steps". Mitchell puts up another aspect which is if the carnival and church are not separate then the pre-Oedipal and the Oedipal stages are not discrete as well. If the pre-Oedipal stage is defined by the Oedipal stage then the only way to disregard it is from an alternative symbolic universe. When the alternative symbolic universe comes to play, the Lacanian moment of symbolic ceases to exist, which means without the moment of symbolic the Oedipal and pre-Oedipal stages will lose its meaning.

The child who, when goes through the moment of symbolic, realises the existence of genders by identifying the male as the possessor of phallus and the female as someone who doesn't have a phallus, which he observes from his mother, psychologically creates a notion that phallus is some power which the male possess and the female do not, which makes them feel as privileged, someone superior.

Well, the rules and disciplinary regulations of the church and the state are not immune to the transgression completely. The disrespect or rather the liberation is only for a short duration because the state fears the degeneration of the system into anarchy and violence.The carnival is an ephemeral and impermanent affair and it only functions within the terms of the law. There are always restraints and checks. So, a new law of symbolism should be concocted as a reconception to the dominant law. The carnival disrupts the law but within the parameters of the law. Mitchell exemplifies Julia Kristeva in support of her

argument by referring to the apolitical stance of Julia who, while expounding their ideas, chose ‘exclusively masculine’ and ‘proto-fascist texts’.

Femininity has always been given designations and tags like intuitive, religious, mystical, playful, poetic. Mitchell does not concede to the impression that carnival is the area of feminine. She says, carnival is instead the definition of feminine as opined by the patriarchal universe. Disruption is contained within the patriarchal symbolic.

Mitchell continues to illustrate some allusions from Emily Bronte’s ‘Wuthering Heights’ to succour her arguments in the essay. She says that Emily is working clearly within the framework of a language which is designated as phallocentric. She is not writing a ‘carnivalesque query’ to the patriarchal order, instead questioning it through a ‘kind of irony’.

I find it quite abhorring that Emily had to publish her novel in the disguise of a male pseudonym, Ellis bell, to gain ‘fame and notoriety’. Of course a woman’s writing published under her name wouldn’t get as much recognition, however arête it may be. Emily uses two narratives- a man, Lockwood, portrayed as a hopelessly romantic foppish gentleman and a woman nurse, Nelly Dean. The aspect of bisexuality of Wuthering Heights is elucidated by Mitchell. Catherine’s father brought a gypsy child, Heathcliff, named after Catherine’s dead brother. The only thing Catherine wanted all her life is Heathcliff which wasn’t feasible because it would be incestuous which was considered a taboo. She instead makes a conventionally feminine choice of marrying a man Edgar Linton. They had a child, delivering whom Catherine died.

Catherine wanted to break the incest taboo and be one with Heathcliff: “ I am Heathcliff, he’s more myself than I am”. This oneness can only be achieved through death. It takes death to transgress the norms of patriarchal society.

Women had to construct themselves as a woman within a new social structure; in a state of flux she is always in the process of becoming. Humans need a historical background to survive. As Aristotle said, we are not animals with instinctual or plants with nutritive lives. We are rational creations with the deliberative recollection of history and imagination of imagined reality. We have to create new histories if we deconstruct the pre-

existing history. Mitchell concludes her speech asking one question, *" What are we in the process of becoming?"*

As Virginia Woolf said, "Women and fiction remain, so far as I am concerned, are unsolved problems".

10.3 SUMMARY

FEMINISM AND PSYCHOANALYSIS—CERTAIN ISSUES

The relationship between feminism and psychoanalysis is problematic. In one of his lectures on Femininity, Freud had presented women as the problem. There are many other misogynist trends evident in Freud's oratory and writings which have made Feminists wary of his biases. Further, he is often accused of 'curtailing and diminishing the diversity of individual women's experiences into a restricted and unvarying formula that will fit within its own theoretical parameters'. Certain important points are to be noted in this context:

In classical psychoanalytic theory, female psychosexual development is only marginally and infrequently discussed. It is measured afainst a masculine norm and found deficient.

Many naorth American feministis believed that the concept od 'penis envy' developed by Freud in his account of the female version of the 'castration complex' represented the misogynist bias of psychoanalytic theory.

Feminists considered misogyny a sufficient ground for rejecting psychoanalysis as a feminist theoretical tool.

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR'S VIEW—— *THE SECOND SEX*

Simone de Beauvoir was undoubtedly the major feminist of the post-Freudean critical scene. Therefore, her views on Freudean theory are important. Beauvoir took up the topic of psychoanalysis in *The Second Sex* (1949) and devoted a chapter for "The Psychoanalytic Point of View".

In this chapter Beauvoir denounced Freud's idea that there is but one, masculine, libido and no feminine libido with "its own original nature".

Beauvoir took Freud to task for not considering the social origins of masculine and paternal power and privilege and considered his theory inadequate to account for woman's otherness.

She argued that if women envied men it was because of the social power and privileges they enjoyed and not because of anatomical superiority.

Beauvoir believed that psychoanalysis rendered woman as the other to a subject rather than a subject herself, and thus denied her existential freedom.

All said and done, Freud's thoughts and hypotheses concerning hysteria, the Oedipal Complex, female sexuality and femininity, and women's role in civilization, have provided the volatile grounds, the sites of contention for feminist re-articulation which was taken up by French feminists

PSYCHOANALYTIC FEMINISM——THE FRENCH VIEW & LACAN

The French view of psychoanalytic theory is very important because of the work of Jacques Lacan. Lacan's work had a powerful influence on the feminist critique of psychoanalysis. His ideas have been 'taken up, transformed and challenged' by Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva and others.

Lacan's work is admired for its 'de-biologization' of Freud.

At the same time, the work is derided for its phallocentrism [focus on male point of view].

In fact, these two aspects [de-biologization and phallocentrism] are intertwined in Lacan's work. Both of them depend on Lacanian concepts of language as a symbolic order that 'precedes makes possible human subjectivity'

Lacan believed that his work is a return to Freud. This return to Freud is accompanied by insights of structural linguistics and structural anthropology. Lacan was the pioneer in introducing the ideas of Saussure and Roman Jakobson on sturctural linguistics and those of Claude Levi-Strauss on structural anthropology into the field of psychoanalysis

Some of Lacan's views on Freud are rennovative in nature. Freud had theorized that there is only one libido and it is masculine. In "The Signification of the Phallus," Lacan explicitly states that there might be two libidos- masculine as well as feminine.

French Feminism and Psychoanalysis

At the outset, it must be made explicit that the expression, 'French Feminism', is a misnomer. The authors are rarely of French origin or nationality. However, French is the predominant language of their writing] . The prominent writers are Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Sarah Kofman, Catherine Clement, and Helene Cixous. Their ideas on the relation between the maternal and the feminine and feminine subjectivity differ considerably. They worry about Freud's lack of attention to mothers and wonder if women can be subjects or citizens without adapting to masculine norms. While deriding Lacan's phallocentrism, they suspect that access to language assimilates women into 'neutralized brothers'

They temperamentally sympathize with the split of personality affirmed by psychoanalysis——the idea that I am not I. They believe that 'self-division rather than self-identity' is the primary aspect of human existence.

They try to disentangle femininity from maternity. They also highlight the significance of maternity for women and for childern of both sexes.

DAVID LODGE ON 'FEMININITY, NARRATIVE & PSYCHOANALYSIS.

Mitchell's essay 'Women, the Longest Revolution' heralded the emergence of politically radical feminism. At the height of the women's movement, she shocked her fellow feminists by highlighting the usefulness of Freud's works which were considered anti-feminist by many. She argued that the rejection of psychoanalysis as bourgeois and patriarchal was fatal for feminism. She saw the usefulness of Freud's work as re-read by Lacan and other post-structuralists.

'Femininity, Narrative and Psychoanalysis' is the transcript of a lecture delivered to a conference on Narrative held in Australia in 1972. The lecture brings together English Literature, politics, psychoanalysis and feminism.

FEMININITY, NARRATIVE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS - CRITICAL BACKGROUND

Though many feminists tend to reject Freudian concepts, all the while there was a subtle change taking place in the attitude of certain feminist critics towards Freudian hypotheses. They felt it better to incorporate rather than reject Freudian concepts. Thus, during the middle to late 1970's, feminists such as Juliet Mitchell, Gayle Rubin, Dorothy Dinnerstein, and Nancy Chodorow moved beyond the initial rejection of psychoanalysis to explore its feminist potential.

These efforts 'were premised less on a denial of the misogynist character of psychoanalytic theory than on a reinterpretation of it'. Gayle Rubin, for example, argued that the feminist critique of psychoanalysis is justified to the extent that Freudian theory is a rationalization of women's subordination. But Rubin proposed that this is not the only legitimate way to understand Freud's theory. It can also be read as a 'description of how phallic culture domesticates women, and the effects in women of their domestication. Thus Rubin concluded to the extent that Freudian theory is a description of processes that contribute to women's oppression, the feminist critique of psychoanalysis is mistaken.

10.4 CRITICAL APPRECIATION

PSYCHOANALYSIS

Psychoanalysis is 'talking cure'. Freud used the term to describe the fundamental work of psychoanalysis. Mental health professionals use the term to mean any of a variety of talking therapies. The analyst is male or female. The patient is male or female. If language is phallocentricsee notes for 'phallocentrism' and 'ecriture feminine', what is a woman patient doing when she is speaking or what is a woman analyst doing when she is listening and speaking back?

At one level, psychoanalysts are telling and retelling histories. The patient comes with a story of his/her experience. 'The analyst listens; through an association something intrudes, disrupts, offers the 'anarchic carnival' [see notes] back into that history, the story won't quite do, and so the process starts again'. The patient makes a new history. the analyst, in analysing his or her own countertransference, performs the same process on himself or herself, listens to a history, asks. 'Why am I hearing it as that?': something from the analyst's own associations disrupts, erupts into that narrative – the analyst asks a question from a new perspective, and the history starts all over again.

Mitchell says that she is thinking about the role of carnival or disruption. When history is dirupted, another history is created. We have multiple histories, though we can only live within one at a time.

Mitchell, then looks at one 'kind of history'. It is the preeminent form of literary narrative——the novel

The novel starts with autobiographies written by women in the seventeenth century. Though there were several famous men novelists, the vast majority of early novels were written by women

These women were trying to create a history from a state of flux, in which they were feeling themselves in 'the process of becoming women within a new bourgeois society'. The novels describe that process.

'The novel is that creation by the woman of the woman, or by the subject who is in the process of becoming woman, of woman under capitalism'.

Novel is not homogenous [of the same kind, similar]. There are points of disruption within it. There are points of autocriticism within it. Mitchell says that *Wuthering Heights* 'is a high point of criticism of the novel from within the novel'

The novel is the best example of the way women start to create themselves as social subjects under bourgeois capitalism.

The novel is a bourgeois form. Mitchell agrees that there are working class novels. But she says that the dominant form is represented by the women in the bourgeoisie.

Thus, when contemporary Feminist critics turn to women writers, resurrect the forgotten texts of these writers, they are conforming to the bourgeois tradition.

Mitchell says that this is useful because we can find out why women had to write the novel, the story of their domesticity, seclusion within the home and the possibilities and impossibilities provided by that.

The tradition of women writing novels [which are actually disguised autobiographies] is criticized by Julia Kristeva who calls such novels 'the discourse of the hysteric'.

Mitchell answers this charge thus:

I believe that it has to be the discourse of the hysteric. The woman novelist must be an hysteric. Hysteria is the woman's simultaneous acceptance and refusal of the organization of sexuality under patriarchal capitalism. It is simultaneously what a woman can do both to be feminine and to refuse femininity, within patriarchal discourse. And I think that is exactly what the novel is…

Mitchell says that (unlike Cixous) she does not believe in female writing, 'women's voice', etc.

There is the hysteric's voice which is the *woman's masculine language* [one has to speak 'masculinely' in a phallocentric world] talking about feminine experience. It is both simultaneously the woman novelist's refusal of the woman's world —— she is, after all, a novelist —— and her construction from within a masculine world of that woman's world.

Mitchell says that when the woman novelist writes from within the masculine world, she is realizing the importance of bisexuality.

RE-READING FREUD

Mitchell speaks about re-reading Freud 'in terms of the moment at which sexual division is produced within society. This moment is described by Mitchell thus: It is the ''moment of the castration complex, the moment when the heterogeneously sexual, polymorphously perverse, carnivalesque child has imposed on it the divisions of 'the law'; the one law, the law of patriarchy, the mark of the phallus At that moment two sexes are psychologically created——the masculine and the not- masculine. When the phallus is seen missing in the mother, masculinity is set up as the norm. Femininity is what masculinity is not [a negative definition]. What is not there in the mother becomes relevant here. The expression which fills that gap is, 'perforce', phallocentric.

LACAN AND THE SYMBOLIC

In Lacanian thinking the moment when the two sexes are psychologically created is called the moment of the symbolic. The symbolic is where sexuality is constructed as

meaning. Here what was heterogeneous, what was not symbolised earlier becomes organized and created round the poles——masculine and not-masculine:feminine.

What has gone before this stage of the symbolic can be called pre-Oedipal, the semiotic, the carnivalesque [questioning the established authority], the disruptive. Mitchell says that we can take two positions in relation to that.

1. The pre-divided, heterogeneous, pre-Oedipal child has its own organisation of polyvalence and polyphony. [the child has an inborn capacity to recognize itself as different from the mother].

OR

2. The very notion of heterogeneity, of bisexuality, of pre-Oedipalityarise because of the dyadic [of two parts or elements] possibility of child with mother. It is an image of oneness and heterogeniety as two sides of the same coin. [what Mitchell means is that the child and the mother are one and at the same time different]. This is infact the symbolic law itself

POLITICAL DIMENSION OF THE PROBLEM

"If you think that the heterogeneous pre-Oedipal polyvalent world is a separate structure in its own right, then the law is disruptable, the carnival can be held on the church steps"

What Mitchell means by this statement has to be explained. In alternative (1) it was stated that the 'pre-divided, heterogeneous, pre-Oedipal child has its own organization of polyvalence and polyphony'. If it is so it means that the 'heterogeneous pre-Oedipal polyvalent world' is a separate one. In such a case the Lacanian moment of the symbolic is questionable. [in the symbolic moment, according to Lacan, what was heterogeneous becomes organized and bi-polar——masculine and feminine.] 'The carnival can be held on the church steps. Here 'carnival' stands for disregard/challenge to the authority which the 'church' represents. If the pre-Oedipal world of the child is separate, then the carnival and the church will have no difference. The carnival can be held on the steps of the church itself.

"Mitchell continues: "But if this is not the case, if the carnival and the church do not exist independently of each other, the pre-Oedipal and the Oedipal are not separate, discrete states...

[If the carnival (disorder) and the church (order) are not separate, then the pre-Oedipal and the Oedipal stages are also not separate or discrete (disconnected).]

'...if, instead, the Oedipal with the castration complex is what defines the pre-Oedipal, then the only way you can challenge the church, challenge both the Oedipal and its pre-Oedipal, is from within an *alternative symbolic universe'*

Mitchell says that if the pre-Oedipal is defined by the Oedipal stage, then the only way to challenge them both is from an alternative symbolic universe. Here Lacanian symbolic universe ceases to exist. In Lacan the crucial difference between the Oedipal and the pre-Oedipal is what defines the symbolic universe. In the absence of this difference, Lacanian symbolic universe has no existence.

The imaginary, the semiotic, the carnival is not an alternative to the symbolic. It is set up by the law as its own ludic space [ludic = playful]. It is an imaginary alternative, not a symbolic alternative. [the carnival is not an alternative to the law or the symbolic universe. The carnival is disruptive only within the terms of the law. It is within the symbolic universe. The carnival is not a regular feature of any society. It is just an escape mechanism to get relief from the rigours of daily existence.

Mitchell concludes that a new symbolism, a new law is required to challenge the dominant law. This is the political dimension of the problem.

Mitchell disagrees with the suggestion that the carnival is the area of the feminine. Mitchell says that it (the carnival) is only what the patriarchal universe defines as the feminine. The intuitive, the religious, the mystical, the playful-- all those things have been assigned to women. Woman is heterogeneous. There is the notion that 'women's sexuality is much more one of a whole body, not so genital, not so phallic.' [Mitchell might have borrowed this concept from Cixous]

The carnival is disruptive of the law, but it disrupts only within the terms of that law. [In the carnival, disrespect is shown to the authority (church/king). But this disrespect

is always within certain parameters. The disrespect is only for a short duration and every participant is careful that carnival does not degenerate into anarchy or violence]

Mitchell says that the limitations imposed on Carnival is suggestive of the French school of feminism associated with Kristeva. The disruption intended by Kristeva is contained within the patriarchal symbolic [just like the carnival within the rules of the established order]. That is why Kristeva and her associates chose 'exclusively masculine texts' and even 'proto-fascist' writings for expounding their ideas. Hence, according to Mitchell, Kristeva and her school were operating within the patriarchal narrative while illustrating feminist ideas.

PSYCHOANALYTIC READING OF *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

Emily Bronte is not writing a 'carnivalesque query'to the patriarchal order.She is writing with the terms of a language which has been defined as phallocentric.

Yet she is posing questions about patriarchal organization through 'a kind of irony'.

This questions

1. Who tells the story?

[Bronte's manuscript was stolen from her and presented to a publisher by her sister, Charlotte.It was eventually published under a male pseudonym:Ellis Bell]

2. The author is a woman, writing a private novel; she is published as a man, and 'acquires some fame and notoriety'.

3. She uses two narratives——a man, Lockwood, and a woman, the nurse, Nelly Dean. The whole novel is structured through these two narrators.

4. Lockwood is a parody of the romantic male lover. He is set up as a foppish [dandy, very much concerned with appearances] gentleman from the town. He is supposed to be in love with all the things the romantic gentleman is 'supposed' to love—soliture, 'heart of gold beneath a fierce exterior' etc

5. Lockwood's romantic pretensions are criticized from within the novel, particularly through the character of Isabella. Isabella thinks that Heathcliff is a dark, romantic Gothic hero, who will prove to be a gentleman beneath all his cruelty.

THE STORY OF BISEXUALITY

The story of Catherine and Heathcliff is a story of bisexuality. It is the story of the 'hysteric'. Catherine's father had promised that he would bring her a whip. Instead he brought a fatherless gypsy child. The child is given the name Heathcliff, the name of the brother of Catherine who had died in infancy. Catherine looks in her father's pocket. Instead of getting the whip she gets a brother/lover, Heathcliff.

For the rest of her life, Catherine wants nothing but Heathcliff. She makes a conventional feminine choice and marries Edgar Linton with whom she can never feel united. They have a child, the birth of which marks the death of Catherine.

Catherine wants to be 'one' with Heathcliff. She breaks the incest taboo: 'I am Heathcliff, he's more myself than I am'. Heathcliff says the same about Catherine. This 'oneness' is the opposite of 'heterogeneity'. 'This oneness comes only with death. Catherine dies and haunts Heathcliff for twenty years. Heathcliff goes on living with the hope of becoming one with Catherine. He dies getting back to her. 'Oneness' is the symbolic notion of what happens before the symbolic. It is 'death and has to be death'.

The choices for the women within the novel, within fiction, are either to survive by making the hysteric's ambiguous choice into femininity which doesn't work (marriage with Linton) or to go for oneness and unity, by suffering death (walking the moors as a ghost with Heathcliff)

CONCLUSION

The novel arose as the form in which 'women had to construct themselves as women within new social structures'.

The woman novelist is 'necessarily the hysteric wanting to repudiate the symbolic definition of sexual difference under patriarchal law'. She is 'unable to do so because without madness we are all unable to do so'.

[The woman novelist is trying to reject the sexual differences imposed by patriarchy. Both Freud and Lacan identified an Oedipal stage in the development of a child when it becomes aware of the difference between masculine and not masculine (feminine). Here the point to be noted is that women throughout history is defined in relation to man and not as an independent entity. She is always the negative (what man is not). The woman novelist cannot break the shackles of patriarchy because she is a woman living in a patriarchal society which thinks of women as hysterical. [irrational, bound to fluctuating moods and temperament, etc.] The novelist has to cater to the needs of the public which is mainly patriarchal. In writing about her experiences, a woman novelist has to fit into the straight jacket which Society had designed for her].

Writing from within the position of a woman (assigned by patriarchy) a woman novelist can be conformist (for example: Mills and Boons romantic novels). Else she can be critical (as in *Wuthering Heights*)

The novel starts at a point where society is in a state of flux. The subject is in the process of becoming a woman or man, as we understand those identities today.

[In the 17th and 18th centuries when the novel form began to crystallise, western society was in a state of unrest. The progress of science was gradually undermining established notions about Man/Woman. The Age of Enlightenment was at hand and the modern Man/Woman was evolving slowly from the shadows of superstion and blind beliefs. Along with this monarchy was losing its hold on the people and democratic principles were gaining ground. Thus, the novel form reflected the aspirations of the rising middle classes who were in the process of becoming.]

Now Mitchell is asking a puzzling question:

'If we are today again talking about a type of literary criticism, about a type of text where the subject is not formed under a symbolic law, but within what is seen as a heterogeneous area of the subject-in-process, I would like to end with asking a question: *in the process of becoming what*?

[Novel in the 18th century indicated a process of becoming. Mitchell is asking about the process of becoming that is taking place in modern literary criticism. Does

the heterogeneous area_which modern feminism celebrate indicate a 'subject-in progress'? If it is a process as is claimed by some feminists, then '*of becoming what"*? The answer to these questions are highly subjective as well as ambigous and Mitchell leaves them as such.

It is not possible to live as human subjects without 'taking on a history'. [Man/Woman needs a historical background to survive. Human beings are rational creations who can think about their past or future. Aritotelianism viewed man as rational animal (animal rationale) capable of historical sense whereas plants have only nutritive lives and animals' instinctual lives. Deliberative imagination is man's defining feature.]

Man's history is mainly the history of being men or women under 'bourgeois capitalism'.

If we deconstruct that history, we have to create other histories. When we do that 'What are we in the process of becoming?'

Thus Mitchell ends this speech with a question for which no rational answer is available.

10.5 LET US SOME UP

Mitchell is a feminist as well as a psychoanalyst.

The psychoanalytic theory, from Freud's original ideas through Jacques Lacan and the 'French feminists' like Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva was a stimulating intellecutal influence on Feminist ideology. However, in the mid-20th century several feminists were skeptical about the use of psychoanalysis to advance their cause. The main reason for this skepticism was the perception that Freud was a misogynist whose concept of 'penis envy' was designed to keep women under eternal subservience. But critics like Mitchell saw in Freud new opportunities for grasping the depth of gender and sexual identities (questions like 'What it means to be a woman'? became relevant)Mitchell believed that abandoning Freud is disadvantageous for women since Freud's work was a critical analysis of patriarchism.Mitchell believed that the cultural practice of ancient societies

(such as the exchange of women in marriage) commodified women. But at the same time enhanced their value as 'exchange objects'.

The female is suffering from 'penis envy'—the anxiety about her 'lack'. The male is anxious about losing it through castration. Mitchell argues that the castration never actually takes place in any societies. It is only imaginary or symbolic. The definitions of masculinity and femininity are constructed through the symbolic. Here man is the autonomous agent and woman is the lacking other. Gender is thus a cultural construct.The gender divide is created as a fantasy to explain the discovery of genital difference. It is a socially conditioned fantasy. Man sees and believes himself as a unified whole because the feminine is always a lack which is knowable. Thus, the feminine is a guarantor of male fantasy.Late capitalism glorified male-centered family life. Thus, the gender divide and consequent subjugation of women are related to the compulsions of capitalist enterprise.

10.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) "bourgeois capitalism' defines man's history as the history of

a) Being sensible
b) Being human
c) Being man and women
d) Being genderless

2) which of the following novel of Emily Bronte is taken by Judith Michell for examination in this work

a)*Jane Eyre*
b) *Emma*
c) *Pride and Prejudice*
d) *Wuthering Heights*

10.7 REFERENCES

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9.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) **Freud has created difficulty in valuing interpretation not based on the priority of**

a) Physiological factor

b) Phytology factor

c) Psychological factor.

d) Pathology factor

2) **Hartman's analysis of Wordsworth's poems highlighting the sustaining power of language and**

a) The poet's Euphemia.

b) The poet's Eroumiya

c) The poet's Ethipia

d) The poet's Etropima

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