



NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

STUDY MATERIAL

PGELT

PAPER 5

Modules 1, 2, 3, 4

POST GRADUATE



PREFACE

In the curricular structure introduced by this University for students of Post-Graduate degree programme, the opportunity to pursue Post-graduate course introduced by this University is equally available to all learners in Subject by any presumption about ability level, it would perhaps be guided a learner is judged in the course of the learning process. The receptivity of with the objectives of open education which does not believe in artificial differentiation.

Keeping this in view, study materials of the Post-Graduate level in different subjects are being prepared on the basis of a well laid-out syllabus. The course structure combines the best elements in the approved syllabi of Central and State Universities in respective subjects. It has been so designed as to be upgradable with the addition of new information as well as results of fresh thinking and analyses.

The accepted methodology of distance education has been followed in the preparation of these study materials. Co-operation in every form of experienced scholars is indispensable for a work of this kind. We, therefore, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to everyone whose tireless efforts went into the writing, editing and devising of proper lay-out of the materials. Practically speaking, their role amounts to an involvement in invisible teaching. For, whoever makes use of these study materials would virtually derive the benefit of learning under their collective care without each being seen by the other.

The more a learner would seriously pursue these study materials the easier it will be for him or her to reach out to larger horizons of a subject. Care has also been taken to make the language lucid and presentation attractive so that they may be rated as quality self-learning materials. If anything remains still obscure or difficult to follow, arrangements are there to come to terms with them through the counselling sessions regularly available at the network of study centres set up by the University.

Needless to add, a great part of these efforts is still experimental—in fact, pioneering in certain areas. Naturally, there is every possibility of some lapse or deficiency here and there. However, these to admit of rectification and further improvement in due course. On the whole, therefore, these study materials are expected to evoke wider appreciation the more they receive serious attention of all concerned.

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Vice-Chancellor

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Post Graduate : English Language Teaching

(PG : ELT)

Paper - 5

Modules – 1, 2, 3 & 4

Literary Theories and Practical Application

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UNIT 1 □ RECEPTION THEORY AND READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM

Structure

1.0 Objective

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Reception Vs. Marxist and Formalist Criticism

1.3 Horizon of Expectations

1.4 Liberating function of literature

1.5 Application of the Interpretative Approach

1.6 Woolf/gangiser—An Introduction

1.7 Indeterminacy

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1.9 Affective Stylistics—Stanley Fish

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit you will be introduced to some general as well as specific concepts related to Reception theory and Reader Response criticism. An attempt has been made to offer a comprehensive overview of the theory including the theorists and their theoretical considerations in respect of Reader Response to works of literature. This unit will also help you recall some of the concepts covered in *theories of reading* in Part I of your M.A. ELT course.

It is expected that you will

- (a) read and understand the rationale for the theories
- (b) apply the concepts to the responses observed in a reader and in his/her contribution to the interpretation of the text
- (c) analyse tasks that develop a reader's literary sensibilities and
- (d) be better equipped to teach literary and non-literary texts at different levels

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The development in Britain and America of a theorised historical interpretation

has been paralleled to some extent in Germany by the work of a group of critics based at the University of Konstanz, although their concern is more with literary history than with the relation between literature and social and political history. The approach of these critics has come to be known in the English-speaking world as **reception theory**, with Hans Robert Jauss being generally regarded as its most important representative. Gadamerian ideas, particularly his positive acceptance of the hermeneutic circle, underlay some of the theoretical assumptions of a new historicist such as Stephen Greenblatt. Gadamer is a powerful and more direct influence on Jauss, who is one of his former pupils. But whereas, Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' is implicitly rejected by new historicists and cultural materialists it is crucial to Jauss's work.

Another basic difference relates to aesthetics. Although the major concern of cultural materialism and the new historicism has been with canonic works of literature, with the plays of Shakespeare being given particular attention, there has been a strong tendency to deny literary texts special status and to see them as being on the same level as non-literary texts. But aesthetics remains fundamental for reception theory. For reception theory questions of meaning and interpretation cannot be separated from such literary considerations as the special nature of poetic language and literary form.

1.2 RECEPTION VS MARXIST & FORMALIST CRITICISM

Jauss's most influential essay is entitled 'Literary history as a challenge [*Provokation*] to literary theory'. Adopting a communication model in which the receiver of a message is as important as the sender, Jauss argues that the literary work exists only when it has been re-created or 'concretised' in the mind of its reader. Both the role of the author of the work and the work as an object in itself are less important for Jauss than the work's reception or impact. The work also cannot be legitimately confined to the period which produced it since it continues to affect later generations of readers, nor can it simply be appropriated by modern readers as transcending its own time. Jauss sees the Marxist theory of reflection as inadequate because the literary work is consigned to 'a merely *copying* function', whereas in his view it continues to live through its influence, and thus can have a formative effect on history. Formalist criticism - and for Jauss this means primarily and somewhat limitedly Shklovsky's concept of '*defamiliarisation*', by which literary forms and styles need to renew themselves continually in an effort to resist 'automatization' - is also inadequate because it does not 'see the work of art in *history*, that is, in the historical horizon of its origination, social function, and historical influence'.

Jauss attempts to create a new kind of literary history which can accommodate both Marxist and Formalist criticism through focus on the reception and influence of the literary work. He sees the relation between the work and its succession of audiences as 'dialogical' at both the aesthetic and the historical levels:

The aesthetic implication lies in the fact that the first reception of a work by the reader includes a test of its aesthetic value in comparison with works already read. The obvious historical implication of this is that the understanding of the first reader will be sustained and enriched in a chain of receptions from generation to generation; in this way the historical significance of a work will be decided and its aesthetic value made evident.

1.3 HORIZON OF EXPECTATIONS

The concept of a 'horizon of expectations' is central to Jauss's thinking. All readers read literary works with certain expectations derived from reading other works, especially works in the same genre. Whereas works of little literary interest will, tend to conform to the original reader's expectations and thus remain within his or her horizon, the literary work will disrupt or undermine these expectations and thus cannot be accommodated within that horizon.

This last point explains why Jauss places such great emphasis on reception. In the course of time literary works which were not reconcilable with their original audience's, horizon of expectations become assimilated by the literary culture and conform with rather than disrupt their readers' expectations. If these works are to retain their power as literature - defined by Jauss as works 'whose reception can result in a "change of horizons" through negation of familiar experiences or through raising newly articulated experiences to the level of consciousness' (TA, 25) - modern readers have to make an effort to recover and experience the original reception of these works. Consequently 'it requires a special effort to read them "against the grain" of the accustomed experience to catch sight of their artistic character once again' (TA, 26). Thus an aesthetics of reception "demands that one insert the individual work into its "literary series" to recognize its historical position and significance in the context of the experience of literature' (TA, 32). In order to know why a particular text was not within the horizon of its original audience's expectations, one needs to know what expectations that audience, had and why it had them, which entails making connections between art and ideology, though this point is only implied by Jauss:

The- new is thus not only an aesthetic category . . . [it] also becomes a historical category when the diachronic analysis of literature is pushed further to ask which

historical moments are really the ones that first make new that which is new in a literary phenomenon. (TA, 35)

At the end of the essay Jauss discusses wider questions concerning the social and existential functions of literature. He argues that

The social function of literature manifests itself in its genuine possibility only where the literary experience of the reader enters into the horizon of expectations of his lived praxis, performs his understanding of the world, and thereby also has an effect on his social behavior. (TA, 39)

1.4 LIBERATING FUNCTION OF LITERATURE

For Jauss literature has a liberating function: 'The experience of reading can liberate one from adaptations, prejudices, and predicaments of a lived praxis in that it compels one to a new perception of things' (TA, 41), with the result that 'a literary work with an unfamiliar aesthetic form can break through the expectations of its readers and at the same time confront them with a question, the solution to which remains lacking for them in the religiously or officially sanctioned morals' (TA, 44). Literary history can thus bridge the gap between 'aesthetic and historical knowledge' by discovering 'in the course of "literary evolution" that properly *socially formative* function that belongs to literature as it competes with other arts and social forces in the emancipation of mankind from its natural, religious, and social bonds' (TA, 45).

Both cultural materialism and the new historicism can also be related to a philosophy of liberation. The role of the critic is to show this conflict taking place within specific texts so that both literature and criticism can become the means of furthering social change. But whereas this philosophy of liberation is social and political Jauss's is centred on the individual consciousness. In his later work he connects the pleasure of reading, which happens at the level of the individual, with human freedom since there is no necessity to read literary texts. Reading literature is therefore a free act in which one confronts texts which by definition question or undermine dominant ideologies.

An obvious problem with Jauss's theory is whether it applies to all periods of literature. Certain major works of literature - Virgil's *Aeneid* would be an example - would appear to have the function of reinforcing the official ideology and there is little or no evidence to suggest that they were not read in that way. Cultural materialists and new historicists, with their theory of society as a struggle for power, can nevertheless discern conflict and division within such literature even though authors and readers may not have been aware of this, it would seem necessary to

Jauss's theory, however, that actual contemporary readers experienced a literary work intended to reinforce the dominant ideology as subverting their expectations, an idea that does not seem particularly persuasive. A possible defence of Jauss is that in such cases the horizon of expectations should be understood as referring primarily to the formal aspect of literature, and that even literary works which ostensibly reinforce the official ideologies of their cultures at a semantic level create a style or a formal structure which conflicts with the audience's horizon of expectations. These stylistic and formal features, when interpreted by literary historians, can be shown to have a semantic significance, which original readers may not have been able to conceptualise, in conflict with the work's apparent meaning. It is doubtful, however, whether this defence would work for the literature of every period, especially in certain non-Western cultures, and a critic like Jameson would no doubt argue that stylistic and formal innovations can also have the function of providing only a more subtle or devious support for dominant ideologies.

Although Jauss sees some similarities between reception theory and structuralism and semiotics, all of which are concerned with poetics, an important difference is that interpretation of individual texts remains central in reception theory. But the aim of interpretation is not 'the tracing of a text back to its "statement", to a significance hidden behind it, or to its objective meaning'; rather 'the meaning of a text [is] a convergence of the structure of the work and the structure of the interpretation which is ever to be achieved anew'.¹ However, he does not view literary texts as different in kind from other texts in regard to how they should be interpreted. Interpretation is tri-partite, consisting of understanding (*intellegere*), interpretation or explanation (*interpretare*) and application (*applicare*), with the question one asks of a text being integrally connected with any meaning one derives from it. This is a traditional approach to interpretation which Jauss gives Gadamer the credit of reviving after it had been discarded in favour of positivist and historicist alternatives. One must understand the literary text at a *semantic* and *aesthetic* level, explain or interpret it, and then apply that reading in a particular context. These three activities are interconnected since the application will determine the form of the explanation and understanding cannot be entirely dissociated from explanation:

Application includes both acts of understanding and interpretation insofar as it represents the interest in transporting the text out of its past or foreignness and into the interpreter's present, in finding the question to which the text has an answer ready for the interpreter, in forming an aesthetic judgment of the text which could also persuade other interpreters.'

Although applications are without limit, Jauss denies that there is any danger of subjectivism since the connection with the text's original reception is maintained

and the appeal to aesthetic judgement encourages intersubjectivity. He argues that treating the text as an object separated from history is much more likely to encourage subjectivism.

1.5 APPLICATION OF THE INTERPRETATIVE APPROACH

Jauss applies his interpretative approach to a poem by Baudelaire, 'Spleen II'. There are three horizons of reading corresponding to the three aspects of interpretation described above, although Jauss believes some adaptation of Gadamer's model is necessary to deal with 'texts of an aesthetic character' (TA, 140). The first horizon consists of 'immediate understanding within aesthetic perception', the second 'reflective interpretation' (TA, 141) arising from that. With the poetic text 'aesthetic understanding is primarily directed at the process of perception' (TA, 141), a process that often requires repeated readings. The second interpretative phase 'always presupposes aesthetic perception as its pre-understanding' (TA, 142). Jauss believes that his interpretative method can combine structuralist and semiotic analysis - integral to the first horizon - with the phenomenological and hermeneutic forms of interpretation integral to the second. Jauss objects to traditional historical interpretation or, as he calls it) 'historical-philological hermeneutics', on the grounds that the interpreter has to dismiss his or her own historicity and seek a purely objective meaning in the text while also privileging the historical over the aesthetic. For Jauss the aesthetic is crucial because it acts as a 'hermeneutic bridge' to the past through works which continue to be accessible in a fully human way, something lacking, he argues, in conventional historical documents or relics. But the historical aspect of the literary text is equally important since it 'prevents the text from the past from being naively assimilated' to the prejudices and expectations of meaning of the present, and therebyallows the poetic text to be seen in its alterity' (TA, 146). Thus the interpreter must seek out 'the questions (most often unexplicit ones) to which the text was a response in its time' (TA, 146), and connect these with the original audience's horizon of expectations at the level of both form and meaning. But the interpreter must also ask questions of the text from his or her own historical perspective: ' "What did the text say?" 'becomes transformed into' "What does the text say to me, and what do I say to it?"

Jauss's literary hermeneutics is open to attack from 'new pragmatists' like Knapp and Michaels on the grounds that since interpretation makes no sense unless it assumes texts are the product of human intention, it can only be historical in its basis. Jauss's assumption that one can choose to reject a text's historicity, even if only partially, in interpreting is therefore incoherent. It follows that differences among interpreters - such as traditionalists, Barthes, Jauss - derive not from their possessing

different theories of interpretation but from their opposed views about whether or not the modern interpreter can escape his or her historical situation when interpreting texts written in the past. Traditional historicists believe one can, Barthes thinks one cannot, and Jauss that a 'fusion of horizons' takes place. But all of them must attempt to interpret texts as historical and intentional products otherwise, Knapp and Michaels would argue, their interpretative activities are meaningless.

When Jauss looks in detail at the Baudelaire poem, he discusses its formal coherence and stylistic patterning in the first stage of interpretation. At the second stage he connects the formal and thematic levels and emphasises how the poem's use of allegory brings together form and meaning. The function of such phrases as 'Je suis un cimetiere' and 'Je suis un boudoir' is 'to make visible the overpowering of the self through the alien, or (as one may now put it) the ego through the id' (TA, 168). The last part of that comment, with its Freudian connotations, reveals Jauss's concern to make the poem relevant to the reality of its modern reader. In discussing the third horizon of interpretation, the history of the poem's reception, Jauss deals with the responses of a number of critics. Initially, he says, one wants to ask such questions as the following: 'Which expectations on the part of its contemporary readers can this "Spleen" poem have fulfilled or denied? What was the literary tradition, and what was the historical and social situation, with which the text might have come to have a relation?' (TA> 170).

Jauss recognises that a materialist reading might want to go further than looking at the response of a 'perceptive eyewitness and relate the poem to historical processes and conditions, but Jauss believes this would be possible only through resorting to allegory, or as Jauss puts it, 'the method of allegoresis' (TA, 172), which cannot be dissociated from the subjectivity and partiality of the interpreter. Jauss would rather stress the poem's break with Romanticism and its anticipations of psychoanalysis which make Baudelaire 'the poet of modernity' (TA, 174).

He goes on to discuss the responses of various later commentators, which illuminate both the poem and the cultural interests of these commentators. In looking at the history of a work's reception, one should not, he argues, be primarily concerned with showing that certain interpretations are wrong. An interpretation can be judged to be wrong if it asks 'falsely posed or illegitimate questions' of the work: 'questions are legitimate when their role as initial comprehensions for the sake of interpretation is borne out in the text' (TA, 185). The different responses which create 'the historically progressive concretization of meaning in the struggle of interpretation' testify to 'the unifiability of legitimate questions' (TA, 185), and unposed questions give scope for future interpretation.

One can suggest that there is an underlying idealism in Jauss's conception of history, that his interest is not in what is historically representative or typical but in past responses themselves, which may or may not be interesting from a modern point of view.

1.6 WOLFGANG ISER — AN INTRODUCTION

Jauss's work has been less discussed in the English-speaking world than that of the other major reception theorist, Wolfgang Iser. The major difference between Jauss and Iser is that with Iser the emphasis is more on the reading process than on a work's historical reception. Like Jauss, Iser rejects interpretation as the discovery of an objective meaning or hidden significance in the text: 'If texts actually possessed only the meaning brought to light by interpretation, then there would remain very little else for the reader.' "The meaning of the text" claims Iser, 'is in itself nothing more than an individual reading experience which has now simply been identified with the text itself. The New Criticism had used interpretation to reveal meanings hidden in the text, but Iser objects: 'one cannot help wondering why texts should indulge in such a "hide-and-seek" with their interpreters; and even more puzzling, why the meaning, once it has been found, should then change again, even though the letters, words and sentences of the text remain the same.' The critic should renounce the search for meaning, recognise that any reading is only one of the possible realizations of a text', and admit that meanings 'are the product of a rather difficult interaction between text and reader and not qualities hidden in the text'.

The critic's object, therefore, should be 'not to explain a work, but to reveal the conditions that bring about its various possible effects. If he clarifies the *potential* of a text, he will no longer fall into the fatal trap of trying to impose one meaning on his reader, as if that were the right, or at least the best interpretation'. Literary texts, Iser believes, possess a plurality of meanings but that plurality is not produced by the text as such but by the text's interaction with its readers. Iser, like Jauss, emphasises, the reader's expectations, the various norms and codes which the reader brings to the text but which the text negates or calls into question. This entails that the sender's imagination is brought into play in the process of reading rather than merely passively consuming the text. His main departure from Ingarden is that whereas for Ingarden concretisation - the reader's need to complete or fill out what Ingarden calls the 'schematised structure' of the text - functions in terms of an aesthetic of artistic unity and harmony, for Iser concretisation does not involve eliminating the indeterminacies in the text, the gaps and blanks that exist between the text's various schematic layers. Such textual indeterminacy is central to Iser's conception of aesthetics.

1.7 INDETERMINACY

"Rene Wellek had pointed to a relationship between Ingarden's phenomenological criticism and New Critical organicist aesthetics, but Iser connects it with Russian Formalism since he argues that the reader's encounter with the text's indeterminacies is defamiliarising. Reading is conceived of as a dynamic process in which the norms and codes that govern the reader's thinking and perception may be called into question by having to confront textual gaps and blanks, thus making it possible for reading literature to be liberating. But as with Jauss, such liberation operates at the individual rather than the social level.

Iser's theory implies that indeterminacy must exist as a potential of the text as object although it is activated only during the process of reading. The ability of the text to communicate also depends on indeterminacy:

There are ... two basic structures of indeterminacy in the text -blanks, and negations. These are essential conditions for communication, for they set in motion the interaction that takes place between text and reader, and to a certain extent they also regulate it. (*The Act of Reading (AR)*, 182)

The reader's relation to the text assumes 'connectability' but blanks 'break up this connectability' (*AR*, 183). Connectability relates both to text and to reader since it is intrinsic to the text as a structure 'and can be equated with the concept of *good continuation* used in the psychology of perception' (*AR*, 185). Iser uses Fielding's *Tom Jones* to provide an example of a textual blank:

When Captain Blifil deceives Airworthy, the interlinking segments of two different character perspectives give rise to the idea that the perfect man lacks discernment because he trusts in appearances. But this image in reading we should be flexible and open-minded, prepared to put our beliefs into question and allow them to be transformed.' He claims that Iser's good reader 'would *already* have to be a liberal: the act of reading produces a kind of human subject which it also pre-supposes'.

1.8 READER-RESPONSE CRITICISM

(i) Norman Holland

There are also significant differences between reception theory and reader-response criticism in the work of Norman N. Holland and Stanley Fish. In a critique of Iser, Holland, a psychoanalytic critic in the 'ego-psychology' tradition, argues that although the role of the reader is given great emphasis in reception theory, Iser does

not discuss the responses of actual readers to literary texts. Holland believes that Iser's concept of the 'implied reader', a term which 'incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process,' has little substance if it does not take account in empirical terms of real readers' responses. He defines Iser's model in which 'a sequence of schemata in the text stimulates us 'as *'bi-active'*. Holland contrasts this model in which the text controls the reader's responses to it with his *'transactive'* model. In soon has to be abandoned, when Tom sells the horse Allworthy has given him. The two pedagogues are horrified by the obvious baseness of such a deed, but Allworthy forgives Tom because, despite appearances, he discerns the good motive underlying the action

Thus the idea of the perfect man lacking in discernment is proved to be wrong, and the original image has to be abandoned; the new image is of the perfect man who lacks the ability, necessary for good judgment, to abstract himself from his own attitudes. (AR, 186)

Blanks in the text, 'by suspending the *good continuation*, condition the clash of images, and so help to hinder (and, at the same time, to stimulate) the process of image-building. It is this process that endows them with their aesthetic significance' (AR, 187). Negations create more fundamental dislocations, so that the reader 'is blocked off from familiar orientations, but cannot yet gain access to unaccustomed attitudes' (AR, 213).

1.9 SOME DIFFICULTIES

As with Jausa a difficulty for Iser's theory arises in relation to those texts written before the modern period. A related problem is that repeated readings of a work would seem to reduce its *indeterminacy* and thus diminish its aesthetic interest, Iser might counter such arguments by utilising Jaus's reception theory to situate texts historically by relating them to their original readers' expectations and thus revealing indeterminacies in the reader-text interaction which might not be apparent from a modern point of view. He might also argue that his theory can account for readers losing interest in certain works because they are no longer able to experience a sufficient degree of indeterminacy in their reading of them. But in general, certain texts from earlier eras, particularly the classical and medieval periods, would seem to place Iser's theory under some strain.

In focusing on gaps, blanks, negations in the text, Iser's theory has certain similarities to that of Macherey but, in contrast to Iser, Macherey sees gaps in the text not in relation to the reader's consciousness or to aesthetic experience but as

symptoms of a repressed history which the text's ideology endeavours to conceal and which the critic should be concerned to expose. This reveals a fundamental difference of view about the function of literature. Terry Eagleton attacks Iser in the following terms: 'Iser's reception theory, in fact, is based on a liberal humanist ideology: a belief that both traditional criticism and the New Criticism, which

assumes that there is a normal response to a text, which the text itself causes . . . simply does not fit what we know of human perception: namely, that perception is a constructive act in which we impose schemata from our minds on the data of our senses. ('RP', 364)

A 'bi-active' theory, such as Iser's reception theory or Stanley Fish's affective stylistics, 'in which a text and its literent (reader, viewer, or hearer) act together to cause the response' ('RP', 365), is a great advance but still has two difficulties for Holland: 'First, it is really two theories, a new theory of reader activity plus the old text-active theory in which the text does something to the reader', and secondly, it is not borne out by perception theory: 'I do not first see the lines and then decide that I will interpret them as though they were perspectives of rectangles. I do it all in one continuous transaction. I never see the lines without a schema for seeing them' ('RP', 366).

Holland claims that if readers' free responses to texts are collected they have virtually nothing in common and that where shared responses exist they are created by such factors as the authority of teachers. Readers should accept interpretation as a personal transaction between the reader's 'unique identity' and the text. Such a transactive theory of reading fits in with contemporary psychological theory. One can then go on to use psychoanalytic concepts such as identity to 'connect literary transactions to personality' ('RP', 367). Holland also argues that this does not lead to relativism but to intersubjectivity: 'I can give you my feelings and associations and let you pass them through the story for yourself to see if they enrich your experience' ('RP', 368). Whereas orthodox critics resist the knowledge that we all read differently, the transactive critic embraces the truth with joy.

The objection to his theory Holland claims he is most often confronted with is that it has the consequence that every reading of a text becomes totally subjective. The term 'subjective' does not trouble him but he denies that for him interpretation is purely random. But whereas for Iser the text exerts controls, for Holland the controls exist within the reader. Fundamental to his view of the in which the reader both initiates and creates the response. In Holland's version of reader-response criticism reading is a personal transaction of the reader with the text in which there is no fundamental division between the text's role and the reader's role.

Holland goes on to reflect theoretically on his interpretative practice. In transactive criticism 'the critic works explicitly from his transaction of the text', but he is different from other critics only in that he accepts that the critic has no other choice and 'explicitly builds on his relationship to the text' ('RP', 363). Fundamental to the model of reading that emerges from this is the fact that although the text is the same for everybody 'everyone responds to it differently' Iser's concept of the implied reader tries to eliminate the reader's personal associations, Holland accepts them.

Another view that was rejected was that the language of literature was fundamentally different from that of other discourses: 'while literature is still a category, it is an open category, not definable by its fictionality, or by a disregard of prepositional truth, or by a predominance of tropes and figures, but simply by what we decide to put into it' (IT, 11). Thus 'it is the reader who *makes* literature' (IT 11), but the reader has power to 'make' literature only when he or she is part of a community of readers. This led on to the view that the distinction between *text* and *reader* should be abandoned since neither had independent status: 'interpretive strategies are not put into execution after reading: they are the shape of reading, and because they are the shape of reading, they give texts their shape is therefore likely to be centred so much on the validity or invalidity of different psychoanalytical theories that any secure application to literary texts will be perpetually deferred.

1.9 AFFECTIVE STYLISTICS

STANLEY FISH

Stanley Fish is the leading exponent of 'affective stylistics', which Holland characterises as a 'bi-active' theory. It is doubtful whether Fish, at least from his most recent theoretical position, -would accept that affective stylistics as a form of interpretation is a bi-active theory. Virtually all of the contemporary critics have seen themselves as combining theory and practice in their criticism, but Fish has argued that theory and practice should be seen as quite separate activities since he believes that theory has no consequences. Looking at Fish's career, what one sees is a series of developments at the theoretical level but a continuing commitment to affective stylistics as a form of interpretative practice. Change at the theoretical level, however, has led to a different view of and justification for that practice.

Fish gives a useful account of affective stylistics and the development of his theoretical position in the introduction to his book, *Is There a Text in This Class?*. Affective stylistics shifts the literary focus from text to reader, and Fish admits that in the beginning he saw the text as an entity separate from the reader, a position

similar to that of Iser. Fish's interest is in reading as a temporal process and in his early work he had to confront the New Critics' dismissal of the subjectivity of the reader by means of the 'affective fallacy' and their commitment to spatial form, the view that the language of the literary text should be seen as coexisting at a single temporal point rather than developing in time. He argues that meanings are actualised in the process of reading — that is, temporally — and thus emerge from the interaction between the text and 'the reader's expectations, projections, '(in)clusions, judgments, and assumptions but in such a way as to make it the vehicle of a deeper understanding'."

Another implication of Fish's view that practice and theory are separate is that one does not "need to read in the way that he does. Why one chooses to engage in one form of interpretation rather than another, depends not on a general theory of interpretation but largely on one's view of what the value of interpreting literature is. Fish has made it clear that it is reading as a human activity that he values and that he objects to the implied anti-humanism of formalist approaches. Related to that is the idea that the interaction between reader and text can cause the reader to question his or her most fundamental assumptions and expose deep-rooted self-interest. Thus discussing a passage from *Paradise Lost*, Book IV, lines 9-12, he writes:

the passage would seem to be assigning the responsibility of the Fall to Satan. . . . This understanding, however, must be revised when the reader enters line 12 and discovers that the loss in question is Satan's loss of Heaven. . . . The understanding that the reader must give up is one that is particularly attractive to him because it asserts the innocence of his first parents, which is, by extension, his innocence too.

Such experiences encourage the reader to reflect on his or her own responses, so that criticism and self-criticism become inseparable. Expectation must clearly be intrinsic to this process, but whereas for Iser the text is a virtual structure which can both arouse and undermine expectations, for Fish expectations are integral to the 'interpretive strategies' the reader brings to the text.

Fish has probably been attacked more than any other recent critic or theorist, particularly over his claims that the text has no separate existence from the reader and that theory has no consequences. Fish has, I think, successfully rebutted total rejections of his position, but his contention that the interpreter also 'writes' the text that he or she interprets is difficult to accept without qualification. To justify this view he recounts how a class he was teaching, which expected to deal with sev-

eighteenth-century English religious poetry, proceeded to read a list of names he happened to have written on the board for a previous class as a seventeenth-century religious poem. He concludes: 'Interpretation is not the art of construing but the art of constructing. Interpreters do not decode poems; they make them' making them rather than, as is usually assumed, arising from them' (IT, 13V). These 'interpretive strategies' are not purely subjective but proceed from 'interpretive communities', groups of readers who share the same 'interpretive strategies', thus Fish denies that his theory opens the door to subjectivism and relativism. He further claims that his theory is easily able to account for both agreement and disagreement about interpretation.

Much of Fish's theoretical work has been devoted to showing that both 'text-active' and 'bi-active' theories of interpretation, to use "Holland's terms, are incoherent and can be reformulated in Fishian terms. Thus in a critique of Iser he argues that Iser's distinction between the literary text as incorporating aesthetic directions or potentialities and the reader as actualising or producing the aesthetic-object in the process of encountering these is incoherent. Iser believes such blanks or gaps exist in the text itself even though they have to be actualised by the reader but Fish argues that it is Iser's 'interpretive strategies' which create the gaps he discovers in the text and concludes: 'if gaps are not built into the text, but appear (or do not appear) as a consequence of particular interpretive strategies, then there is no distinction between what the text gives and what the reader supplies; he supplies *everything*'.

But Fish attacks Iser only at the level of theory not at the level of his interpretative practice. Iser's critical approach reformulated in Fish's terms would presumably be quite acceptable, and indeed it has many similarities to Fish's own, since both are within the 'interpretive community' of reader-response criticism. Thus Iser's interest in gaps in the text can be compared with Fish's concern with dislocations in the reading process caused by premature closures of meaning. Reading as a temporal process is integral to both methods.

Fish is right when he argues that as soon as one enters into the discourse of interpretation, one is inevitably involved in preferring one reading to another on the basis of certain principles, but an effect of his emphasis on a literary institution divided into separate 'interpretive communities' which write the text by means of their 'interpretive strategies', together with his refusal to allow the text any degree of otherness, seem to me to encourage relativist and sceptical arguments that literary

interpretation is not a worthwhile activity because there is nothing 'other' to interpret.

The weakness of Fish's theoretical position is that it appears to suggest that the text cannot present any resistance to the reader, even if Fish denies that this is his intention. He never concedes that the language the reader encounters will already have been socially and historically constructed, and although there will be an interaction between the reader's interests and the socially and historically constructed words of the text which will modify the power of the-latter, the reader's power unless the reader is psychotic - to impose coining new terms and concepts and employing playful or oblique language, as discussed previously. Theoretical language has bequeathed to us the equivalent of dead metaphors - ideology, will to power, objective correlative - which are used as if their meaning was quite straightforward. Even Derrida has been unable to escape this process, for those attempting to explain and apply his work inevitably turn his theory into a set of beliefs. Thus theoretical terms coined by Derrida and other modern theorists - difference, trace, strategies of containment, interpretive communities - have suffered the same fate as older terms like 'ideology'.

The form of literary interpretation which has most powerfully challenged both the literary institution and the institutions of society in recent years is feminist criticism, many of whose advocates would reject ..any separation between theory and practice. Has feminist theory been able 'to guide and/or alter practice' or has it merely created another 'interpretive community' which has-taken its place among others within the literary institution?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- I. Choose a text of any kind- poetry, novel, short story or drama and read it. Once you have read a sizeable portion of the text, think over the issues listed below.
 - What actually happens when you read something?
 - Do you read just the words, larger grammatical units and sentences?
 - Do you interact with the text in any other way?
 - How do you derive the meaning? Discuss your observations with a friend.
 - Did your minds react in the same way?
- II.
 1. Why is Hans Robert Jauss considered one of the major proponents of the 'Reception Theory'?
 2. Explain 'horizon of expectations'.
 3. Explain the role of the 'reader' in the interpretative approach with reference to any particular poem.

4. What are some of the major areas of difference between the thinking of Jauss and that of Iser?
5. How does 'Affective Stylistics' shift its literary focus from the text to the reader?
6. What are some of the major weaknesses of
 - (a) the views of Stanley Fish
 - (b) the views of Wolfgang Iser?

REFERENCE :

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UNIT 2 □ STRUCTURALISM

Structure

2.0 Objective

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Saussure and Other critics

2.2.1 Stop and Think A

2.3 The scope of Structuralism

2.4 What Structuralists do

2.5 Structuralist Criticism, Examples

2.5.1 The Five codes

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2.5.3 Stop and Think C

2.5.4 Stop and Think D

2.5.5 Comments and Summary

2.6 Questions

2.7 Selected reading

2.0 OBJECTIVE

In this unit we want to introduce you to some general as well as some specific concepts related to the Structuralist theory and Literary criticism. We have tried to give you a comprehensive overview of the theory, involving the theorists and their influence and work on different world literature. The growth and proliferation of the Structuralist theory has been charted for you to have a better understanding of the theory. The Stop and Think modes will give you a clear comprehension of what you read. So shall we start with Structuralism?

2.1 INTRODUCTION

What is *STRUCTURALISM*?

Structuralism is an intellectual movement which began in France in the 1950s

and is first seen in the work of the anthropologist Claude Levi-Stratuss (1908) and the literary critic Roland Barthes (1915-1980). It is difficult to boil structuralism down to a single 'bottom-line' proposition, but if forced to do so I would say that its essence is the belief that things cannot be understood in isolation - they have to be seen in the context of the larger structures they are part of (hence the term 'structuralism'). Structuralism was imported into Britain mainly in the 1970s and attained widespread influence, and even notoriety, throughout the 1980s.

The structures in question here are those imposed by our way of perceiving the world and organising experience, rather than objective entities already existing in the external world. It follows from this that meaning or significance isn't a kind of core or essence *inside* things: rather, meaning is always *outside*. Meaning is always an attribute of things, in the literal sense that meanings are *attributed* to the things by the human mind, not contained within them. But let's try to be specific about what it might mean to think primarily in terms of structures when considering literature. Imagine that we are confronted with a poem, Donne's 'Good Morrow', let's say. Our immediate reaction as structuralists would probably be to insist that it can only be understood if we first have a clear notion of the genre which it parodies and subverts. Any single poem is an example of a particular genre, and the genre and the example relate to each other rather as a phrase spoken in English relates to the English language as a structure with all its rules, its conventions, and so on. In the case of Donne's poem the relevant genre is the *alba* or 'dawn song', a poetic form dating from the twelfth century in which lovers lament the approach of daybreak because it means that they must part.

But the *alba*, in turn, can hardly be understood without some notion of the concept of courtly love, and, further, the *alba*, being a poem, presupposes a knowledge of what is entailed in the conventionalised form as utterance known as poetry. These are just some of the cultural structures which Donne's poem is part of. You will see that your structuralist 'approach' to it is actually taking you further and further away from the text, and into large and comparatively abstract questions of genre, history, and philosophy, rather than closer and closer to it, as the Anglo-American tradition demands. Now if we use the crude analog of *alba*, courtly love, poetry itself as a cultural practice) as the chicken, and the individual example (Donne's poem in this case) as the egg. For structuralists, determining the precise nature of the chicken is the most important activity, while for the liberal humanists the close analysis of the egg is paramount.

Thus, in the structuralist approach to literature there is a constant movement away from the interpretation of the individual literary work and a parallel drive towards understanding the larger, abstract structures which contain them. These structures,

as i suggested at the start of this section, are usually abstract such as the notion of the literary or the poetic, or the nature of narrative itself, rather than 'mere' concrete specifics like the history of the *alba* or of courtly love, both of which, after all, we could quite easily find out about from conventional literary history. The arrival of structuralism in Britain and the USA in the 1970s caused a great deal of controversy, precisely because literary studies in these countries had traditionally had very little interest in large abstract issues of the kind structuralists wanted to raise. The so-called 'Cambridge revolution' in English studies in the 1920s, had promulgated the *opposite* to all this: it enjoined close study of the text in isolation from all wider structures and contexts: it was relentlessly 'text-based' and tended to exclude wider questions, abstract issues, and ideas. Structuralism in that sense turned English studies on its head, and devalued all that it had held dear for around half a century, asking long-repressed questions such as: what do we mean by 'literary'? 'How do narratives work?' 'What *is* a poetic structure?' Traditional critics, in a word, did not welcome the suggestion that they ought to switch their attention from eggs to chickens.

2.2 Ferdinand de Saussure—The father of the theory, and Others

Though structuralism proper began, as we said, in the 1950s and 1960s, it has its roots in the thinking of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1859-1913). Saussure was a key figure in the development of modern approaches to language study. In the nineteenth century linguistic scholars had mainly been interested in historical aspects of language (such as working out the historical development of languages and the connections between them, and speculating about the origins of language itself). Saussure concentrated instead on the patterns and functions of language in use today, with the emphasis on how meanings are maintained and established and on the functions of grammatical structures.

But what exactly did Saussure say about linguistic structures which the structuralists later found so interesting? This can be summarised as three pronouncements in particular. Firstly, he emphasised that the meanings we give to words are purely *arbitrary*, and that these meanings are maintained by convention only. Words, that is to say, are 'unmotivated signs', meaning that there is no inherent connection between a word and what it designates. The word 'hut', for instance, is not in any way 'appropriate' to its meaning, and all linguistic signs are arbitrary like this. (There is the minor exception of a small number of onomatopoeic words like 'cuckoo' and 'hiss', but even these vary between languages.) Insisting that linguistic signs are arbitrary is a fairly obvious point to make, perhaps, and it is not a new thing to say (Plato said it in Ancient Greek times), but it is a new concept to *emphasise* (which is always more important), and the structuralists were interested in the

implication that if language as a sign system is based on arbitrariness of this kind then it follows that language isn't a reflection of the world and of experience, but a system which stands quite separate from it. This point will 'be further developed later.

Secondly, Saussure emphasised that the meanings of words are (what we might call) *relational*. That is to say, no word can be defined in isolation from other words. The definition of my given word depends upon its relation with other 'adjoining' words. For example, that word 'hut' depends for its precise meaning on its position in a 'syntagmatic chain', that is, a chain of words related in function and meaning each of which could be substituted for any of the others in a given sentence. The syntagmatic chain in this case might include the following:

hotel shed hut house mansion palace

The meaning of any one of these words would be altered if any one of the others were removed from the chain. Thus, 'hut' and 'shed' are both small and basic structures, but they are not quite the same thing: one is primarily for shelter (a night-watchman's hut, for instance), while the other is primarily for storage: without the other, each would have to encompass *both* these meanings, and hence would be a different word. Likewise, a mansion can be defined as a dwelling which is bigger and grander than a mere house, hut not as big and grand as a palace. Thus, we define 'mansion' by explaining how its meaning relates to that of the two words on either side of it. If we have paired opposites then this mutually defining aspect of words is even more apparent: the terms 'male' and 'female', for example, mainly have meaning in relation to each other: each designates the absence of the characteristics included in the other, so that 'male' can be seen as mainly meaning 'not female', and vice versa. Similarly, we could have no concept of 'day' without the linked concept of 'night', no notion of 'good' without a 'bad' to define it against. This 'relational' aspect of language gave rise to a famous remark of Saussure's. 'In a language there are only differences, without fixed terms'. All words, then, exist in 'differencing networks', like these 'dyads', or paired opposites, and like the syntagmatic chain of 'dwelling place' words given earlier.

Saussure used a famous example to explain what he meant by saying that there are no intrinsic fixed meanings in language. What is it that gives a train its identity? It isn't anything material, since each day it will have a different engine and carriages, different drivers and passengers, and so on. If it is late, it won't even leave at 8.25. Does it even have to be a train? I once asked at Southampton station for the Brighton train, and the ticket collector pointed to a bus standing outside the station and said, 'That's it'. It was a Sunday, and because of engineering works on the line a bus service was being used to ferry passengers beyond the sections being worked upon.

Sometimes, then, a 'train' *doesn't* have to be a train. Saussure's conclusion is that the only thing which gives this train its identity is its position in a structure of differences: it comes *between* the 7.25 and the 9.25, that is, its identity is purely relational.

Thirdly, for Saussure, language *constitutes* our world, it doesn't just record it or label it. Meaning is always *attributed* to the object or idea by the human mind, and constructed by and expressed through language: it is not already contained within the thing. Well-known examples of this process would be the choice between paired alternatives like 'terrorist' or 'freedom fighter'. There is no neutral or objective way of designating such a person, merely a choice of two terms which 'construct' that person in certain ways. Another example of the same concept is seen in the two ways of referring to the domestic tax imposed in Britain by the Thatcher government: opponents of this tax called it the poll tax, evoking images of the Middle Ages and the Peasants' Revolt. The government itself called the tax the community charge, avoiding the negative word "tax" and making use of the favoured term 'community'. The term for this tax used by a given individual immediately indicated a political position, and, again, no neutral or 'objective' alternative was available. It has been said that there are three versions of every story, your version, my version, and the truth, but the case here is more complicated than that, since *all* the available terms are purely linguistic. There is no truth about these matters which exists securely outside language.

Whenever we look, we see language constituting the world in this way, not just reflecting it. For instance, the words for colours *make* a reality, they don't just name things which are 'there': the spectrum isn't divided into seven primary colours; all the colours merge into one another. So we might have had fourteen names rather than seven. Another example is the terms we give to the seasons of the year. We have four distinct names ('spring', 'summer', etc.), but actually the year runs continuously without any breaks or decisive changes. It isn't, in reality, divided into four. Why not have six seasons, or eight? Since change is continuous throughout the year the divisions could be made anywhere at all. The seasons, then, are a *way of seeing* the year, not an objective fact of nature. So Saussure's thinking stressed the way language is arbitrary, relational, and constitutive, and this way of thinking about language greatly influenced the structuralists, because it gave them a model of a system which is self-contained, in which individual items relate to other items and thus create larger structures.

One other distinction made by Saussure gave structuralists a way of thinking about the larger structures which were relevant to literature. He used the terms *langue* and *parole* to signify, respectively, language as a system or structure on the one hand,

and any given utterance in that language on the other. A particular remark in French (a sample of *parole*) only makes sense to you if you are already in possession of the whole body of rules and conventions governing verbal behaviour which we call 'French' (that is, the *langue*). The individual remark, then, is a discrete item which only makes sense when seen in relation to a wider containing structure, in the classic structuralist manner. Now, structuralists make use of the *langue/parole* distinction by seeing the individual literary work (the novel *Middlemarch*, let's say) as an example of a literary *parole*. It too only makes sense in the context of some wider containing structure. So the *langue* which relates to the *parole* *Middlemarch* is the notion of the novel as a genre, as a body of literary practice.

2.1.1. STOP and THINK

Consider some of the points made so far in this section about language.

Firstly, can you think of other examples of language constituting reality, rather than merely naming something which is already there? Your examples may be of a similar type to those mentioned above ('freedom fighter', 'poll tax', the seasons). You may also like to consider the significance in this context of those "speech acts" which are known as 'performatives', that is, the kind of utterance which is the reality it designates, such as making a promise ('I promise to tell him') or formally opening some new facility ('I now declare this bridge opened').

Secondly, can you see any flaws in the line of argument about language and reality put forward by Saussure? For instance, does it make sense to posit a category of pure difference? Do you see any force in the counter-view once put forward by the critic Christopher Ricks, that you can't just have difference, you have to have difference between things? (See his article 'In Theory' in *London Review of Books*, April 1981, pp. 3-6.) If you accepted Ricks's argument, and agreed that you can only have difference between things, what implications would this have for the Saussurean argument that languages have only differences, without fixed terms?

Thirdly, are you convinced by that train? Is its position in the timetable really the *only* thing which gives it its identity? Saussure supplements the example with another one:

Why can a street be completely rebuilt and still be the same? Because it does not constitute a purely material entity, it is based on certain conditions that are distinct from the materials that fit the conditions, e.g. its location with respect to other streets'

A counter-argument might be that the 8.25 has to be a train before it can be the 8.25: nobody will remark. There goes the 8.25 to parts of a flock of pigeons

emerges from under the station canopy: likewise, it is true to say that a given street has a largely relational identity — you define 'X' Street by saying that it's the one that runs at right angles between 'Y' Street and 'Z' Street. All the same, a piece of string stretched between the two will not be mistaken for the street.

2.3. The scope of Structuralism

But structuralism is not just about language and literature. When Saussure's work was 'co-opted' in the 1950s by the people we now call structuralists, their feeling was that Saussure's model of how language works was 'transferable', and would also explain how all signifying systems work. The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss applied the structuralist outlook to the interpretation of myth. He suggested that the individual tale (the *parole*) from a cycle of myths did not have a separate and inherent meaning but could only be understood by considering its position in the whole cycle (the *langue*) and the similarities and difference between that tale and others in the sequence.

So in interpreting the Oedipus myth, he placed the individual story of Oedipus within the context of the whole cycle of tales connected with the city of Thebes. He then began to see repeated motifs and contrasts, and he used these as the basis of his interpretation. On this method the story and the cycle it is part of are reconstituted in terms of basic oppositions, animal/human, relation/stranger, husband/son and so on. Concrete details from the story are seen in the context of a larger structure, and the larger structure is then seen as an overall network of basic 'dyadic pairs' which have obvious symbolic, thematic, and archetypal resonance (like the contrast between art and life, male and female, town and country, telling and showing, etc., as in the 'worked example' later).

This is the typical structuralist process of moving from the particular to the general, placing the individual work within a wider structural context. The wider structure might also be found in, for instance, the whole corpus of an author's work or in the genre conventions of writing about that particular topic (for instance, discussing Dickens's novel *Hard Times* in terms of its deviations from novelistic conventions and into those of other more popular genres, like melodrama or the ballad); or in the identification of sets of underlying fundamental 'dyads'. A signifying system in this sense is a very wide concept: it means any organised and structured set of signs which carries cultural meanings. Included in this category would be such diverse phenomena as: works of literature, tribal rituals (a degree ceremony, say, or a rain dance), fashions (in clothing, food, 'life-style', etc.); the styling of cars, or the contents of advertisements. For the structuralist, the culture we are part of can be 'read' like a language, using these principles, since culture

is made up of many structural networks which carry significance and can be shown to operate in a systematic-way. These networks operate through 'codes' as a system of signs, they can make statements, just as language does, and they can be read or decoded by the structuralist or semiotician.

Fashion, for instance, can be 'read' like a language. Separate items or features are added up into a complete 'outfit' or 'look' with complex grammatical rules of combination: we don't wear an evening dress and carpet slippers: we don't come to lectures in military uniform, etc. Likewise, each component sign derives its meaning from a structural context. Of course, many fashions in clothing depend on breaking such rules in a 'knowing' way, but the 'statement' made by such rule-breaks (for instance, making outer garments which look like undergarments, or cutting expensive fabrics in an apparently rough way) depends upon the prior existence of the 'rule' or convention which is being conspicuously flouted. In the fashion world today, for instance, (late 1994) the combination of such features as exposed seams, crumpled-looking fabrics, and garments which are too big or too small for the wearer signifies the fashion known (confusingly, in this context) as deconstruction. Take any one of these features out of the context of all the rest, however, and they will merely signify that you have your jacket on inside out or don't believe in ironing. Again, these individual items have their place in an overall structure, and the structure is of greater significance than the individual item.

The other major figure in the early phase of structuralism was

Roland Barthes, who applied the structuralist method to the general field of modern culture. He examined modern France (of the 1950s) from the standpoint of a cultural anthropologist in a link book called *Mythologies* which he published in France in 1957. This looked at a host of items which had never before been subjected to intellectual analysis, such as: the difference between boxing and wrestling; the significance of eating steak and chips, the styling of the Citroen car; the cinema image of Greta Garbo's face; a magazine photograph of an Algerian soldier saluting the French flag. Each of these items he placed within a wider structure of values, beliefs, and symbols as the key to understanding it. Thus, boxing is seen as a sport concerned with repression and endurance, as distinct from wrestling, where pain is flamboyantly displayed. Boxers do not cry out in pain when hit, the rules cannot be disregarded at any point during the bout, and the boxer fights as himself, not in the elaborate guise of a make-believe villain or hero. By contrast, wrestlers grunt and snarl with aggression, stage elaborate displays of agony or triumph, and fight as exaggerated, larger than life villains or super-heroes. Clearly, these two sports have quite different functions within society: boxing enacts the stoical endurance which is sometimes necessary in life, while wrestling dramatises ultimate struggles

and conflicts between good and evil. Barthes's approach here, then, is that of the classic structuralist: the individual item is 'structuralised', or 'contextualised by structure', and in the process of doing this layers of significance are revealed.

Roland Barthes in these early years also made specific examinations of aspects of literature, and by the 1970s, structuralism was attracting widespread attention in Paris and world wide. A number of English and American academics spent time in Paris in the 1970s taking courses under the leading structuralist figures (and these included Colin MacCabe) and came back to Britain and the USA fired up to teach similar ideas and approaches here. The key works on structuralism were in French, and these began to be translated in the 1970s and published in English. A number of Anglo-American figures undertook to read material not yet translated and to interpret structuralism for English-speaking readers; these important mediators included: the American,

Jonathan Culler, whose book *Structuralist Poetics* appeared in 1970s the English critic Terence Hawkes whose book *Structuralism and Semiotics* came out in 1977 as the first book in a new series published by called 'New Accents'. Hawkes was the general editor of the series, and its mission was 'to encourage rather than resist the process of change' in literary studies. Another influential figure was the British critic Frank Kermode, then professor at University College, London, who wrote with enthusiasm about Roland Barthes, and set up graduate seminars to discuss his work (though he has now in the 1990s become identified, in retirement, with much more traditional approaches). Finally, there was David Lodge, Professor of English at Birmingham, who tried to combine the ideas of structuralism with more traditional approaches. This attempt is typified by his book *Working with Structuralism* (1980).

2.4. What structuralist critics do

1. They analyse (mainly) prose narratives, relating the text to some larger containing structure, such as;

- (a) the conventions of a particular literary genre, or
- (b) a network of intertextual connections, or
- (c) a projected model of an underlying universal narrative structure, or
- (d) a notion of narrative as a complex of recurrent patterns or motifs.

2. They interpret literature in terms of a range of underlying parallels with the structures of language, as described by modern linguistics. For instance, the notion of the 'mytheme', posited by Levi-Strauss, denoting the minimal units of narrative

'sense', is formed on the analogy of the morpheme, which, in linguistics, is the smallest unit of grammatical sense. An example of a morpheme is the 'ed' added to a verb to denote the past tense.

3. They apply the concept of systematic patterning and structuring to the whole field of Western culture, and across cultures, treating as 'systems of signs' anything from Ancient Greek myths to brands of soap powder.

2.5. Structuralist criticism: examples

I will base these examples on the methods of literary analysis described and demonstrated in Barthes's book *S/Z*, published in 1970. This book, of some two hundred pages, is about Balzac's thirty-page story 'Sarrasine'. Barthes's method of analysis is to divide the story into 561 'lexies', or units of meaning, which he then classifies using five 'codes', seeing these as the basic underlying structures of all narratives. So in terms of our opening statement about structuralism (that it aims to understand the individual item by placing it in the context of the larger structure to which it belongs) the individual item here is this particular story, and the larger structure is the system of codes, which Barthes sees as generating all possible actual narratives, just as the structures of a language can be seen as generating all possible sentences which can be written or spoken in it. I should add that the difficulty in taking as an example of structuralism matter from a text by Barthes published in 1970, since 1970 comes within what is usually considered to be Barthes's post-structuralist phase, always said to begin (as in this book) with his 1968 essay 'The Death of the Author'. My reasons for nevertheless regarding *S/Z* as primarily a structuralist text are, firstly, to do with precedent and established custom: it is treated as such, for instance, in many of the best known books on structuralism (such as Terence Hawkes's *Structuralism and Semiotics*, Robert Scholes's *Structuralism in Literature*, and Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics*). A second reason is that while *S/Z* clearly contains many elements which subvert the confident positivism of structuralism, it is nevertheless essentially structuralist in its attempt to reduce the immense complexity and diversity possible in fiction to the operation of five codes, however tongue-in-cheek the exercise may be taken to be. The truth, really, is that the book sits on the fence between structuralism and post-structuralism: the 561 lexies and the five codes are linked in spirit to the 'high' structuralism of Barthes's 1968 essay 'Analysing Narrative Structures', while the ninety-three interspersed digressions, with their much more free-wheeling comments on narrative, anticipate the 'full' post-structuralism of his 1973 book *The Pleasure of the text*.

2.5.1. The five codes identified by Barthes in *S/Z* etc.

1. *The proairetic code* : This code provides indications of actions. ('The ship

sailed at midnight' 'They began again', etc.)

2. *The hermeneutic code* : This code poses questions or enigmas which provide narrative suspense. (For instance, the sentence 'He knocked on a certain door in the neighbourhood of 'Pell Street' makes the reader wonder who lived there, what kind of neighbourhood it was, and so on).

3. *The cultural code* : This code contains references out beyond the text to what is regarded as common knowledge. (For example, the sentence 'Agent Angelis was the kind of man who sometimes arrives at work in odd socks' evokes a pre-existing image in the reader's mind of the kind of man this is — a stereotype of bungling incompetence, perhaps, contrasting that with the image of brisk efficiency contained in the notion of an 'agent'.).

4. *The semic code* : This is also called the connotative code. It is linked to theme, and this code (says Scholes in the book mentioned above) when organised around a particular proper name constitutes a 'character'. Its operation is demonstrated in the second example, below.

5. *The symbolic code* : This code is also linked to theme, but on a larger scale, so to speak. It consists of contrasts and pairings 'related to the most basic binary polarities — male and female, night and day, good and evil, life and art, and so on. These are the structures of contrasted elements which structuralists see as fundamental to the human way of perceiving and organising reality.

As the last two codes have generated the greatest difficulty (especially in distinguishing one from the other) I will use each in turn as the basis of an example, beginning with the symbolic code, which I will illustrate in use as (he organising principle for the interpretation of an entire tale, the story being 'The oval portrait' (reproduced in Appendix D), by the early nineteenth century. American writer Edgar Allan Poe, an author who has received considerable attention from both structuralists and post-structuralists. In terms of the 'What structuralists do' list of activities above, this is an example of category 1.(d) -ating narrative structure as a complex of recurrent patterns and otifs.

In discussing it I will enlist your help as a co-writeris structuralist critique. The points at which your help is required are indicated by the 'STOP and THINK' heading.

A brief working summary of the plot may be useful. During what appears to be a civil war in an unnamed European country a wounded officer (as we may assume him to be) takes refuge in 'a recently abandoned chateau. The room he sleeps in contains an extremely lifelike portrait of a young woman, and a written account of

this portrait, which he finds in the room, tells how the artist was her husband, who had become so carried away with the creation of the portrait that he failed to notice that as 'life' was kindled in the painting it simultaneously drained away from the sitter. At the end of the tale the placing of the final touch of colour which renders the portrait perfect coincides with the death of the sitter.

The most basic difference between (liberal humanist and structuralist reading is that the structuralist's comments on structure, symbol, and design, become paramount, and are the main focus of the commentary, while the emphasis on any wider moral significance, and indeed on interpretation itself in the broad sense, is very much reduced. So instead of going straight into the content, in the liberal humanist manner, the structuralist presents a series of parallels, echoes, reflections, patterns, and contrasts, so that the narrative becomes highly schematised, is translated, in fact, into what we might call a verbal diagram. What we are looking for, as we attempt a structuralist critique, and where we expect to find it, can be indicated as in the diagram below. We are looking for the factors listed on the left, and we expect to find them in the parts of the tale listed on the right:

Parallels	} in }	Plot
Echoes		Structure
Reflections/Repetitions		Character/Motive
Contrasts		Situation/Circumstance
Patterns		Language/Imagery

Listing some of the parallels, etc., which might be picked out in Poe's tale is perhaps the best way of illustrating all this. Firstly, then, the tale itself has a binary structure (a structure of paired opposites) made up of two contrasting halves: the first part is a 'framing' narrative, containing the first-person account of the wounded officer, while the second is the story-within-the-story which he reads in the commentary on the painting. There is a very marked difference in narrative pace between these two halves, the first being leisurely, ponderous even, reflecting the down-to-earth, rationalistic mind of the officer, while the second moves with increasingly disjointed rapidity, reflecting the frenzy of artistic creation, and the rapid downward spiral of the victim/sitter's health.

A second contrast within the tale is that the chateau itself performs very different functions in the two halves. In the first half it is a place of refuge and recuperation for the officer, where he finds safety from his enemies and, we may assume, recovers his health. In the second half, by contrast, it is a place of danger and ultimately destruction for the sitter, where she is delivered to the whims of her artist-husband and her life is drained away.

2.5.2. STOP and THINK

Now, look for other contrasts between the two halves. For instance, each half features a relationship between two people (the officer and the valet in the first part and the artist and his wife in the second); how do these two relationships differ? There is an unequal distribution of power within each relationship, but the effects are different. How, exactly, there a similarity in what the members of each couple do to and for each other?

The main 'actors' in the two halves are (respectively) the wounded officer and the artist. What contrasts are observable in the mental state of these two?

Both the officer in the first part and the artist in the second are in a sense, engrossed in a painting, but the role of art in the two halves is very different. What exactly is the contrast?

All these are contrasts, parallels, etc., between the two halves. There are also many more *within* the two halves. Firstly, there is a strongly implied contrast between the husband's self-absorbed artistic frenzy on the one hand, and a more conventional outwardly directed sexual passion of the kind which might be expected in a husband for a new bride. Instead of being fascinated by her, this husband is 'entranced before his work' in auto-erotic contemplation. Indeed, the marriage is in a sense bigamous, since the husband is described as 'having already a bride in his art. The several weeks he spends alone with his new bride executing the painting are a kind of sustained negative parody of a honeymoon. Locked of together for several weeks, the husband painter took a fervid and burning pleasure in his task and wrought day and night, and towards the end 'the painter had grown wild with the ardour of his work'. In fact, he has spent this 'honeymoon' in passionate involvement with the first bride rather than the second.

A third level of contrasts and parallels are those which concern narrative mechanisms such as presentation and language, as well as content. One such, for instance, is the parallel between the narrators of the two halves. Both have a degree of anonymity, and in the second case the anonymity is complete, since we are given no information at all about the identity of the author of the 'vague and quaint words' of the story-within-the-story. (The only named character is Pedro the valet, the least important figure in the tale.) But structuralists are encouraged by Roland Barthes to ask of a text the question '*qui parle?*'—'Who is speaking?' and if we ask that question of the second part of the tale, then the answer will involve dislodging the narrator from the position of a neutral spectatorial recorder, for this account must have been written by someone who witnessed these events without attempting any intervention. At the very least, this witness is someone without insight, indistinguishable from those who, having seen the portrait, spoke of its resemblance in low words, as of

a mighty marvel and a proof not less of the power of the painter than of his deep love for her whom he depicted so surpassingly well'.

2.5.3. STOP and THINK

The first narrator, too can be seen as to some degree culpable, and as wilfully blind the events witnessed. Could we go further? Is there a parallel between the two narrators, such that the first is aligned, through the language used, with the attitudes of the artist-husband?

For instance, what do you make of his prolonged contemplation of the painting? Are there elements in that part of the text which parallel the displaced eroticism of the artist's protracted gazing on his wife as he makes the painting? There are two examples, not just one, of an intense masculine gaze in the story, look at the distribution of the words 'gaze' and 'glory' (or 'gloriously') in the text. Look at the way the passing of time is depicted in each of these cases. In both cases there is a moment when the gaze is averted: what is the significance of this parallelism?

All these contrasts are of a very particular kind, proper to just this one tale. We may then perform a simplifying move which is rather like finding the lowest common denominator of a set of numbers, for these items might be reduced to a set of more generalised ones : the contrast and conflict between *life* and *art*, *male* and *female*, *light* and *dark* (in the sense of enlightenment and moral brightness, as well as in purely physical terms), *looking* and *doing*, *reality* and *representation*. The thesis of the structuralist is that narrative structures are founded upon such underlying paired opposites, or dyads, so that contrasts such as these are the skeletal structure on which all narratives are fleshed out. If we had to reduce even this list of dyads, to achieve a single pair, then it would have to be the art/life contrast, since the tale seems most to be about life and art viewed as factors in an overall psychic economy.

The obvious final question is to ask which side of this dichotomy the tale is on. There can surely be little doubt that it is on the side of art, for it is the act of artistic creation, and, to a lesser extent, that of contemplating a work of art, which is most vividly and passionately described in the tale, rather than any sense of the waste of a young life. The frenzy of this 'passionate, wild, and moody man' produces a work of art so lifelike that it seems the product of a divine being. This is no way to champion 'life'. 'Officially' the story is a pious protest at the sacrifice of a young life, but in practice the making of the sacrifice is presented 'with a kind of loving envy. As D. H. Lawrence didn't quite say, never trust the moral, trust the tale.

So much, then, for the symbolic code. The second example centres on the operation within a text of the *semic code*. This code, as we have said, is linked with the process of characterisation and thematicisation but operates on a smaller

scale than the symbolic code For Hawkes. in the book mentioned earlier, it 'utilises hints or "flickers of meaning", and given that it operates through the nuances of individual words and phrases, the best way to appreciate it in action is to use a variation of what educationalists call 'cloze procedure', which involves deleting words from a text and having readers fill these by drawing inferences from context and overall structure.

2.5.4. STOP and THINK

The passage below is from the novel by Mervyn Jones. The central character, Mr Armitage, is presented in the opening scene and his character is immediately established. I have left gaps in the text and have listed at the end of the relevant sentences several words which might fill that gap (one of which, in each case, is the word actually used by the author). You will see that the character is decisively altered, according to the word you choose to fill the gap, enabling us to feed the scerriic code actually at work. The paragraphs have been numbered for ease of reference. In terms of the 'What structuralists do' list, this is an example of 1.(c), that is, of relating the text to a projected model of an underlying universal narrative structure, since the critic would assume that the five Barthesian codes are fundamental to the workings of all narratives. Spend time now selecting a word for each gap before going on to my commentary.

1. John Edward Scott Armitage: fifty-five years old, five feet eleven inches tall, weight thirteen stone three (*pounds, ounces*)

2. June the eighth: a fine morning, nine-fifteen by the programme change on the car radio, also nine-fifteen—exactly as he checked the time on his — watch. [*multi-function, Swiss, Swatch, Timex, Pocket, Mickey Mouse*]

3. Hendon Way, north-bound. Armitage was driving a Jaguar, just run in. Its newness pleased him - the — smell of the leather, the neat zeros on the mileage dial. He was among those men whose car is never more than *a* year old.

[*rich, sweet, heady, sexy, opulent*]

There is further description, then Armitage slows thelook at two hitch-hikers. They meet his standard. acceptability, and he offers them a lift, but the response to his offer is a momentary hesitation. The text resumes:

4. The boy still presented his pleasant smile, but did not get into the car. Now he seemed to be considering, not the directions, but also the car. and even Armitage him self. The hitch-hiker infact, was deciding whether to accept the driver instead of the other way round. Armitage was — In a few seconds more he might have been indignant. But the girl said: 'This is fine - yes it is - super, really'.

[*baffled, stumped, gob-smacked*]

5. She spoke eagerly, indeed with some impatience at the boy's hesitation. And she too smiled at Armitage, but more than pleasantly. —, he thought. Of course, they were lucky to get a long ride in a new Jaguar. The girl clearly realised this; she seemed, moreover, to be happy to travel with Armitage. As soon as this notion occurred to him Armitage saw that he was absurd. Yet it was an attractive thing for her to give such an impression.

[happily, cheerfully, invitingly, gleefully]

6. She — into the front seat, and the boy got into the back. Armitage pulled away quickly to get ahead of a removal van. He drove in a thrusting style, seizing every opportunity, overtaking in roaring third gear. He met and then dismissed, the thought that the girl's presence beside him had made him show off his skill.

[jumped quickly, plumped heavily, slid seductively, slid easily, squeezed awkwardly, slipped quietly]

2.5.5. Let's comment briefly on the gaps in each of these paragraphs.

In the first the word in the published text is 'ounces', (the precision of which immediately suggests a man with a very precise and ordered attitude to life. (How many people know their weight to the nearest ounce?))

In the second paragraph the character of Armitage is completely changed if we change his watch. In the text his 'Swiss' watch reinforces the image of the well-ordered, well-to-do life already established in the first few lines of the book. But the semic code's 'flicker of meaning' can instantly change him into an ageing gadget-faddist with a multi-function digital timepiece, or a dedicated follower of fashion with a trendy Swatch Watch, or with a pocket watch, or a hearty life-and-soul-of-the-type with a jokey Mickey Mouse watch.

In the third paragraph the words 'sweet lady' to turning Armitage into a leather fetishist, while rich has certain directness and vulgarity which implies that his pleasure in things is in direct proportion to their cost. The text's 'opulent' retains and element of this but seems to imply an appreciation of quality and craftsmanship for its own sake.

In the fourth paragraph (as often in fiction) the kind of word used by the narrating voice reflects the character being described. 'Stumped' suggests an undignified cluelessness, as, even more so, does 'gob smacked', whereas the text's 'baffled' implies the offended dignity of a man of some standing accustomed to a degree of respect.

In the fifth paragraph Armitage's perception of the nature of the girl's smile is a crucial element in his characterisation. The text has him seeing her as smiling

'cheerfully', indicating that he is pleased to perceive a positive reaction towards him. If she were smiling, in his view, 'invitingly', then the implication would be that his motives were entirely sexual. 'Gleefully', on the other hand, would make her into a child rather than an adult.

In the final paragraph the missing phrase indicates that, all the same, Armitage finds the girl attractive and is physically aware of her. The text tells us that she slid easily into the front seat, implying a certain slender gracefulness. Armitage's attention is less directed towards the boy, so he simply 'got into' the back. If we reverse these two phrases the implication is that Armitage is more interested in the boy than the girl, thus: 'She got into the front seat, and the boy slid easily into the back'. This has the effect of lending to construct Armitage as homosexual, even though no such explicit statement is made.

This simple 'cloze' exercise, then, indicates something of the small-scale, but none the less crucial, workings of the semic code in the construction of character, while also showing how, in sequence, this code can begin to activate thematic motifs, such as the notion of orderliness and control associated with Armitage.

The operation of two other codes could easily be illustrated from the same passage. The *hermeneutic code*, for instance, is obviously important in it. Right at the beginning of a novel the reader has to be drawn into the process of speculating about possible outcomes, working out enigmas, and predicting the possible patterns of events and motives. Thus, with this example we are immediately involved in answering questions like what is going to happen as a result of this meeting? 'Are the hitch-hikers as innocent as they seem?' 'Will Armitage's confidence be shaken some way as the novel progresses?' Finally, an example of the *cultural code* is seen in the third paragraph when we are told that Armitage 'was among those men whose car is never more than a year old', where the text appeals to our prior knowledge of this kind of man as a distinct type with a whole range of related characteristics and habits. The last code, the symbolic, would be difficult to detect in such a brief and early extract from a novel, and has already been demonstrated at length on the Poe example.

2.6 Questions

1. Explain 'Structuralism'. Who were its main proponents?
2. Examine a few texts and identify
 - the intertextual connections
 - the literary genre
 - the underlying pattern of the narrative/ descriptive text.

2.7 Selected reading

Barthes, Roland, *Selected Writings*, introduced by Susan Sontag (Fontana, 1983).

Barthes, Roland, *The Semiotic Challenge*, translated by Richard Howard (Blackwell, 1988).

Essays by the best-known structuralist critic; see chapter in section three 'Textual Analysis of a Tale by Edgar Allan Poe', on 'The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar'.

Culler, Jonathan, *Barthes* (Fontana, 1983).

Culler, Jonathan, *Structuralist Poetics* (Routledge, 1975).

Hawkes, Terence, *Structuralism and Semiotics* (Methuen, 1977).

Scholes, Robert, *Structuralism in Literature : An Introduction* (Yale University Press, 1974).

Sturrock, John, *Structuralism* (Paladin, 1986)

UNIT 3 □ POST STRUCTURALISM

Content

3.0 Objective

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3.6.1 Post Structuralism : Selected Reading

3.0 OBJECTIVES

We propose to introduce you to some basic notions about how critics from time to time have interpreted Post-Structuralism. We would also discuss how literary criticism became a self-conscious study, thus giving rise to theory. We will briefly touch upon the different foundations of the post structural theory enabling the students of literature and language understand this theory.

3.1 INTRODUCTION : WHAT IS POST STRUCTURALISM?

Post structuralism is a continuation or a further development of structuralism or even a rebellion against it. They analyse the embedded meaning in the two semantically looking for 'similarities in sound', the origin and root meanings of words, metaphors and highlight these in such a way, that their analyses become extremely critical to the meaning of the text. Their analysis is so intense that it generally leads

to an explosion of the language into 'multiplicities of meaning'. In their search for disunities they also locate shifts and gaps of different kinds in the text and utilise these 'fissures' as evidence of what may be 'repressed' or merely 'glossed over or passed over in silence by the text'. They tend to explore the disunities rather than the unity or continuity of a text.

3.2. DERRIDA, OTHER CRITICS AND POST STRUCTURALISM

Post-structuralism emerged in France in the late 1960s. The two figures most closely associated with this emergence are Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida (1930-). Barthes's work around this time began to shift in character and move from structuralist phase to a post-structuralist phase. The difference can be seen by comparing two different accounts by Barthes of the nature of the narrative, one from each phase, namely the essay 'The Structuralist Analysis of Narrative' (first published in 1966 and reprinted in *Image, Music, Text* ed. Stephen Heath, 1970) and *The Pleasure the Text* (1973). The former is detailed, methodological and technical, while the latter is really just a series of random comments on narrative, arranged alphabetically, thereby of course, emphasising the randomness of the material. Between these two works came the crucial essay 'The Death of the Author' (1968) which is the 'hinge' round which Barthes turns from structuralism to post-structuralism. In that essay he announces the death of the author, which is a rhetorical way of asserting the independence of the literary text and its immunity to the possibility of being unified or limited by any notion of what the author might have intended, or 'crafted' into the work. Instead, the essay makes a declaration of radical textual independence: the work is not determined by intention, or context. Rather, the text is free by its very nature of all such restraints. Hence, as Barthes says in the essay, the corollary of the death of the author is the birth of the reader. So the difference between the 1966 essay and the 1973 book is a shift of attention from the text seen as something produced by the author to the text seen as something produced by the reader, and, as it were, by language itself, for as Barthes also says, in the absence of an author, the claim to decipher a text becomes futile.

Hence, this early phase of Post-structuralism seems to license and revel in the endless free play of meanings and the escape from all forms of textual authority.

The second key figure in the development of post-structuralism in the late 1960s is the philosopher Jacques Derrida. Indeed, the starting point of post-structuralism may be taken as his 1966 lecture 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' (variously reprinted, most recently in abbreviated form in K. M. Newton's *Twentieth Century Literary Theory: A Reader*, Macmillan, 1988). In this paper Derrida sees in modern times a particular intellectual 'event' which constitutes

a radical break from past ways of thought, loosely associating this break with the philosophy of Nietzsche and Heidegger and the psychoanalysis of Freud. The event concerns the 'decentring' of our intellectual universe. Prior to this event the existence of a norm or centre in all things was taken for granted: thus 'man', as the Renaissance slogan, had it, was the measure of all other things in the universe while Western norms of dress, behaviour, architecture, intellectual outlook, and so on, provided a firm centre against which deviations, aberrations, variations could be detected and identified as 'Other' and marginal. In the twentieth century, however, these centres were destroyed or eroded; sometimes this was caused by historical events - such as the way the First World War destroyed the illusion of steady material progress, or the way the Holocaust destroyed the notion of Europe as the source and centre of human 'civilisation'; sometimes it happened because of scientific discoveries - such as the way the notion of relativity destroyed the ideas of time and space as fixed and central absolutes; and sometimes, this was caused by intellectual or artistic revolutions - such as the way modernism in the arts in the first thirty years of the century rejected such central absolutes as harmony in music, chronological sequence in narrative, and the representation of the visual world in art.

In the resulting universe there are no absolutes or fixed points, so that the universe we live in is 'decentred' or inherently relativistic. Instead of movement or deviation from a known centre, all we have is 'free play' (or 'play' as the title of the essay has it). In the lecture Derrida embraces this decentred universe of free play as liberating, just as Barthes in 'The Death of the Author' celebrates the demise of the author as ushering in an era of joyous freedom. The consequences of this new decentred universe are impossible to predict, but we must endeavour not to be among 'those who.....turn their eyes away in the face of the as yet unnameable which is proclaiming itself (Newton, p. 154). This powerful, quasi-religious appeal to us not to turn our eyes away from the light is typical of the often apocalyptic tone of post-structuralist writing. If we have the courage, the implication is, we will enter this new Nietzschean universe, where there are no guaranteed facts, only interpretations, none of which has the stamp of authority upon it, since there is no longer any authoritative centre to which to appeal for validation of our interpretations.

Derrida's rise to prominence was confirmed by the publication of three books by him in the following year (translated as *Speech and Phenomena*, *Of Grammatology*, and *Writing and Difference*). All of these books are on philosophical rather than literary topics, but Derrida's method always involves the highly detailed 'deconstructive' reading of selected aspects of other philosophers' works, and these deconstructive methods have been borrowed by literary critics and used in the reading of literary works. Essentially, the deconstructive reading of literary texts tends to make them

emblems of the decentred universe we have been discussing. Texts previously regarded as unified artistic artefacts are shown to be fragmented, self-divided, and centreless. They always turn out to be representative of the 'monstrous births' predicted at the end of 'Structure, Sign, and Play'.

3.2.1 STOP and THINK

A key text in post-structuralism is Derrida's book *Of Grammatology*. The slogan '*There is nothing outside the text*' is the most frequently quoted line from this book, but it is usually quoted out of context to justify a kind of extreme textualism, whereby it is held that all reality is linguistic, so that there can be no meaningful talk of a 'real' world which exists without question outside language.

It is becoming common today to deny that such a view is the one actually put forward by Derrida, and while I do not recommend that you attempt to tackle the whole book at this stage, you could put yourself considerably ahead of many commentators and critics by acquiring a detailed knowledge of the section of the book in which this remark occurs. (pp. 157-64).

Derrida is writing in this section about Rousseau's 'Essay on the origin of languages', but he stops to question his own method of interpreting this text, and hence the rapture of all interpretation. He debates the concept of the 'supplement', a word which in French can also mean a replacement, in the sense that language replaces or stands in for reality. (This idea, is outlined in the immediately preceding pages of *Of Grammatology*. 141-57.). But what exactly is the nature of this 'standing in', since 'the person writing is inscribed in a determined textual system' (p. 160), which is to say that we all inherit language as a ready-made system, with its own history, philosophy, and so on already 'built in'? In this sense one might argue that we don't express ourselves in words, merely some aspect of language:

The writer writes *in* a language and *in* a logic whose proper systems, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely. He uses them by only letting himself, after a fashion and up to a point, be governed by the system. And the reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of the language that he uses. This relationship is not a certain quantitative distribution of shadow and light, of weakness or of force but a signifying structure that critical reading should *produce*. (Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 158) Reading and interpretation, then, are not just *reproducing*-what the writer thought and expressed in the text. This inadequate notion of interpretation Derrida calls a 'doubling commentary', since It tries to reconstruct a pre-existing, nontextual reality (of what the writer did or thought) to lay alongside the text. Instead, critical reading must *produce* the text,

since there is nothing behind it for us to reconstruct. Thus, the reading has to be deconstructive rather than reconstructive in this sense. This is the point where Derrida makes the remark which he later calls 'the axial proposition of this essay, that there is nothing outside the text' (*Of Grammatology*, p. 163):

'Reading ... cannot legitimately transgress the text toward something other than it ... or toward a signified outside the text whose content could take place, could have taken place, outside of language, that is to say, in the sense that we give here to that word, outside of writing in general. That is why the methodological consideration that we risk applying here to an example are closely dependent on general propositions that we have elaborated above; as regards the absence of the referent or the transcendental signified. There is nothing outside the text.'

(*Of Grammatology*, p. 158)

He expands this further and reiterates that 'beyond and behind what one believes can be circumscribed as Rousseau's text, there has never been anything but writing ... what opens meaning and language is writing as the disappearance of natural presence' (p. 159).

You will not find these pages of Derrida by any means easy, but they will repay some intensive work, ideally in group discussion. Do they enable you to pin down precisely what Derrida is saying about the relationship between word and world, and are his views as stark and uncompromising as they are often accused of being?

3.3. STRUCTURALISM AND POST-STRUCTURALISM—SOME PRACTICAL DIFFERENCES

An initial problem here is that post-structuralism often claims that it is more an attitude of mind than a practical method of criticism. This is, in a sense, quite true, but perhaps no more true of post-structuralism than of any other critical orientation. After all, in what sense could, say, Marxist or feminist - or even liberal humanist - criticism be called a method? Only in the loosest way, surely, since none of these provide anything like a step by step procedure for analysing literary works. All they offer is an orientation towards a characteristic central issue (that is, towards issues of class, gender, and personal morality, respectively) and a body of work which constitutes a repertoire of examples.

What, then, seem to be the characteristics of post-structuralism as a critical method? The post-structuralist literary critic is engaged in the task of 'deconstructing' the text. This process is given the name 'deconstruction', which can be roughly defined as applied post-structuralism. It is often referred to as 'reading against the

grain' or 'reading the text against itself', with the purpose of 'knowing the text as it cannot know itself. (These are Terry Eagleton's definitions.) A way of describing this would be to say that deconstructive reading uncovers the unconscious rather than the conscious dimension of the text, the things which its overt textuality glosses over or fails to recognise. This repressed unconscious within language might be sensed, for instance, in the example used earlier when we said that the word 'guest' is cognate with (that is, has the same original root as) the word 'host', which in turn comes from the Latin word *hostis*, meaning an enemy. This hints at the potential double aspect of a guest, as either welcome or unwelcome, or as changing from one to the other. This notion of 'hostility', then, is like the repressed unconscious of the word, and the process of deconstruction, in revealing the unconscious of the text, might draw upon such disciplines as etymology in this way.

Another well-known definition of deconstructive reading is Barbara Johnson's in *The Critical Difference* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980):

Deconstruction is not synonymous with 'destruction'. It is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word 'analysis', which etymologically means 'to undo' ... The deconstruction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or arbitrary subversion, but by the careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text.

(Johnson, *The Critical Difference*, p. 5)

Derrida's own description of deconstructive reading has the same purpose. A deconstructive reading:

must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of language that he uses ... [It] attempts to make the not-seen accessible to sight.

(*Of Grammatology*, pp. 158 and 163)

J. A. Guddon, in his *Dictionary of Literary Terms* asserts that in deconstruction :

a text can be read as saying something quite different from what it appears to be saying ... it may be read as carrying a plurality of signification or as saying many different things which are fundamentally at variance with, contradictory to and subversive of what may be seen by criticism as a single 'stable' meaning. Thus a text may 'betray' itself.

(from the entry on Deconstruction)

So the deconstructionist practises what has been called *textual harassment* or

oppositional reading, reading with the aim of unmasking internal contradictions or inconsistencies in the text, aiming to show the disunity which underlies its apparent unity. The aim of the 'New Critics' of the previous generation, by contrast, had been precisely the opposite of this, to show the unity beneath apparent disunity. In pursuance of its aims, the deconstructive process will often fix on a detail of the text which looks incidental in the presence of a particular metaphor, for instance and then use it as the key to the whole text, so that everything is read through it.

In talking about structuralism we discussed how structuralists look for such features in the text as parallels, echoes, reflections, and so on. The effect of doing this is often to show a unity of purpose within the text, is if the text knows what it wants to do and has directed all its means towards this end. By contrast, the deconstructionist aims to show that the text is at war with itself: it is a house divided, and disunified. The deconstructionist looks for evidence of gaps, breaks, fissures and discontinuities of all kinds. So a diagram showing the differences between structuralism and post-structuralism at the practical level might look like this:

The structuralist seeks:

Parallels/Echoes

Balances

Reflections/Repetitions

Symmetry

Contrasts

Patterns

*Effect: To show textual
unity and coherence*

The post-structuralist seeks:

Contradictions/Paradoxes

Shifts/Breaks in: Tone

Viewpoint

Tense

Time

Person

Attitude

Conflicts

Absences/Omissions

Linguistic quirks

Aporia

*Effect: To show textual
disunity*

3.4. SO, WHAT DO POST-STRUCTURALIST CRITICS DO ?

1. They 'read the text against itself so as to expose what might be thought of as the 'textual subconscious', where meanings are expressed which may be directly contrary to the surface meaning.

2. They fix upon the surface features of the words - similarly in sound, the root meanings of words, a 'dead' (or 'dying' metaphor....bring these to the foreground, so that it becomes crucial to the overall meaning.

3. They seek to show that the text is characterised by disunity rather than unity.

4. They concentrate on a single passage and analyse it so intensively that it becomes impossible to sustain a 'univocal' reading and the language explodes into 'multiplicities of meaning'

5. They look for shifts and breaks of various kinds in the text and see these as evidence of what is repressed or glossed over or passed over in silence by the text. These discontinuities are sometimes called 'fault-lines', a geological metaphor referring to the breaks in rock formations which give evidence of previous activity and movement.

Let us look at the theories now and draw the essence of Post Structuralism from the given comparative data.

3.5. SOME THEORETICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STRUCTURALISM AND POST-STRUCTURALISM

Is post-structuralism a continuation and development of structuralism or a form of rebellion against it? In one important case it is the latter, since a very effective way of rebelling is to accuse your predecessors of not having the courage of their convictions. Thus post-structuralists accuse structuralists of not following through the implications of the views about language on which their intellectual system is based. As we saw, one of structuralism's characteristic views is the notion that language doesn't just reflect or record the world; rather, it shapes it, so that *how* we see is *what* we see. The post-structuralist maintains that the consequences of this belief are that we enter a universe of radical uncertainty, since we can have no access to any fixed landmark which is beyond linguistic processing, and hence we have no certain standard by which to measure anything. Without a fixed point of reference against which to measure movement you cannot tell whether or not you are moving at all. You have probably at some time had the experience of sitting

in a stationary train with another train between yourself and the far platform. When that train begins to move you may have the sensation that it is *your* train which is moving and only realise this isn't so when the other train has gone and you again see the fixed point of the platform. Post-structuralism says, in effect, that fixed intellectual reference points are permanently removed by properly taking on board what structuralists said about language. Or, to change the analogy, in space, where there is no gravity, there is no up and down, and these pronouncements about language send us into a gravity-free universe, without upside down or right way up. This situation, of being without intellectual reference points, is one way of describing what post-structuralists call the *decentred universe*, one in which, by definition, we cannot know where we are, since all the concepts which previously defined the centre, and hence also the margins, have been 'deconstructed', or undermined, in the manner described later.

The characteristic concerns of post-structuralism, as hinted at here, may at first seem remote. Why this constant high anxiety about language, we might ask, when it seems to work perfectly well most of the time for day by day purposes? But on reflection we may find that it is precise; in this matter of anxiety about language that we can most easily identify with post-structuralist concerns, for these anxious feelings seem remarkably pervasive whenever we have to use language at my level beyond that of casual daily exchange with people we know very well and whose status is the same as our own. For instance, think of any slightly less straightforward language situation, like writing to your bank, writing an essay, striking up a friendship with a stranger at a party, or sending a letter of condolence. In those cases, and many more, there is an almost universally felt anxiety that the language will express things we hadn't intended, or convey the wrong impression, or betray our ignorance, callousness or confusion. Even when we use a phrase like 'if you see what I meant' or 'in a manner of speaking' there is the same underlying sense that we are not really in control of the linguistic system. These feelings, write large, are really the same, or at least surely have the same source, as the radical linguistic scepticism which is so typical of deconstruction. Here, then, is a way into the post-structuralist frame of mind which lies very much within attitudes and anxieties which most of us experience.

However, perhaps it will be helpful simply to list some differences and distinctions between structuralism and post-structuralism, under the four headings below.

3.5.1. Origins

Structuralism derives ultimately from linguistics. Linguistics is a discipline which has always been inherently confident about the possibility of establishing objective

knowledge. It believes that if we observe accurately, collect data systematically, and make logical deductions then we can reach reliable conclusions about language and the world. Structuralism inherits this confidently scientific outlook: it too believes in method, system, and reason as being able to establish reliable truths.

By contrast, post-structuralism derives ultimately from philosophy. Philosophy is a discipline which has always tended to emphasise the difficulty of achieving secure knowledge about things. This point of view is encapsulated in Nietzsche's famous remark '*There are no facts, only interpretations*'. Philosophy is, so to speak, sceptical by nature and usually undercuts and questions commonsensical notions and assumptions. Its procedures often begin by calling into question what is usually taken for granted as simply the way things are. Post-structuralism inherits this habit of scepticism, and intensifies it. It regards any confidence in the scientific method as naive, and even derives a certain masochistic intellectual pleasure from knowing for certain that we *can't* know anything for certain, duly conscious of the irony and paradox which doing this entails.

3.5.2. Tone and style

Structuralist writing tends towards abstraction and generalisation: it aims for a deduced, 'scientific cool-ness' of tone. Given its derivation from linguistic science. This is what we would expect. An essay like Roland Barthes's 1966 piece 'introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative' (reprinted in *Image, Music, Text* ed. Stephen Heath. 1977) is typical of this tone and treatment, with its discrete steps in its orderly exposition, complete with diagrams. The style is neutral and anonymous, as is typical of scientific writing.

Post-structuralist writing, by contrast, tends to be much more emotive. Often the tone is urgent and euphoric, and the style flamboyant and self-consciously showy. Titles may well contain puns and allusions, and often the central line of the argument is based on a pun or a word-play of some kind.

Often deconstructive writing fixes on some 'material' aspect of language, such as a metaphor used by a writer, or the etymology of a word. Overall it seems to aim for an engaged warmth rather than detached coolness.

3.5.3 Attitude to language

Structuralists accept that the world is constructed through language, in the sense that we do not have access to reality other than through the linguistic medium. All the same, it decides to live with that fact and continue to use language to think and perceive with. After all, language is an orderly system, not a chaotic one, so

realising our dependence upon it need not induce intellectual despair.

By contrast, post-structuralism is much more fundamentalist in insisting upon the consequences of the view that, in effect, reality itself is textual. Post-structuralism develops what threatens to become terminal anxieties about the possibility of achieving *any* Knowledge through language. The verbal sign in its view, is constantly floating free of the concept it is supposed to designate. Thus, the post-structuralist's way of speaking about language involves a rather obsessive imagery based on liquids - signs float free of what they designate, meanings are fluid, and subject to constant 'slippage' or 'spillage'. This linguistic liquid, slopping about and swilling over unpredictably, defies our attempts to carry signification carefully from 'giver' to 'receiver' in the containers we call words. We are not fully in control of the medium of language, so meanings cannot be planted in set places, like somebody planting a row of potato seeds; they can only be randomly scattered or 'disseminated', like the planter walking along and scattering seed with broad sweeps of the arm, so that much of it lands unpredictably or drifts in the wind.

Likewise, the meanings words have can never be guaranteed one hundred per cent pure. Thus, words are always 'contaminated' by their opposites - you can't define *night* without reference to *day*, or *good* without reference to *evil*. Or else they are interfered with by their own history, so that obsolete senses retain a troublesome and ghostly presence within present-day usage, and are likely to materialise just when we thought it was safe to use them. Thus, a seemingly innocent word like 'guest', is etymologically cognate with 'host' which means an enemy or a stranger, thereby inadvertently manifesting the always potentially unwelcome status of the guest (see below, page 71). Likewise, the long-dormant metaphorical bases of words are often reactivated by their use in philosophy or literature and then interfere with literal sense, or with the stating of single meanings. Linguistic anxiety, then, is a keynote of the post-structuralist outlook.

3.5.4 Project

By 'project' here I mean the fundamental aims of each movement, what it is they want to persuade us of. Structuralism, firstly, questions our way of structuring and categorising reality, and prompts us to break free of habitual modes of perception or categorisation, but it believes that we can thereby attain a more reliable view of things.

Post-structuralism is much more fundamental: it distrusts the very notion of reason, and the idea of the human being as an independent entity, preferring the notion of the 'dissolved' or 'constructed' subject, whereby what we may think of

as it individual is really a product of social and linguistic forces that is, not an essence at all, merely a 'tissue of textualisation'. Thus, its torch of scepticism burns away the intellectual ground on which the Western civilisation is built.

3.6 REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Make a list of various definitions of Post Structuralism.
2. Who are the main proponents of Post Structuralist theories.
3. When is a text 'free'?
4. Write a short note on Jacques Derrida.
5. When and how did the Post Structuralist movement start?
6. What are the main features of Post-Structuralism?
7. What are the major areas of difference between Structuralism and Post Structuralism in terms of (a) theory (b) writing (c) attitude to language (d) fundamental aims.

Selected reading

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Expanded and updated in 1993. See the chapter 'Derrida and Deconstruction'.

UNIT 4 □ DECONSTRUCTION

Structure

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Introduction : What is Deconstruction

4.1.1 Deconstruction vs Structuralism

4.1.2 Deconstruction and Literary Criticism

4.2 Assumptions of Deconstruction

4.3 The Concept of Logocentrism

4.4 The concept of 'Differance'

4.5 The Question of Textuality

4.6 Deconstruction and Literature

4.7 Practitioners of Deconstructive Theory

4.8 Deconstruction in Contrast to other schools of criticism

4.9 Conclusion

4.10 Review Questions

4.11 Recommended Reading

4.0 Objectives

This unit introduces you to some basic notions about deconstructive criticism, involving the theorists and their influence and works in world literature.

4.1 Introduction : What is Deconstruction?

Deconstruction refers to a strategy of analysis, initiated by Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) in France that has been applied to literature, linguistics, philosophy, law and architecture. In 1967 Derrida published three books *Speech and Phenomenon*, *Of Grammatology*, and *Writing and Difference*, which introduced the deconstructive approach to reading texts. As Derrida explained in his 'Letter to a Japanese Friend' the word 'deconstruction' was his attempt both to translate and re appropriate for his own ends the Heideggerian terms 'Destruktion' and 'Abbau' via a word from

the French language, the varied senses of which seemed consistent with his requirements.

Deconstruction is related to vast tracts of the Western philosophical tradition, though it is also tied to distinct but abutting academic disciplines such as linguistics and anthropology. Derrida's work offers close readings of philosophical, literary, anthropological, and linguistic writings including works by Plato, Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Ferdinand de Saussure, J. I. Austin, Claude Levi-Strauss, Sigmund Freud, Stephane Mallarme, James Joyce, Franz Kafka and Heidegger. The philosophical thought that Derrida challenges through these readings is not merely a particular canon of texts or an academic discipline but fundamental assumptions about meaning, classification, communication and authenticity that structure Western thought.

4.1 Deconstruction vs Structuralism

The root of the deconstruction theory lies in post-structuralism, which may be considered to be both a continuation and a critique of Structuralism. Historically, post-structuralism had its origin in October 1966 during the Symposium on "The Language of Criticism and Sciences of Man" held in John Hopkins Humanities Centre where the objectives was "to bring into an active and not uncritical contract leading to European proponents of structural studies in a wide variety of discipline." It is in this symposium that Jacques Derrida presented his now famous "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in which he attacked the traditionalist position in general and the Lévi-Strauss version of structuralism in particular. Structuralism was based on Saussure's concept that the linguistic sign is the combination of 'signifier' (written or spoken) and 'signified' (concept), and therefore excludes the referential discussion since language is a self-sufficient system, reality is unimportant. Similarly, meaning is not produced by the author, for it is the linguistic system as whole which produces it. Thus, in contrast to the traditional approach which gave primacy to the author and to reality, structuralist criticism excludes both. But Derrida questioned the key concepts of structuralism (particularly sign and structure) and its methodology (especially poetics and semiology). While structuralism was based on linguistics and on stable linguistic and literary structures, Derridean post-structuralism is based on philosophy and especially on the philosophy of unstable meaning.

4.1.2 Deconstruction and literary criticism

Though Derrida's work cannot be condensed too quickly, a reader can recognize that the problems of inheritance, tradition, and invention occur throughout. Derrida's

oeuvre is said by its champions to consist entirely of meticulous readings (of texts, whether apparently philosophical or not), which find philosophy anew.

Derrida's practice of reading raises the question of the relationship between deconstruction and literary theory. Schematically put, the interest in deconstruction shown by many of its literary students takes deconstruction to be a method, a hermeneutic for reading in general.

Further, deconstruction's sensitivities to philosophical efforts at defining limits have been taken by some to imply a deconstructive agenda for the ultimate reversal of order. This agenda would cover: philosophy's claim to be the first of all academic disciplines; holding out hopes of uniting all; delineating what is proper to each as they remain apart; and expelling from itself non-philosophy (via judgements which irreducibly take part in violence and hinge on matters of interpretation made through language). This has been seen as the privilege of the non-serious and the literary over a humbled philosophy.

Some of Derrida's critics (among them Richard Wolin, Thomas Sheehan, and John Searle) have opted for this characterization. They have popularized an account of deconstruction as a radical and dangerous relativism.

Derrida, on the other hand, maintained a practise of literary criticism that is almost certainly indispensable to deconstruction.

4.2 Assumption of Deconstruction

Let's we see what are the basic assumptions of the Deconstruction theory :

In Deconstruction the basic structuralist principle of difference is located ontologically as well as semiotically at the very point of beingness of every thing there is difference — or difference — because only through difference is one thing not another thing instead. Difference comes before being; similarly, a trace comes before the presence of a thing (as anything which is itself by virtue of not being something else by differing, and that which it differs from remains as a trace, that whose absence is necessary for it to be), so too writing precedes speech — a system of differences precedes any location of meaning in articulation.

Deconstruction, as do other poststructural theories declines the structuralist assumption that structural principles are essences — that there are universal structural principles of language which exist 'before' the incidence of language. (The emphasis on the concrete historical and contingent in opposition to the eternalities of essence reveals one of deconstruction's filiations with existentialism.) All 'principles' of existence (i.e. of experience) are historically situated and are structured by the

interplay of individual experience and institutional force, through the language, symbols, environment, exclusions and oppositions of the moment (and of the previous moments through which this one is constructed). Structures are historical, temporary contingent, operating through differentiation and displacement.

There is no outside of the text, everything that we can *know* is text that is constructed of signs in relationship. This claim does not mean that there is nothing outside of language; the claim refers to the realm of human knowledge, not to the realm of concrete existence (elusive as that might be). Deconstruction does *not* deny the existence of an independent, physical world.

All texts are constituted by difference from other texts (therefore similarity to them). Any text includes that which it excludes, and exists in its differences from/filiations with other texts.

Opposites are already united; they cannot be opposites otherwise. Nor can they be a unity, and be themselves. They are the alternating imprint of one another. There is no nihilism without logocentrism, no logocentrism without nihilism, no presence without absence, no absence without presence, and so forth.

Inherent in language itself is difference and deferral; it is impossible for language to be identical with its referents. A word or any other sign can only mobilize the play of the fields of signs from which it is distinguished, and from which it is of necessity removed.

Inherent in language also is the contest between grammar and rhetoric. Grammar is the syntagmatic protocol, meaning as created by placement; rhetoric is the intertextual system of signs which makes what the grammar means, mean something else (irony and metaphor are principal examples). Grammatical and rhetorical meaning cannot be identical, and one may well not be able to assign a priority of 'meaning'.

In a sense deconstruction is profoundly historical: it sees temporality as intrinsic to meaning, in that meaning can only be structured against that which is before it, which is structured against that which is before that. Meaning is that which differs and which defers. The claim is not that there is no meaning — that is a misunderstanding of deconstruction the claim is that what we take to be meaning is a shifting field of relations in which there is no stable point in which dynamic opposing meanings may be present simultaneously, in which the meaning is textually modulated in a interweaving play of texts. Meaning circulates, it is always meaning by difference, by being other. The meaning-through-difference creates/draws on 'traces' or 'filiations', themselves in some senses historical.

Deconstruction is also historical insofar and it functions, etymologically turning to the root, often metaphorical, meanings of words for an understanding of how they

function within the web of differentiation which spans the chasm of the non-human over which we constantly live.

As deconstruction works on (in both senses of 'works on') the web of differentiation which spans the chasm of the non-human over which we constantly live, it is intrinsically and deeply human and humane. It is affirmative of the multiplicity, the paradoxes, the richness and vibrancy, of our life as signifying beings. If it seems to deny affirmation, it is because it knows that affirmation is always, intimately and compellingly, itself, only in the presence of and by virtue of negation. To fully live we must embrace our deaths.

If deconstruction seems to oppose Humanism, it is because Humanism operates by substituting the concept 'man' for the concept 'God' (or 'order', 'nature', 'Truth', 'logos' etc.) and so placing 'man' as the unproblematic ground of meaningfulness for human life. It should be clear however that 'man' is then a hypothesized center substituting for another hypothesized center, in the history of metaphysics. Deconstruction wants to clarify the instability upon which such a concept is grounded.

Deconstructive reading can be applied to any text. It is a theory of reading, not a theory of literature. Derrida generally deconstructs philosophical writing, showing the metaphysical contradictions and the historicity of writing which lays claim to the absolute.

4.3 The Concept of Logocentrism

We have already come to know about the basic assumptions of the deconstruction theory. Now let's discuss in detail Derrida's concept of 'logocentrism'. It is in *Of Grammatology* that Derrida presents his most important theory, that of 'logocentrism'. The word 'logos' in Greek means 'reason', 'logic', or 'word'. Derrida uses the term 'logocentrism' to describe all forms of thought which base themselves on some external frame of reference, such as the notion of truth or reality. Logocentric critics are those who give more importance to the external reality supposedly presented by the language than to language itself. Derrida points out that right from Plato western philosophy has acted on the presupposition that language is subservient to some idea or meaning outside it. This 'logocentric' tradition sought some absolute source or guarantee of meaning (a 'transcendental signified') which could centre or stabilise the uncertainties of signification through a set of 'violent hierarchies' privileging a central term over a marginal one: nature over culture, male over female, and most importantly speech over writing. The 'phonocentric' suspicion of writing as a parasite upon the authenticity of speech is a critical target of Derrida's subversive approach to Western philosophy, in which he inverts and dissolves conceptual hierarchies to show that the repressed or marginalised term has always already contaminated the

privileged or central term. Thus, drawing on Saussure's theory of the sign, Derrida argues that the stable self-identity which we attribute to speech as differences rather than of positive terms or presences : writing, distributed in the Western 'metaphysics of presence' because it displays the absence of any authenticating voice, is in this sense logically prior to speech. Derrida describes a pervasive tendency "to confine writing to a secondary and instrumental junction : translator of a full speech that was fully present (present to itself, to its signified, to the other, the very condition of the theme of presence in general), technician in the service of language, spokesman, interpreter of an originary speech itself shielded from interpretation." The privileging of speech over writing that Derrida describes, like other instances of privileging what is considered "fully present" or originary, is important to philosophical thought because it is the possibility of full presence—absolute independence and undifferentiated identity—that grounds meaning, authorizes transcendent notions of "Truth," and assures unified subjectivity. These metaphysical assumptions are brought into question when Derrida goes on to show that these oppositions are far from stable and that the self-identity and integrity claimed for the privileged term is fundamentally undercut. In the case of writing's supposed 'secondary and instrumental function' in relation to speech, Derrida shows that the valorization of speech is dependent on the denigrated qualities ascribed to writing and that the 'secondarity it seemed possible to ascribe to writing alone' affects language in general. In this opposition, as in others, the privileged term can only be defined by its difference from the term with which it is paired, making its meaning dependent on its place within a relationship rather than a fully present essence. Derrida also shows that not even this difference is absolute and that the privileged term not only depends on the term to which it is opposed but is infiltrated by that term. Therefore, the privileged term's association with full presence is sustained only through suppressing both its dependence and the difference within the term itself. Thus, Derrida shows that the terms in oppositions like nature/culture, outside/inside, literal/figural, man/woman, signifier/signified, and speech/writing do not have meaning independently and do not sustain their presumed difference from each other. Insisting on these two points, Derrida makes clear that he is not simply effecting a reversal of privilege but is instead challenging the purity and unity of concept that would be necessary to sustain an opposition absolutely. The result is not to discredit the opposition in question with any sense that a demonstration of instability or infiltration permanently removes the force of that opposition.

What Derrida instead insists on is a double gesture that requires thinking contradictory ideas simultaneously. Many of his most famous terms are words which he puts in service of this impossible but necessary double gesture. The "trace" for instance names of non-originary origin the impossibility of origin but the continued

force and allure of the ordinary. Other terms that take on this significance in Derrida's essays include supplement, hymen, pharmakon, writing, parergon, and so on. This double gesture is also sometimes designated by writing terms 'under erasure', crossing them through as they are printed to indicate simultaneously the impossibility and inescapability of the concept they name.

4.4 The concept of 'Differance'

An important term among those that Derrida uses to describe the simultaneous possibility of meaning is 'difference'. Derrida coins this term, exchanging the '-ence' ending for '-ance', to bring together contrary sense of the French verb 'différer'. As Derrida explains, in the essay 'Difference' in *Margins of Philosophy* (1982), the term indicates both 'to defer, postpone, delay' and 'differ, be different from'. The first meaning implies that the meaning of a word or structure is deferred in one's mind one sees the full context. In other words, any element of language relates to other elements in a text. The second meaning implies that a word is different or distinct from all other words, whether present or absent in the text. In other words, Derrida harks back to the syntagmatic and paradigmatic notions of Saussure. When, for example, one finds the word 'cat', one contrasts it paradigmatically with other words which could have replaced it, to realise that it is not a dog, a cow, an elephant etc. Yet, the context, too, is important, for as Terry Eagleton has indicated in *Literary Theory*, a 'cat' can mean a furry four-legged creature, a malicious person, a knotted whip etc, depending on the context.

Deconstructive readings track down within a text the aporia or internal contradiction that undermines its claims to coherent meaning: or they reveal how texts can be seen to deconstruct themselves. Derrida's difficult and paradoxical attitude to the meta-physical tradition seeks to subvert it while also claiming that there is no privileged vantage-point from which to do this from outside the instabilities of language. Deconstruction thus undermines its own radical scepticism by admitting that it leaves everything exactly as it was unashamedly self-contradictory effort to think the unthinkable often by recourse to strange neologisms, puns and other word-play.

By deconstructing Saussure thus, Derrida showed that language is not anything stable and no reading can take us to the meaning, for all meaning is fiction.

Derrida, therefore, concludes that in language there are only differences without positive or absolute terms. Even a dictionary demonstrates the fact of deferring meaning. A word has several meanings and each meaning becomes a signifier in its turn leading to more meaning. In the words of Roman Selden 'The process continues interminably, as the signifier leads a chameleon-like existence, changing

the colours with each new context'. Every time we attempt to say something we may be moving towards it (meaning/reality) but we never reach it. Derrida would go even further and say that there is no transcendental signifier or reality principle behind any word or text. All our hunt for meaning is only a wild goose chase. All that is obtained is free play.

Derrida arrived at the notion of 'deconstruction' for unravelling the meaning of individual texts. He begins by pointing that when he wrote an essay on Rousseau, he actually wrote something quite different what he actually meant to say. He concludes that he is bound, as we all are, to say 'more, less or something quite other than what he would mean/would like to say' (*Of Grammatology*). Indeed, critical interpretation of literature is necessary precisely because a literary text does not say what it intends or even appears to say. Therefore, in order to understand a text, one must unravel or 'untie' the text to see if it means something quite contrary. This is 'deconstruction' of the text, a word he originally chose to translate Heidegger's *Destruktion*, bringing out the sense of 'taking apart' rather than 'blowing up'.

4.5 The question of textuality

One of Derrida's most frequently cited and frequently misinterpreted statements is his contention, in *Of Grammatology*, that "there is nothing outside of the text" (or translated literally, "there is no outside text"). This assertion has been read as a denial that there is anything of consequence outside a written text, and, therefore, it has been taken as a statement of disregard for what are often considered to be important extra textual factors — history and politics, for example. However, Derrida's contention that there is nothing outside the text is, instead, a challenge to the division of inside from outside, of text from some exterior "reality" to which that text refers and which anchors and authorizes textual meaning. In "Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion," the final section of "Limited Inc" (1977), Derrida attempts to clarify his contention explaining that it "does not mean that all references are suspended deried, or enclosed in a book, as people have claimed. But it does mean that every referent, all reality has the structure of a differential trace, and that one cannot refer to this 'real' except in an interpretive experience." In other words, there is nothing outside a text that can ground its meaning absolutely, and this is precisely because there is nothing that is not subject to the movement of *difference*, nothing that is outside textuality.

4.6 Deconstruction and literature

Literature' is a writing clearly open to deconstructive reading, as it relies so heavily on the multiple meanings of words, on exclusions, on substitutions, on

intertextuality, on filiations among meanings and signs, on the play of meaning, on repetition (hence significant difference). In Jakobson's phrasing, literature attends to (or, reading as literature attends to), the poetic function of the text. This, in (one guesses) a Derridean understanding would mean that the naive, thetic, transcendental reading of a text is complicated (folded-with) by a counter-reading which deconstructs the thetic impetus and claims :

The more 'metaphysical' or universal and 'meaningful' a text the more powerfully it can provoke deconstructive reading; similarly as 'reading as literature' implies a raising of meaning to the highest level of universality, 'reading as literature' also calls forth the potential for a strong counter-reading. As Derrida says, "the more it is written, the more it shakes up its own limits or lets them be thought."

Some attributes of 'literature' in the deconstructive view are:

1. that literature is an institution, brought into being by legal, social and political processes;
2. that literature is that which at the same time speaks the heart of the individual and which shows how the individual is made possible only by otherness, exteriority, institution, law, structures and meanings outside oneself;
3. that literature is both (simultaneously) a singular, unrepeatable event and a generalizable experience, and demonstrates the tension antithesis between these — as something which is original is also of necessity not original, or it could not have been thought.

It is possible that texts which 'confess' the highly mediated nature of our experience, texts which themselves throw the reader into the realm of complex, contested, symbolized, intertextual, interactive mediated experience, texts which therefore move closer than usual to deconstructing themselves, are in a sense closer to reality (that is, the truth of our real experience) than any other texts. This kind of text conforms to the kind of text known as 'literature' — most clearly, to modernist literature, but to all texts which participate in one or more of the ironic, the playful, the explicitly intertextual, the explicitly symbolizing — from Renaissance love poetry to Milton to Swift to Fielding to Tennyson to Ondaatje.

Reading these texts in the deconstructive mode is, however, not a matter of 'decoding the message'; it is a matter of entering into the thoughtful play of contradiction, multiple reference, and the ceaseless questioning of conclusions and responses. The less a text deconstructs itself, the more we can and must deconstruct it, that is, show the structures of thought and assumption which ground it and the exclusions which make its meaning possible. If, as Roman Jakobson suggests, a mark of literature is that it draws attention to its textuality, its constructedness,

then literature may be said to be inherently closer to 'reality' than other forms of writing or discourse are, just when it seems to be furthest away, as our 'reality' is symbolic, signified, constructed.

The works of Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, and Barbara Johnson are among many examples of deconstruction's productive engagement with literature. In *Allegories of Reading* (1979), de Man describes his approach to reading as one "in which rhetoric is a disruptive intertwining of trope and persuasion or of cognitive and performative language." Pursuing this "disruptive intertwining" through particular attention to rhetorical figures, de Man contends that "a literary text simultaneously asserts and denies the authority of its own rhetorical mode." Miller, in *The Ethics of Reading* (1987), contends that "deconstruction is nothing more or less than good reading" and argues that "there is a necessary ethical moment in that act of reading as such." Taking authors reading their own texts as exemplary acts of reading, Miller locates ethical importance in deviation from rather than allegiance to a text. Barbara Johnson, in *A World of Difference* (1987), reads literary and critical works in order to address questions such as: "What are the political consequences of the fact that language is not a transparently expressive medium?" and "How can the study of suppressed, disseminated or marginalized messages within texts equip us to intervene against oppression and injustice in the world?" Particularly concerned with issues of sexual and racial difference, Johnson shows the relevance of literary reading to such questions and also takes up questions about deconstruction's relation to feminism.

4.7 Practitioners of Deconstructive theory

Although initially directed against the scientific pretensions 'structuralism in the human sciences, it was welcomed enthusiastically into literary studies at Yale University and elsewhere in the English-speaking world, partly because it seemed to place literary problems of figurative language and partly because it opened up limitless possibilities of interpretation. The writings of Paul de Man, Barbara Johnson, J. Hills Miller, and Geoffrey Hartman in the 1970s and 1980s applied and extended Derrida's concepts to critical questions of interpretation, tending to challenge the status of the author's intention or of the external world as a source of meaning in texts and questioning the difference between criticism and literature.

However, these critics had widely varying approaches to deconstructive thought, a point which Hartman underscores when he describes himself and Bloom as 'barely deconstructionists' in contrast to Derrida, Miller and de Man. In de Man there is a dubious tendency to privilege literature in general as a self-deconstructing discourse : to privilege literature in general as a self-deconstructing discourse, but

this does not destroy the brilliance of individual readings which, in their aporetic enable, make the text 'unreadable' in terms of closure (*Allegories of Reading*, 1979). Similarly, Hills Miller argues that 'The fault of premature closure is intrinsic to criticism' *Fiction and Repetition*, 1982). Besides generating new readings, mainly of nineteenth and twentieth century material, American deconstruction has enlivened debate about critical principles. The refusal of final meaning has caused a certain institutional anxiety about anarchic individualism—understandably so, perhaps, in view of the polemical mannerism of deconstructionist style (as seen by those who don't enjoy it). But the absence of absolute criteria for interpretation does not mean total freedom; it is precisely the pressure of pre-existent discourse that deconstruction re-marks in its critique of origin. In a recent interview, Derrida says that 'Meaning.....does not depend on the subjective identity but on the field of different forces, which produce interpretations.' (*The Literary Review* 14, 1980)

Nonetheless, the influence of the Yale critics has led both proponents and detractors to describe deconstruction as a method of reading or a literary critical technique. In "Letter to a Japanese Friend," Derrida insists that "deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one." Instead, "Deconstruction takes place, it is an event that does not await the deliberation, consciousness, or organization of a subject." Thus he describes deconstruction not as the subjective deployment of a reading strategy but as something that happens in written texts and in all structures of meaning. In other words, deconstruction is not something that a reader does to a text but is a quality of textuality. In saying this, it is important to reiterate that the "text" with which deconstruction concerns itself is not simply limited to written language but includes the discursive structuring of experience, institutions, reality, subjectivity, and so on.

Derrida and his followers - Paul de Man, Roland Barthes (he began as a structuralist but has since moved on to post-structuralism). J. Hillis Miller and Geoffrey Hartman have managed to create a genuine controversy that involves the traditional historicists, the Chicago neo-Aristotelians, the myth critics and the New Critics. The traditionalists held that historical and critical methods can produce positive knowledge of texts and their environments, provided we accepted three basic premises (i) that written text says something determinate. (ii) that such determinacy is grounded on authorial intention and (iii) that the properly equipped historian can produce a reading that others would accept as objective. The deconstructionists, on the other hand, argue that positive knowledge is not available because there is no stable ontological ground for it. A literary work may be meaningful, but nothing is meant. The meaning is indeterminate. The text, is not a closed system of empirical data; it is open. We gain access to it by several entrances none of which can authoritatively declared to be the main one. So, in place of the traditional book

Barthes uses the word "text" by which he had a number of recent French thinkers mean something like "open writing" or what is called "intertextuality". Each single text is an entrance into a network with a thousand entrances. Barthes writes in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975). "Text means Tissue; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies, more or less hidden, meaning we are now emphasizing, in the tissue the generative idea that the text is just inter-weaving' a web without a centering spider free play without a closure and therefore it destroys itself as a veil. Stanley Fish would even go one step further. For him the texts are not merely indeterminate but a text is a kind of empty container waiting to be filled with meaning. *Deconstruction and Criticism* (1979) containing essays by Harold Bloom, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey Hartman and J. Hillis Miller provides an excellent sample of deconstructive criticism. Harold Bloom writes in "The Breaking of Form": "I only *know* a text, any text, because I know a reading of it, someone else's reading, my own reading, a composite reading. I happen to possess somewhat preternatural verbal memory, particular for verse. But I do not know *Lycidas* when I recite or to myself, in the sense that I know *The Lycidas* by the Milton. *The Milton, the Shelley*, do not exist". Particularly interesting is the article "Shelley Disfigured" by Paul de Man in which he claims that reading is disfiguration, to the very extent that it resists historicism and turns out to be historically more reliable than the products of historical archaeology. *Deconstruction : Theory and Practice* (1982) by Christopher Norris is a good introduction to the philosophical postulates of deconstruction. If Derrida is mainly engaged in an attack on logocentrism Michael Foucault in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interview* (1977) and *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1973) and above all in *History* (1978) shows that language is power. He describes power as always implicit in the discourse, as a difference or incompatibility of force relations, and according to him the discourse is not just a passive medium of representation, but an act of power and a locus of power.

4.8 Deconstruction in contrast to other schools of criticism

Marxist criticism is not interested in a literary work just as a literary work, but as an illustration of certain social processes and economic motivation and as an expression of an ideology. The value of a literary work as a "sign" of various interacting social forces rather than the "literary" value becomes the immediate concern. The feminist critics are concerned more with the aspect of gender revelations than with the literary work itself. In other words, the feminist critics, like the Marxist critics, look at a work of art more as a political document than as an aesthetic object; though Johnson's work suggests, feminism's sometimes troubled and troubling re-

lationship with deconstruction can be productive for both deconstruction and feminism. While some feminists have distrusted deconstruction's challenge to identity on the basis that feminism requires stable sense of identity to ground its politics, Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), argues that "the radical instability of the category [of woman] sets into question the foundational restrictions on feminist political theorizing and opens up other configurations not only of genders and bodies, but of politics itself." Similarly, Diana Elam, who takes the encounter between feminism and deconstruction as her central concern in *Feminism and Deconstruction: Ms. en Abyme* (1994), argues that feminism and deconstruction ask questions that allow a rethinking of the political. For Elam, "the ethics of deconstruction and feminism is an ethical activism which requires that judgments be made, yet which does not supply the means of legitimating those judgments. No recourse to self-present subjects, natural rights, or transcendental truths..." Psychoanalytic criticism sees the literary work as a product of some hidden, mysterious psychic forces, and is engaged in bringing these forces to light. The emphasis is on the creative process rather than on the created object. The product is only the starting point from where to work back to the mind of the author or a character or the psychological aspects of a culture that produces the work. The archetypal criticism and myth criticism see an object only as a carrier of a myth. Furthermore, an archetypal critic like a myth critic is mainly interested in similarities rather than differences between literary works. Genre criticism, in its obsession with the rhetorical pattern and form often loses sight of the meaningful content. It is more a cross between literary history and general poetics, than an independent school of criticism. Phenomenological criticism, strictly speaking, is a form of psychoanalytic criticism and suffers from the same deficiencies that plague psychoanalytic criticism. Moreover, phenomenological criticism is essentially historical. For Reader-Response criticism there is no object, there is only the subject. Structuralism cannot produce insights; nor is it concerned with value judgments. It is useful only as a discovery procedure. Even the New Criticism which is certainly the most important critical movement of the twentieth century with its attention fixed on the literary work had its drawbacks. The New Critics' speculations about the nature of a poetic object revealed a built-in-dilemma. A literary work is simultaneously an aesthetic object and a cognitive discourse. This ambivalent nature of the literary object gave rise to the dilemma of poetic autonomy versus poetic relevance. A literary work contains ideas and no criticism worth the name can ignore them. Moreover, in their practice as New Critics the critics often failed to stick to their postulates. Blackmur uses biography in his "The Later Poetry of WB Yeats" and Allen Tate relates biography to Emily Dickinson's poetry in "Emily Dickinson" for example. It is evident from the writings of the New Critics that they failed to attain the scientific objectivity

that they professed, but the solid achievement of the New Critics consists in their ability to call attention of the readers to the literary qualities of a literary work. They have been able to convince that one should move to the context from the text but the primary attention should always be focused on the text itself. Deconstruction questioned the very idea of the text and in the process systematically dissolved the structures. Having dissolved the author and the reader deconstruction dissolve also the notions of meaning, rationality and truth. But there is one point common between New Criticism and Deconstruction. Both insist on close reading. The difference is that while New Criticism looks upon a literary work as a closed system of empirical data, Deconstruction sees it as open ended and insist on inter-textuality. Gradually it is revealed that dissolution of truth does not mean that no statement is true but that there is no stable or absolute truth.

4.9 Conclusion

To conclude we may quote Derrida's own words on the 'impossibility' on the deconstruction theory, as often criticised by theorists and critics outside Derrida's circle :

"I would say that deconstruction loses nothing from admitting that it is impossible; also that those who would rush to delight in that admission lose nothing from having to wait. For a deconstructive operation *possibility* would rather be a danger, the danger of becoming an available set of rule-governed procedures, methods accessible practices. The interest of deconstruction, of such force and desire as it may have is a certain experience of the impossible...."

Deconstruction is inventive or it is nothing at all; it does not settle for methodological procedures, it opens up a passageway, it marches ahead and marks a trail; its writing is not only performative, it produces rules — other conventions — for new performativities and never installs itself in the theoretical assurance of a simple opposition between performative and constative. Its *process* involves an affirmation, this latter being linked to the coming in event, advent, invention.

4.10 Review Questions

1. What is 'deconstruction' and how is it related to 'literary criticism'?
2. What are the basic assumptions of the deconstruction theory?
3. Discuss Derrida's concept of "logocentrism".
4. What do you mean by the term "differance"? How is it applicable to literary texts?

5. Comment on Derrida's contention — "There is nothing outside of the text".
6. Who are the Yale critics and what is their contribution to literary criticism?
7. Compare and contrast Deconstructive criticism with other schools of criticism.

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UNIT 1 □ MARXIST CRITICISM

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives**
- 1.1 Introduction: Marxism and Marxist Criticism**
- 1.2 Marxist approach to Literature**
- 1.3 Base and Superstructure**
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 - 1.5.1 Christopher Caudwell**
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 - 1.6.4 Marxist criticism in America**
- 1.7 Conclusion**
- 1.8 Review questions**
- 1.9 Bibliography**

1.0 OBJECTIVES :

This unit introduces you to

- the basic as well as general concepts related to the Marxist theory of criticism
- the theorists belonging to this school; their works and propositions
- the influence of Marxist criticism over other schools of criticism and world literature
- the recent developments in this school of thought

1.1 INTRODUCTION : MARXISM AND MARXIST CRITICISM

"The relations between literature and society are reciprocal. Literature is not only the effect of social causes, it is also the cause of social effects" - the basic tenet of Marxist theory of criticism can be traced in the above quotation of Henry Lenin. Karl Marx ? (1818-83) was the co-founder, with Frederick Engels (1820-95), of what they termed 'historical materialism', but has since come to be known as Marxism. Marxism is a social, economic and political theory which works out explanations of the capitalist theory and mode of production, and claims to be committed to revolutionary social changes. Marx's principles, attitudes, modes of thought and inquiry have been adapted to create a Marxist theory of literature which assumes that literature is a social and material practice and is related to other social practices. Marxist criticism has been devoted to a reconstruction of the past on the basis of historical evidence in order to find out to what extent text, be it a novel, a drama, a poem or an essay, is a truthful and accurate representation of social reality at any given time. Some of the issues which engaged the attention of the Marxist critics are, first the relation between history and literature, second, the relation between *base and super-structure*, third, the relation between form and content, fourth, the question of literature and political commitment and, fifth, the role of author as producer.

1.2 MARXIST APPROACH TO LITERATURE

Marxist criticism differs from other historical or sociological approaches to literature in its view of the nature of history itself. It sees history as, in Marx's words, 'the history of class struggle'- the history of struggle between those who, by virtue of controlling a society's economic production, can usually dominate its cultural and intellectual production as well, and those exploited classes whose labour makes this privileged situation possible in the first place. In such class societies, all intellectual production is likely to bear the indelible print of these fundamental material struggles; and in so far as it does, it can be said to be 'ideological'. Literature is for Marxism a particular kind of signifying practice, which together with such other practices goes to make up what may be termed an ideological formation. Such a formation is always complex and contradictory, but it is never innocent. Its impulse is to stabilise and unify the various meanings, values and representations in which society lives out its own experience, in ways which help to secure and reproduce the power of its ruling class. Literature, then, might be said to represent the class-struggle at a specific level; in waiting, reading, interpreting and evaluating and the individuals, being members of this class divided society, are engaged in a struggle over linguistic meanings which is intimately related to systems of power.

1.3 BASE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

The 'base-superstructure' model appearing initially in the 1859 'Preface' to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, holds the fundamental Marxist assumption. Marx's formulation is so succinct that it is as well to quote it at length :

'The totality of... relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which corresponds definite forms of social consciousness.'

Traditional Marxists have laid great stress upon the distinction between base and superstructure seeing the social *base* as essentially economic in nature, and the *superstructure* as constituting of the world of mental activities – ideas, beliefs, philosophies and art and literature. Thus, according to this view, the economic base of society determine the nature and structure of the ideology, institutions, and social practices that form the *superstructure* of that society, exemplified in the educational system, law, religion, and politics. Literature is seen as part of that superstructure. The most influential form of early Marxist criticism assumed that there was a direct relation between the socioeconomic infrastructure of society and such practices as literature; literature was seen as a product of ideology, the role of ideology in Marxist terms being to provide legitimation for the power of the ruling class. This type of criticism is sometimes called reflective or 'vulgar' Marxism since it sees literary texts as directly reflecting socioeconomic forces.

1.4 LITERATURE AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT

The question of literature and political commitment and art as production are the two most seminal aspects of Marxism. The concept of 'socialist realism' marked an important advance in the development of Marxist and, *ipso facto*, communist views on literature and art in general. Basically, socialist realism required a writer to be committed to the working class, the class of struggling people, cause of the party; and it required that literature should be 'progressive' and should display a progressive outlook of society.

1.5 PRACTITIONERS OF MARXIST CRITICISM

1.5.1 CHRISTOPHER CAUDWELL :

A notable practitioner of this belief was the British Marxist Christopher Caudwell (1907-1937) who died in Spain fighting in the International Brigade. Caudwell's best-known work is his *Illusion and Reality : A Study of the Sources of Poetry* (1937). Here, Caudwell offers a Marxist analysis of the development of English poetry,

somewhat crudely correlating the stages of this development with economic phases such as primitive accumulation, the Industrial Revolution, and the decline of capitalism. In this wide-ranging book, Caudwell addressed the origins of poetry, the connection of poetry to mythology and the unconscious, as well as the future role of poetry in the struggle for Socialism. Again, in a discussion of nineteenth-century English poets entitled, 'English Poets: The Decline of Capitalism', he writes that "Arnold, Swinburne., Tennyson and Browning, each in his own way, illustrate the movement of the bourgeois; illusion in this 'tragic' stage of history" He goes on to say of Tennyson's poem *In Memoriam* : "'Like Darwin, and even more Darwin's followers, he projects the conditions of capitalist production into Nature (individual struggle for existence) and then reflects this struggle, intensified by its instinctive and therefore unalterable blindness, back into society, so that God - symbol of the internal forces of society - seems- captive to Nature - symbol of the external environment of society" Caudwell's subsequent writings included *Studies in a Dying Culture* (1938) and *Further Studies in a Dying Culture* (1949).

1.5.2 WALTER BENJAMIN :

Walter Benjamin, a German Marxist critic, was sympathetic to modernism (in contrast to most Marxists, who identified it with a decadent bourgeois ideology), and in one of his most influential essays, *The Artist as Producer*, he argues that the most revolutionary art cannot merely replicate traditional forms if it is going to further social change. This will merely lead to art being consumed by a bourgeois audience, even if such art is apparently committed to Marxist ideas. Benjamin was a major advocate of the work of the German dramatist Bertolt Brecht, a committed Marxist, but one who rejected the dominant Marxist aesthetic of socialist realism, an approach to art that required it to conform to Marxist doctrine and promote socialist aims.

1.5.3 GEORGE LUKACS :

George Lukacs, Hungarian Marxist critic in the Hegelian tradition, writes in his early essay *The Evolution of Modern Drama* (1909) that 'the truly social element in literature is the form'. For Lukacs there was a *form* to history that literature should incorporate in its structures. Hegel had argued in the *Philosophy of Fine Art* that 'every definite content determines a form suitable to it. 'Defectiveness of form,' he maintained, 'arises from defectiveness of content'. Forms are historically determined by the kind of 'content' they have to embody; they are changed *and* transformed as that regular content itself changes. 'Content' in this sense is prior to 'form', just as for Marxism it changes in a society's material, 'content', its mode of production which determine forms of its superstructure. 'Form itself,' F. Jameson has remarked in his *Marxism and Form*, 'is but the working out of content in the realm of the superstructure'.

1.5.4 LOUIS ALTHUSSER :

Marxist criticism in the later half of the twentieth century saw a shift away from the reflective model. The major intellectual influence on this change was that of the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, in works such as *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (1971), who opposed the Hegelian or humanistic readings of Marx, which tended to concentrate on his earlier writings, and focused instead on the later writings in which Marx attempted to establish a system that was scientifically based. Althusser also drew on structuralist ideas and this alignment between Marxism and structuralism made Marxist criticism more appealing to critics who were not committed Marxists but were in broad sympathy with it or who accepted its analysis in part. Two aspects of Althusser's revision of Marxism were especially influential because they allowed Marxist criticism to break away from the reflective model - the first was the concept of social formation, the second that of ideological state apparatuses. The notion of 'totality' - the entirety of social reality, in which all parts of the whole were seen as expressing its essence - as in Hegel - influenced Marxist thinking. Althusser substituted for 'totality' - the concept of 'social formation': a structure of various levels without a centre rather than a totality in which the economic level determined the structure of all the other levels. The various levels, he argued, possessed 'relative autonomy' and were 'overdetermined', that is, determined by a complex network of forces, with the economic base being the ultimate determinant, but at very far remove. Althusser defined the various elements of the social formation, such as legal, religious, educational, and artistic institutions, as 'ideological state apparatuses' and redefined ideology as 'a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence' rather than as 'false consciousness', which had been the way it had been understood by earlier Marxists. Each particular state apparatus creates its own form of ideological discourse and, through a process which Althusser defines as 'interpellation', calls upon individuals to take up a 'subject position', one which serves the interests of the dominant class.

1.5.5 PIERRE MACHEREY :

Pierre Macherey's *A Theory of Literary Production*, first published in French in 1966 and in English in 1978, is the first major literary study in which Marxism and structuralist thinking were aligned. For Macherey the ideology governing a work cannot be separated from the question of form since the literary text is "rooted in historical reality" not in a direct way "but only through a complex series of meditations". Thus history is not directly accessible in literature and so can be apprehended only indirectly. Macherey argues that literary representation is under the control of ideology and the role of criticism is to reveal history not as a presence in the text but as an 'absence' that which ideology excludes but which can be discerned in the fissures or gaps in the text which expose the incoherence of its ideology.

1.5.6 ANTONIO GRAMSCI :

The Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci, with his concept of 'hegemony', allows for a flexible reading of the base and superstructure model. He used the term 'hegemony' to denote the predominance of one social class over others (e.g. bourgeois hegemony). This represents not only political and economic control, but also the ability of the dominant class to project its own way of seeing the world so that those who are subordinated by it accept it as 'common sense' and 'natural'. He believes that ideology alone cannot explain the extent to which people are willing to accept dominant values. He also realizes, along with many other Marxist critics that the base/superstructure model is much too rigid to account for cultural productions which do not simply reinforce those dominant values. In a way, Gramsci's notion of hegemony is a continuation of the concepts behind ideology. Hegemony is a sort of deception in which the individual forgets her own desires and accepts dominant values as their own. For example, someone might think that going to college is the right and necessary step in every life, when in reality their belief is socially constructed. Literature, then may be seen as something that both reinforces dominant values and occasionally calls them into question. For example, nineteenth century women writers of sentimental fiction used certain narrative conventions merely to reinforce dominant values, whereas a writer like Jane Austen used many of the same conventions to undermine the same dominant values.

1.5.7 TERRY EAGLETON :

Althusser and Macherey changed the direction of Marxist criticism and Terry Eagleton, the leading British Marxist critic, directly felt their effect in his major theoretical study *Criticism and Ideology* (1976). Eagleton was greatly influenced by Louis Althusser's attempt to divest Marxism of Hegelian elements and to promote its scientific status. He argued that criticism must assume a scientific position beyond the domain of ideology. In this text Eagleton formulated the fundamental categories of Marxist criticism, and insisted that the text is a producer of ideology. However, Eagleton goes part of the way with Macherey in agreeing that ideology being put to work within a text exposes the gaps and silences in that ideology which can be made to speak. However he is unhappy with Macherey's concept of 'absence', which he sees as "an essentially negative conception of the text's relation to history". He believes that it is still possible to preserve a direct relation between text and history by means of a complex series of meditations that govern the relation between text and history. He recognises that history can be present in the text only as ideology, so that reality in the text is therefore 'pseudo-reality', but he believes there can be a 'science of ideological formations' and that one can study 'the laws of the production of ideological discourse as literature.' Thus, in looking at a writer such as George Eliot, he sees her work as an attempt 'to resolve a structural conflict

between two forms of mid-Victorian ideology' – a belief in individualism taking irresponsible forms – so that 'the historical contradictions at the heart of Eliot's fiction are recast into ideologically resolvable terms.' Eagleton's later work turned somewhat away from Althusser and was inspired instead by Walter Benjamin's revolutionary thought. It also engaged in a sustained dialogue with many branches of recent literary theory, including feminism, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis. Eagleton skillfully situated these currents within their historical and political contexts, revealing the ways in which they were subversive of, and complicit with, liberal humanism in its manifold guises. An instance of this can be had in his book *William Shakespeare* (1986) in which he writes of *Antony and Cleopatra*: "What deconstructs political order in the play is desire, and the figure for this is Cleopatra ... She is, as it were, pure heterogeneity, an 'infinite variety' which eludes any stable position." Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983) has commanded a wide audience in both Britain and America, and he is undoubtedly the most widely read Marxist critic now living. Overall, his work has clarified the relationship of Marxism to other discourses; it has revaluated the tradition of Marxist criticism itself; and it has articulated a Marxist model of aesthetics both theoretically and in application.

1.5.8 FREDRIC JAMESON :

Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious* (1981), is possibly, the most ambitious Marxist critical study of the past thirty years. According to W. R. Goodman, in his *Contemporary Literary Theory*, 'Jameson has strong sympathies with the Hegelian Marxist tradition as exemplified in the work of Lukacs but he attempts an ambitious reconciliation of Lukacs with Althusserian Marxism in a totalizing criticism that can also embrace non-Marxist critical perspectives, such as formalism, archetypal criticism, structuralism, and post-structuralism. He sees Marxism as a "master code" which underlines all other forms of criticism. Even the most detailed formalist or textual analysis, he argues, is governed by a philosophy of history even if critics are unaware of it. Like Eagleton, Jameson does not want to give up the idea that all levels of the superstructure are essentially similar in structure to the economic base and directly determined by it. He argues that such a concept still functions in Althusser's theory. Working with an implicitly psychoanalytical model, Jameson sees history as an "absent cause" since it does not exist separately from its products, and as history cannot be separated from politics it functions as a "political unconscious." Jameson, like Althusser and Macherey, does not regard ideologies as forms of false consciousness, but as "strategies of containment" which repress knowledge of the contradictions which are the product of history, history for him being driven by the "collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity." Works of art are the most complex products of ideologies as strategies of containment and the Marxist critic's

role is to restore "to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history." Works of art for Jameson have developed complex strategies to deny the exploitation and oppression which is the reality of history since Jameson accepts Walter Benjamin's dictum that "[there has never been a document of culture which was not at one and the same time a document of barbarism." The Marxist critic looks for clues and symptoms which reveal the way literary texts evade the realities of history or refuse to acknowledge contradictions. Since history is an absent cause and so not directly accessible except in textual form, "our approach to it and to the real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious."

1.6. MARXISM AND OTHER THEORIES

Marxist literary criticism may be thought of as a reaction to many of the rigid theories of the New Critics. Unlike the New Critics, who saw the text as a self-contained whole, Marxists generally focus upon the unresolved tensions within works of literature. Similarly, although Marxist criticism has both influenced and been influenced by structuralist criticism and post-structuralist criticism, it greatly differs from them in its refusal to separate literature and language from society. Marxist criticism is materialist, so it has more in common with theories that focus upon how literature functions within social, political, and economic structures, than it does with theories that focus only on the text. Marxist criticism has had an enormous influence on feminism, new historicism, and most recently, cultural studies.

1.6.1 MARXISM AND RUSSIAN FORMALISM

During the earlier half of the twentieth century, a number of critics in Soviet Union attempted to combine Marxist theory with Russian Formalist criticism. These critics were associated with Mikhail Bakhtin, who, though not apparently a committed Marxist himself, cooperated with these critics to produce some important studies, notably *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (1928) with P.N. Medvedev and *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929) with Valentin Voloshinov. Though these studies are critical of a purely formalist approach to literature (one which focuses on style, technique, and literary devices rather than meaning or content), they believe that it is possible to combine Marxism and formalism dialectically in what Bakhtin and Medvedev call a 'sociological poetics'. With the emergence of the Stalinist era in the Soviet Union, this literary critical approach was suppressed.

1.6.2 MARXISM AND FEMINISM

The Marxist feminist approach to literature deserves mention, in this context, which lays emphasis on the relations between capitalism and the oppression of women in capitalist relations of production.

While the Marxist critics see the social reality in terms of historical struggle, the fundamental concept of historical materialism being the contradiction between the forces and social relations of material production, the feminist critics see society as a patriarchal structure and try to expose the gender discrimination that perpetuates masculine dominance over the feminine. In this context Marxist-feminist approach involves an emphasis on the relations between capitalism and the oppression of women in capitalist relations of production. Kate Millet, a radical feminist, argues that our society is a patriarchy in which the rule of women by men is "more rigorous than class stratification." and she implies that class division is relevant only to men, meaning that the class division in the case of women is more illusory than real. It has also been argued that the unpaid labour of women at home serves to reproduce both the forces and the relations of production. The feminists insist that Marxism should take account of women's oppression and sexual division of labour which, they hold, are embedded in capitalist relations of production.

1.6.3 CONTEMPORARY MARXIST CRITICISM

Contemporary Marxist criticism has rejected some timeless notions of the 'literary' for an insistence that what counts as 'literary' in the first place is always a matter of ideological and institutional definition. The 'para-Marxist' work of Raymond Williams has been central in this respect. Williams had been one of the major contributors to the *New Left Review* founded in 1960 and edited first by Stuart Hall and then by Petty Anderson. Williams' central project, which he would later term 'Cultural Materialism', was to furnish a historical and materialistic rereading of the English cultural tradition, as in *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (1958), which stressed that culture was a process. *The Long Revolution* (1961) continued and redefined this project using categories such as dominant, residual, and emergent cultures mediated by what Williams called 'structures of feeling'. Williams' work became overtly Marxist with the publication in 1977 of *Marxism and Literature*. In this work Williams undertook a critical review of earlier Marxist theories and offered his own analyses of fundamental Marxist notions such as ideology, hegemony, base, and superstructure. His own cultural materialism as set forth here attempts to integrate a Marxist conception of language and literature. For contemporary Marxist criticism there is no isolated 'literature' to be ideologically examined; what we have instead is a set of literary modes of production, embedded in the dominant social relations of capitalism, which may themselves be transformed by political practice to produce new meanings of 'literature'. According to recent Marxist beliefs literature may be an artifact, product of social consciousness, a world vision, but it is an 'industry'. Similarly, books are not just structures of meaning, they are also commodities produced by publishers and sold in the market at a profit. Drama is not just a collection of literary texts; it is a capitalist

business which employs certain men, such as actors, directors, authors, to produce a commodity to be sold to the audience at a profit. This essentially is the approach taken by Walter Benjamin in his essay *The Author as Producer*.

1.6.4. MARXIST CRITICISM IN AMERICA

This topic has been adequately discussed by Goodman in his *Contemporary Literary Theory* ; I quote the following excerpt :

Socially and politically conscious criticism had a long heritage in America, going back to figures such as Walt Whitman, William Dean Howells, and Ralph Waldo Emerson and running through the work of writers noted above such as John Macy, Van Wyck Brooks, and Vernon L. Parrington. Notable Marxist critics of the 1920s and 1930s included Floyd Dell, Max Eastman, V.R. Calverton, Philip Rahv, and Granville Hicks. Eastman and Dell edited the important radical journal *The Masses* and then *The Liberator* (1918-1924), Both produced works of literary criticism, Dell relating literary history to social causes and Eastman unorthodoxically treating poetry as a distinct domain. Calverton and Hicks were perhaps the most prominent of the Marxist critics; the former founded *The Modern Quarterly: A Journal of Radical Opinion* (1923), which later became *The Modern Monthly*. Form *The Newer Spirit* (1925) he urges that aesthetic judgments are conditioned by a reader's background and that a work must be interpreted and judged in relation to the social structure which generated it. In *The Liberation of American Literature* (1932) Calverton interprets the tradition of American literature in terms of Marxist categories such as class and economic infrastructure. Granville Hicks became a Communist during the depression and In his *The Great Tradition* (1933) he assesses American writers in terms of their social and political awareness and their relevance to social progress and their contribution to the development of proletarian awareness and literature. In other works Hicks had acknowledged that literary achievement and ideological disposition were not intrinsically related. This period saw the growth of a number of other radical journals as well as the voicing of revolutionary views by non-Marxist critics such as Kenneth Burke and Edmund Wilson. The latter's most influential work, *Axel's Castle* (1931), traced the development of modern Symbolist literature, identifying in this broad movement a "revolution of the word" which might open up new possibilities of thought and literature.

1.7 CONCLUSION

Thus, recent developments in Marxist criticism have uprooted Marxism from being a fixed system and moved it forward through dialectical confrontations with other forms of thought, such as psychoanalysis, structuralism, post-structuralism and feminism, with the result that even at a time when Marxist politics is in crisis as a

result of the break-up of the Soviet Union and the world is fast changing due to global socio-economic reforms, Marxist criticism still remains a force in modern critical theory and practice.

1.8 REVIEW QUESTIONS :

1. What is the Marxian concept of literature?
2. State the basic assumption of the Marxist-feminist approach to literature.
3. What are the recent developments in Marxist criticism?
4. What do you know about the Marxist critical activities in America?
5. Name some of the major Marxist critics. What is their contribution to the field of literary criticism?
6. How does Louis Althusser differ from the other Marxist critics?
7. Write short notes on the following:
 - (a) Base and Superstructure
 - (b) Marxism and Russian Formalism
 - (c) Fredric Jameson

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UNIT 2 □ PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM

Structure

- 2.0 Aims and Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Freud's Theory
 - 2.2.1 The *id*, the *ego* and the *superego*
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- 2.7 Review questions
- 2.8 Bibliography

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES :

In the unit we introduce you to the basic principles of psychoanalytic criticism and its practitioners from the past to recent times.

Like psychoanalysis itself, this critical endeavour seeks evidence of unresolved emotions, psychological conflicts, guilts, ambivalences, and so forth within literary works. The author's own childhood traumas, family life, sexual conflicts, fixations, socio-cultural notions and such become traceable within the behaviour of the characters in the literary work. But psychological material is expressed indirectly, disguised, or encoded (as in dreams) through principles such as "symbolism" (the repressed object represented in disguise), "condensation" (several thoughts or persons represented in a single image), and "displacement" (anxiety located onto another image by means of association). In psychoanalytic criticism what the author never intended, that is, repressed, is sought—the unconscious material that has been distorted by the censoring conscious mind. The psychoanalytic critic responds to the work of literature as a kind of dream, assessing the imagery and the characters and their relationships in an effort to understand the root conflicts being dramatized. The early practitioners of psychoanalytic criticism focused on using literature to psychoanalyse the author because they assumed that all artists are neurotic. However, recent psychoanalytic criticism focuses on interpreting and articulating the motivations and conflicts that determine the predicaments of characters within the framework of literature.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Psychoanalytic criticism adopts the methods of "reading" employed by Freud and later theorists particularly Lacan to interpret texts. It argues that literary texts, like dreams, express the secret unconscious desires and anxieties of the author, that a literary work is a manifestation of the author's own neuroses. One may psychoanalyse a particular character within a literary work, but it is usually assumed that all such characters are projections of the author's psyche. One interesting facet of this approach is that it validates the importance of literature, as it is built on a literary key for the decoding. Freud himself wrote, "The dream-thoughts which we first come across as we proceed with our analysis often strike us by the unusual form in which they are expressed; they are not clothed in the prosaic language usually employed by our thoughts, but are on the contrary represented symbolically by means of similes and metaphors, in images resembling those of poetic speech" (26).

2.2 FREUD'S THEORY

Sigmund Freud didn't exactly invent the idea of the conscious versus unconscious

mind, but he certainly was responsible for making it popular. The conscious mind is what one is aware of at any particular moment, one's present perceptions, memories, thoughts, fantasies, feelings, what one has. Working closely with the conscious mind is what Freud called the preconscious, what we might today call "available memory" — anything that can easily be made conscious. The largest part by far is the unconscious. It includes all the things that are not easily available to awareness, including many things that have their origins there, such as our drives or instincts, and things that are put there because we can't bear to look at them, such as the memories and emotions associated with trauma. According to Freud, the unconscious is the source of our motivations, whether they be simple desires for food or sex, neurotic compulsions, or the motives of an artist or scientist. And yet, we are often driven to deny or resist these motives, and they become available to us only in disguised forms.

2.2.1 THE *id*, THE *ego*, AND THE *superego* :

Freudian psychological reality begins with the world which is full of objects. Among them is a very special object, the organism. The organism is special in that it acts to survive and reproduce, and it is guided toward those ends by its needs — hunger, thirst, the avoidance of pain.

A very important part of the organism is the nervous system, which has as one of its characteristics, a sensitivity to the organism's needs. At birth, that nervous system is little more than that of any other animal, an "it" or *id*. The nervous system, as *id*, translates the organism's needs into motivational forces called, in German, *triebe*, translated into English as *instincts* or *drives*. Freud also called them 'wishes'. This translation from *need* to *wish* is called the primary process. The *id* works in keeping with the pleasure principle, which can be understood as a demand to take care of needs immediately. The infant, in the Freudian view, is pure, or nearly pure *id*. And the *id* is nothing if not the psychic representative of biology.

Luckily for the organism, there is that small portion of the mind we discussed before, the conscious, connected up to the world through the senses. Around this little bit of consciousness, during the first year of a child's life, some of the "it" becomes "I". In other words, some of the *id* becomes *ego*. The *ego* relates the organism to reality by means of its consciousness, and it searches for objects to satisfy the wishes that the *id* creates to represent the organism's needs. This problem-solving activity is called the secondary process. The *ego*, unlike the *id*, functions according to the reality principle. It represents reality and, to a considerable extent, reason.

In his discussion of the absolute division between the unconscious and the consciousness (or between *id* and *ego*), Freud introduced the idea of the human self,

or subject, as radically split, divided between these two realms of consciousness and unconsciousness.

However, as the *ego* struggles to keep the *id* (and, ultimately, the organism) happy, it meets with obstacles in the world. It occasionally meets with objects that actually assist it in attaining its goals. And it keeps a record of these obstacles and aides. In particular, it keeps track of the rewards and punishments meted out by two of the most influential objects in the world of the child, namely parents. This record of things to avoid and strategies to adopt becomes the *superego*. The *superego* represents society and its constraints.

There are two aspects to the *superego*. One is the *conscience*, which is an internalization of punishments and warnings. The other is called the *ego ideal* which derives from rewards and positive models presented to the child. The *conscience* and *ego ideal* communicate their requirements to the ego with feelings like pride, shame, and guilt.

Freud saw all human behavior as motivated by the drives or instincts, which in turn are the neurological representations of physical needs. At first, he referred to them as the life instincts. These instincts perpetuate the life of an individual, by motivating him or her to seek food and water, and also the life of the species, by motivating him or her to have sex. The motivational energy of these life instincts he called *libido*. Libido is a lively thing; the pleasure principle that keeps humans in perpetual motion. And yet the goal of all this motion is to be still, to be satisfied, to be at peace, to have no more needs. Paradoxically, the goal of life, one might say, becomes death. Freud began to believe that under "and" "beside" the life instincts there was a death instinct. He began to believe that every person has an unconscious wish to die for the simple reason that for the great majority of people in the world, there is more pain than pleasure in life—something people are extremely reluctant to admit. Death promises release from this struggle.

2.2.2 THE STAGES :

For Freud, the sex drive is the most important motivating force. In fact, Freud felt it was the primary motivating force not only for adults but for children and even infants. Sexuality meant all pleasurable sensation from the skin. Freud noted that, at different times in our lives, different parts of our skin give us greatest pleasure. Later theorists termed these areas erogenous zones. It appeared to Freud that the infant found its greatest pleasure in sucking, especially at the breast. In fact, babies have a penchant for bringing nearly everything in their environment into contact with their mouths. A bit later in life, the child focuses on the anal pleasures of holding it in and letting go. By three or four, the child discovers the pleasure of touching or rubbing against his or her genitalia. Only later, in our sexual maturity, do we find our greatest

pleasure in sexual intercourse. In these observations, Freud had the makings of a psychosexual stage theory.

The *oral* stage lasts from birth to about 18 months. The focus of pleasure is, of course, the mouth. Sucking and biting are favorite activities.

The *anal* stage lasts from about 18 months to three or four years old. The focus of pleasure is the anus. Holding it in and letting it go are greatly enjoyed.

The *phallic* stage lasts from three or four to five, six, or seven years old. The focus of pleasure is the genitalia. This is the stage when masturbation is common.

The *latent* stage lasts from five, six, or seven to puberty, that is, somewhere around 12 years old. During this stage, Freud believed that the sexual impulse stays suppressed in the service of learning.

The *genital* stage begins at puberty, and represents the resurgence of the sex drive in adolescence, and the more specific focusing of pleasure in sexual intercourse.

2.2.3 CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT :

One's experiences as one grows up contribute to one's personality, or character, as an adult. Freud felt that traumatic experiences had an especially strong effect. Traumas associated with stage developments, since we all have to go through them, he said, have more consistency. If one has difficulties in any of the tasks associated with the stages — weaning, toilet training, or finding one's sexual identity — one tends to retain certain infantile or childish habits. This Freud called fixation. Fixation gives each problem at each stage a long-term effect in terms of human personality or character.

If one is frustrated in his/her need to suckle in the first eight months, perhaps because the mother is uncomfortable or rough, or tries to wean the infant too early, then one may develop an oral-passive character. An oral-passive personality tends to be rather dependent on others. They often retain an interest in "oral gratifications" such as eating, drinking, and smoking. It is as if they were seeking the pleasures they missed in infancy.

When we are between five and eight months old, children begin teething. One satisfying thing to do when one is teething is to bite on something. If this causes a great deal of upset and precipitates an early weaning, one may develop an oral-aggressive personality. These people retain a life-long desire to bite on things, such as pencils, gum, and other people. They have a tendency to be verbally aggressive, argumentative, sarcastic, and so on.

In the anal stage, infants are fascinated with their "bodily functions." Some parents put themselves at the child's mercy in the process of toilet training. They beg, they cajole, and make the child feel he is the king of the house. This child will grow up to be an anal expulsive also known as anal aggressive personality. These people tend

to be sloppy, disorganized, generous to a fault. They may be cruel, destructive, and given to vandalism and graffiti. Other parents are strict and use punishment or humiliation. This child will likely become constipated as he or she tries desperately to hold it in at all times, and will grow up to be an anal retentive personality. He or she will tend to be especially clean, perfectionistic, dictatorial, very stubborn, and stingy. In other words, the anal retentive is tight in all ways.

There are also two phallic personalities, although no theorist has named them.

2.2.4 THE OEDIPAL CRISIS :

As discussed above, each stage has certain difficult tasks associated with it where problems are more likely to arise. In the phallic stage, it is the Oedipal crisis, named after the ancient Greek story of king Oedipus, who inadvertently killed his father and married his mother. This is how the Oedipal crisis works: the first love-object for all humans is the mother. All infants want her attention, her affection, her caresses; infants want the mother thus, in a broadly sexual way. The young boy, however, has a rival for his mother's charms—his father—who is bigger, stronger, smarter, and he gets to share the bed with the mother. Thus the father becomes the rival. About the time the little boy recognizes this archetypal situation, he also becomes aware of subtle sexual differences between boys and girls. From his naive perspective, the most blatant difference is that he has a penis, and girls do not. This gives rise to the question as to where the girl's penis is and thence to the anxiety that perhaps she has lost it somehow, perhaps it was cut off, perhaps this could happen to him. This is the beginning of what Freud termed castration anxiety, a slight misnomer for the fear of losing one's penis. The boy, then recognizing his father's superiority and fearing for his penis, engages some of his ego defences—he relocates his sexual impulses from his mother to girls and, later, women. And, more importantly, he identifies with the aggressor, his father and attempts to become more and more like him, that is to say, a man. After a few years of latency, he enters adolescence and the world of mature heterosexuality.

The girl also begins her life in love with her mother, so there is the problem of her switching her affections to her father before the Oedipal process can take place. Freud accomplishes this with the idea of penis envy: The young girl, too, has noticed the difference between boys and girls and feels that she, somehow, doesn't measure up. She wants to have the penis too, and all the power associated with it. She too desires the father who in turn belongs to the mother. The young girl displaces affections from him to boys and men, and identifies with her mother, the woman who got the man she really wanted. Unlike the cases with boys, the girl does not suffer from the powerful motivation of castration anxiety, since she cannot lose what she doesn't possess.

2.3 TRADITIONAL FREUDIAN CRITICISM

Along the lines of Freud's own forays into literary criticism, such as his remarks on the Oedipal scheme in *Hamlet* (1899), his theoretical essay "Creative Writers and Day-dreaming" (1908), and his psycho-biographical essay "Dostoevsky and Parricide" (1928), several of Freud's contemporaries as well as later writers produced studies of literary figures and literary works that established elementary models of psychoanalytic criticism. Such models typically assumed relative lucidity between the fictional product and the creative artist. In other words, read psychoanalytically, the literary work disclosed the author's unconscious fantasies. The aim of this kind of criticism was typically psychobiographical—the exact, manifest terms of the narrative were subordinated to those patterns of wish, developmental stages, defence mechanisms and revealed by analytic discovery of "latent content." The best examples of this style of criticism which is still in practice refuse to subordinate art to neurosis and deploy the tools of psychoanalysis to explore precise terms of language, metaphor, and character.

2.3.1 JONES :

After Freud, the best-known pioneer of traditional psychoanalytic criticism was Ernest Jones. Jones was the author of almost two hundred essays in theory and applied-psychoanalysis, including articles on dreams, literature, religion, war neuroses, and female sexuality among others. He was the author of the first full biography of Freud (1957) and was instrumental in introducing Freud to the English-speaking world and presided over the origins of the British psychoanalytic establishment. Jones's early monograph *On the Nightmare* (1910) demonstrates a bold effort to apply psychoanalytic perspectives to history and legend, sketching analyses of witches, vampires, Druids, and speculative etymology (mares, horses, and the linguistic *m[a]r* root). It would be interesting to add, Jones himself suffered throughout his life from vivid nightmares. His essay on "The Theory of Symbolism" (1916) is an energetic and shrewd effort to regularize Freud's ideas as stated in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and elsewhere, to articulate elementary structures of symbolic representation in dream as well as in literature, Jones connected symbols with primitive sensorial residues of "primary process" anchored in repressed, unconscious representations of the body, sexual life, family relations, and death — a reservoir of images common to human development and liable to regressive attention during periods of stress, dreaming, or creative activity.

Jones's work on *Hamlet* made him the best known of early Freudian literary critics (Laurence Olivier consulted him for the 1950 film version!) However, another of Freud's first-generation followers covered more literary and theoretical ground. Otto Rank was one of Freud's brightest disciples. He eventually left over theoretical and

personal disputes; for example, he favoured "birth trauma" over castration as the original model of personal deprivation. In an essay "The Artist," which he presented to Freud in 1905, Rank maintained his interest in art throughout his life. *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (1909) is a remarkably erudite compilation of core motifs in cultural myths: the hero, the double, and the theme of incest. His vast mythological and literary research was in the service of laying the foundation for the Oedipus complex for psychoanalysis although he eventually unsettled this ground with his ideas about birth trauma and pre-Oedipal separation anxiety. Rank's essay on the *Doppelgänger* (*The Double* 1914,) uses literary examples from E. T. A. Hoffman, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, Guy de Maupassant, and Edgar Allan Poe, aligning brief biographical sketches with theoretical emphasis on narcissism and projection. He saw the double as both a reflection of self-love and a rival. His massive work on the incest-motif, *Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage* (1912, *The Incest Theme in Literature and Legend*) ; was a broad survey of Oedipal dynamics in European and world literature and mythology.

2.3.2 SHARPE :

Less well known than Jones or Rank, Ella Freeman Sharpe deserves mention because of her unique attention to language, especially metaphor. Sharpe came to psychoanalysis from literature, which she had been teaching. Many of her literary analyses follow Freud's: her essay "The Impatience of Hamlet" (1929) continued Jones's study (the early version published in 1910) and deepened it to consider pre-Oedipal issues, as well as the therapeutic functions of art. She wrote: "The poet is not Hamlet. Hamlet is what he might have been if he had not written the play of *Hamlet*" (205).

2.3.3 MARIE BONAPARTE :

One of the fullest early developments of Freudian analysis of a single author was produced by Marie Bonaparte. Perhaps best known for her munificence in helping Freud and his family escape the Nazis in 1938, Princess Bonaparte wrote an immense study of Edgar Allan Poe (1933), Freud wrote a brief preface to the work, which is a thorough effort to relate biographical details to all aspects of the artist's literary production. Bonaparte relied heavily on Freud's theoretical relation of the poet to the dreamer ("Creative Writers and Day-dreaming," 1908) and translated backwards from literature to unconscious wishes and fears, producing reductive psycho sexual allegories. Hers was a primary-process criticism that tried to collapse conventional forms of literary representation in favour of regressive translations to unconscious origins. She viewed Poe, for example, as a writer who transformed private traumata into fiction, principally the death of his mother when he was two, whose artistic goal was to resurrect a living bond to a dead woman, a project simultaneously thrilling

and terrifying. Bonaparte was especially attentive to characters, creatures, landscapes, and architecture as split or overdetermined representations of obsessive figures and themes. Her book was an extensive elaboration of Freud's dreamwork — condensation, displacement, symbolism.

2.3.4 CREWS

Probably the best contemporary illustration of traditional Freudian criticism is the early work of Frederick Crews. Along with Harold Bloom and Norman Holland, Crews encouraged, by instruction and example, much of the psychoanalytic criticism practiced in America since the mid-1960s. His seminal book on Nathaniel Hawthorne (1966) rescued that writer from conventional moralistic allegory and attended seriously to the dark landscape of sexual ambivalence that energizes his fiction. "The form of [Hawthorne's] plots," wrote Crews, "often constitutes a return of the repressed" (17). Hawthorne's fascination with Puritans and the cultural history of guilt, said Crews, reflects his own unconscious impulses, which tend primarily to be Oedipal (79).

2.4 FREUD RE-CONCEPTUALIZED :

Classical Freudianism was re-conceptualised by four literary theorists who argued that the content of psychic fantasy was relevant to literary study as well as to therapy. As they derived from Sigmund Freud, evidence for extra linguistic 'ontology' they are distinguishable, too, from strict Lacanian theorists.

2.4.1 KLEIN

Malanie Klein was a prominent member of the interwar "English school" of psychoanalysis in London, which modified Freudian theory in significant ways. For Klein, literature and fantasy reflect the drive. Following her intuition of a parallel between dreams and children at play, Klein undertook the first serious and extensive analyses of young children, a study which culminated in *The Psycho-Analysis of Children* (1932). There Klein hypothesized the existence of a pre-Oedipal phase (or "position" in her terminology) in which children introject their first object, the breast, splitting it into ideal and persecutory modes, an action that corresponds to the genesis of ego and superego. To her this introjection and 'splitting' presupposes the existence of a nonlibidinous aggressive drive. Children later experience "the depressive position," in which the final loss of the good object becomes the prototype of all subsequent mourning. Psychic life consists of symbiotic anxieties at the prospect of annihilation or loss and defences that are expressed in mature love as alternations between guilt and reparation. Aside from a posthumously published essay on *The Oresteia*, Klein wrote no literary interpretation; however, her modifications of Freudian theory have been of interest to contemporary critics. In challenging the supremacy of the Oedipus

complex, Klein presented an alternative psychoanalytic account of feminine sexuality. Rather than conceiving girls as arriving at sexuality through deprivation or lack, Klein redefined penis envy as a defence against a more primordial fear, the attack from either parent — as introjected in the nascent superego. In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Julia Kristeva drew on the Kleinian theory of the drive to argue that suprapro-Oedipal processes correspond to the semiotic (27, 151-52). Toril Moi argued that Cixous's mother figure may be based in part on Klein's "Good Mother" (115). Margery Durham used Kleinian theory in her explication of Coleridge's "Christabel", and Simon Stuk applied Klein's theories to Romantic poets, especially William Blake and William Wordsworth.

2.4.2 LESSER :

Like Klein, whom he cited with approval, Simon O. Lesser found in the developmental aspects of Freudianism its greatest explanatory power. For Simon O. Lesser and Norman N. Holland, texts evoke in readers intrapsychic struggles characterized chiefly by strategies of defence. Lesser was one of the first American critics to argue that the experience of reading and interpreting literature should be understood psychoanalytically, as a function of the ego's defences against taboo impulses, especially as these impulses are stimulated by fantasies evoked by the text. Relying on the work of Klein, Ernst Kris, and Otto Fenichel, Lesser advanced this hypothesis in articles collected in *Fiction and the Unconscious* (1957) and in *Whispered Meanings* (1977). There he posited the superiority of his psychoanalytic approach over the methods of New Criticism on the grounds that formalist criticism was naive in its misunderstanding of the source of the reader's identification with the narrators and protagonists of fiction. Lesser's best-known demonstration of his case is his reading of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," which he saw as depicting unacknowledged Oedipal and aggressive forces in its hero, Robin. Lesser found similar dyads of fantasy and defence in works by Sherwood Anderson, T. S. Eliot, and Herman Melville. Following Klein, he viewed literary form as functioning to enable the ego to contemplate otherwise repugnant or offensive material.

2.4.3 HOLLAND :

Lesser's influence on Norman N. Holland has been explicitly acknowledged. The younger critic recognized his predecessor's innovation in using the tenets of psychoanalysis to understand the act of reading literature. Holland developed his strategy with diverse, increasingly sophisticated tactics. He began his career as a student of drama — Reformation comedy and Shakespeare — in books that analysed the function of costume, disguise, and role in the metamorphosis of identity. With *Psychoanalysis and Shakespeare* his criticism became overtly Freudian, although his objectives were still text-centred. But in *The Dynamics of Literary Response* and after-

wards, Holland developed a reader-response criticism that drew upon psychoanalytic and psychological traditions of ego development. Holland's argument in *Dynamics* was close to Lesser's in *Fiction and the Unconscious*. He argued that readers experience literature as a transformation of unconscious fantasy materials. However, in later works Holland denied that the text actually "contained" as a totality the core of fantasies that would induce individual, partial transformations in the readers. In works since *Five Readers Reading* he exchanged his earlier text-centred model for a wholly interactive one that defines text as promptuary and the experience of reading as part of infinitely recursive feedback loops in which readers are located. Holland's goal was to unify and synthesize reader-response criticism by articulating its affinities with psychiatry, psychology, phenomenology, and aesthetics. At the same time, his work has accorded increasing importance to individual variations in interpretation. In addition, he advocated and exemplified the view that critics must acknowledge their own anxieties, defences, and even socio-political biases in dealing with texts. In his most recent work he calls for reader-response criticism to become conscious of such unacknowledged presuppositions by learning from questions raised by feminist, Third World, and gay critics.

2.4.4 BROWN :

Norman O. Brown's vigorous interpretation of Freud still remains influential. Brown wrote two principal contributions to contemporary criticism: *Life Against Death* (1959) and *Love's Body* (1966). In *Life Against Death* he offered a radical interpretation of Freud drawing on classical literature, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Continental writers of the Freudian Left, especially Wilhelm Reich and Geza Roheim. Brown argued that Freud's importance lay in his depiction in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) of a universal neurosis. To him, the institution of repression implied the seemingly permanent human subjugation to a life of illusion and sublimation. That repression was evidenced in the fall from the polymorphous perversity of infantile sexuality through oral, anal, and phallic stages to the tyranny of genital organization. Orthodox academic or clinical interpretations of Freud plot with the forces of repression by emphasizing the necessity to adapt to societal norms that were by definition sick and the only chance for some "way out" of this dilemma was to be found in Freud's metapsychological speculations on Eros and Thanatos, the life and death drives (or *libido* and *Todestrieb*). The "way out" that Brown adumbrated is set forth in "The Resurrection of the Body" the last chapter in *Life Against Death*. Brown interpreted Freud's "oceanic feeling" from *The Future of an Illusion* (1928) to denote a desire for union between the self and the world that, once recovered, can heal the divisions created by repression. Brown saw repression itself as equiprimordial with the separation of the infant from the mother. Thus, the "resurrection of the body" implied the restoration of that time "before the fall" into

repression. In this way he linked his "way out" with Christian eschatology.

One of the most influential sections of *Life Against Death* has been its fifth part, "Studies in Analogy," in which Brown analysed Protestantism, the scatological poems of Jonathan Swift, and the representation of money in literature. He argued that poetry dramatizes the horror of sublimation and repression. Regarding Protestantism, he held that the Lutheran equation of the world with the devil, born of the link between money and excrement, anticipates his own indictment of a world given over to the death instinct.

Brown's intent in *Love's Body* was to pursue to its logical conclusion the "way out" briefly sketched at the end of *Life Against Death*. The path to the realization of his absolute unity is traced through psychological, historical, and social stages, beginning with a perception of separateness and the repression of political society, through intellectual rebellion to the achievement of fulfilment, freedom, and perhaps nothingness. The book exemplifies and urges the inner journey or quest, and its advocacy is based loosely on Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism*. Brown paraphrased and quoted directly from more than three hundred works in the mystical tradition he celebrated which resulted in a mosaic in which the intellectual affinities of various authors are asserted through juxtaposition. Brown's mosaic technique was a consequence of his attack on sequential logic and rationality, in both books, as intensifications of repression and sublimation.

2.5 JACQUES LACAN'S THEORY

Western humanist ideas of self or personhood are defined by the working of consciousness, including rationality, free will, and self-reflection. For Freud and for psychoanalysis in general however, action, thought, belief, and the concepts of "self" are all determined or shaped by the unconscious, and its drives and desires. Jacques Lacan, a French psychoanalyst was originally trained as a psychiatrist, and in the 1930s and 40s he worked with psychotic patients. In the 1950s he began to develop his own version of psychoanalysis, based on the ideas articulated in structuralist linguistics and anthropology. Freud's notion of the unconscious was one of the ideas that began to question, or to destabilize, that humanist ideal of the stable, unified self; he was one of the precursors of post-structuralism in that regard. But Freud also hoped that, by bringing the contents of the unconscious into consciousness, he could minimize repression and neurosis — he made a famous declaration about the relation between the unconscious and conscious, stating that "*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*" (Where It was, shall I be). In other words, the *id* (unconscious) will be replaced by the "I", by consciousness and self-identity. Freud's goal was to strengthen the ego or the conscious / rational identity, making it more powerful than the unconscious. For

Lacan, this project became impossible. The ego can never take the place of the unconscious or displace it or control it, because, for Lacan, the ego or "I" self is only an illusion, a product of the unconscious itself. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the unconscious is the ground of all being.

Central to the conception of the human, in Lacan, was the notion that the unconscious, which governs all factors of human existence, is structured like a language. He based this on Freud's theory of the two main mechanisms of unconscious processes, *condensation* and *displacement*. Both phenomena are essentially linguistic, where meaning is either condensed (in metaphor) or displaced (in metonymy). Lacan noted that Freud's dream analyses, and most of his analyses of the unconscious symbolism used by his patients, depended on word-play — on puns, associations, etc. that are chiefly verbal. Lacan noted that the contents of the unconscious are acutely aware of language, and particularly of the structure of language. And here he followed ideas presented by Saussure, but modified them as well. Lacan focused on relations between signifiers alone, and not among the signifier and signified. Lacan felt that there are no signifieds. The elements in the unconscious, he stated — wishes, desires, images — all form signifiers, usually expressed in verbal terms, and these signifiers form a "signifying chain"; one signifier has meaning only because it is not some other signifier. Because of this lack of signifieds, Lacan said, the chain of signifiers — $x=y=z=b=\pm q=0=\%=\mid=s$, constantly slide and shift and circulate. There is no anchor, nothing that ultimately gives meaning or stability to the whole system. The chain of signifiers is constantly in play, and one signifier only leads to another signifier, and never to a signified. Lacan said that this is what the unconscious looks like — a continually circulating chain or multiple chains of signifiers, with no anchor, and so to use Derrida's terms, no center. This was Lacan's linguistic translation of Freud's picture of the unconscious as this chaotic realm of constantly shifting drives and desires. To Lacan, the process of becoming an adult, a "self", is the process of trying to fix, to stabilize and to stop the chain of signifiers so that stable meaning, including the meaning of "I" becomes possible. At the same time, Lacan said that this possibility is only an illusion, an image created by a misperception of the relation between body and self.

Freud talked about three stages of polymorphous perversity in infants: the oral, the anal, and the phallic; he stated that the Oedipus complex and Castration complex are ones that end polymorphous perversity and create "adult" beings. Lacan created a different set of categories to explain a similar trajectory, from infant to adult. He talked about three concepts — need, demand, and desire — that roughly correspond to three phases of human development — the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic. The Symbolic realm, to Lacan is the equivalent of adulthood, or, more specifically the Symbolic realm is the structure of language itself, which humans have, to enter into in order to become stable speaking subjects.

2.5.1 THE REAL :

Lacan stated that the infant starts out as something inseparable from its mother. There is no distinction between self and other, from the infant's perspective. The infant to both Freud and Lacan has no sense of self or individuated identity, and no sense even of its body as a coherent unified whole. The infant is driven by satisfiable *needs*, be it food, comfort, safety, which can be satisfied by objects. When the infant needs food, it gets the mother's breast or a bottle, when it needs safety, it gets hugged. In this state of need, the infant doesn't recognize any distinction between itself and the objects that meet its needs and it doesn't also recognize that an object is part of another whole person as it doesn't develop the concept of a 'whole' person. This is the state of "nature" which is broken up for the formation of "culture". The infant eventually separates from its mother, forms a separate identity, in order to enter into civilization. That separation entails some kind of a *loss* as the child begins to perceive the difference between itself and its mother. As it starts to become an individuated being, it loses that primal sense of unity, and one must not forget, security, that it originally had. This is the element of the tragic incorporated into psychoanalytic theory that, becoming a civilized "adult" always entails the profound loss of an original non-differentiated unity, and with the (m)other. The infant, according to Lacan, who has not yet made this separation, exists in the realm of the real. The Real is a psychic place where there is this original unity and therefore there is no absence or loss or lack. The Real phase is all fullness and completeness, where there's no need that cannot be satisfied. And precisely because of this reason, there being no absence or loss or lack, there is no language in the Real. The Real is thus always beyond language, unrepresentable in language and therefore irretrievably lost when one enters into language.

The Real, and the phase of need, lasts from birth till 6 to 18 months, when the infant starts to be able to distinguish between its body and everything else in the world. At this point, the infant shifts from having needs to having demands which are not satisfiable with objects. A demand is related to recognition and love from another which can't really be fully satisfied. The infant becomes aware that it is separate from its mother, that she is an other though it is yet unaware of the binary opposition of self / other simply because the coherent sense of self is unformed. That awareness of separation, or the fact of otherness, creates an anxiety and a sense of loss. The infant then demands an impossible reunion, a retreat to that original sense of fullness and non-separation that it had in the Real and wants the idea of the "other" to disappear to pacify the experience of lack. But that lack, or absence, the sense of "other-ness", is the condition for the baby becoming a self / subject, in other words, a functioning cultural being. One should remember that the 6-to-18 month infant also can't say what it wants.

2.5.2 THE IMAGINARY

This leads to a discussion of what Lacan called the mirror stage. At this age, between 6 and 18 months, the infant or child doesn't yet have control over its own body, its own movements, and it doesn't even have a sense of its body as a whole. Rather, the infant experiences its body as fragmented, or in pieces. However, the child in this stage can imagine itself as whole — because it sees other people, and perceives them as whole beings. According to Lacan at some point in this period, the infant will see itself in a mirror. It will look at its reflection, then look back at a real person — its mother or anybody — then look again at the mirror image. In this action the child moves “from insufficiency to anticipation”. The mirror, and the moving back and forth from mirror image to other people, gives it a sense that it, too, is a whole person, an integrated being. It thus moves from a “fragmented body” to an “orthopaedic vision of its totality”, to a vision of itself as whole and integrated. The vision is “orthopaedic” because it serves as a crutch, a corrective instrument, an aid to help the child achieve the status of wholeness. What the child anticipates is a sense of self as a unified separate whole; the child sees that it looks like what “others” also look like. Eventually, this entity the child sees in the mirror, this whole being, will be a “self,” an entity designated by the word “I”. The identification however, is, a mis-recognition, because the image is not what it can call “me”, its only an image. But another person, usually the mother, reinforces the mis-recognition. She guarantees the “reality” of the connection between the child and its image, and the idea of the integrated whole body the child is seeing and identifying with. To the child, the image in the mirror as a summation of its entire being becomes its “self”. This process, of misrecognizing one's self in the image in the mirror, creates the “armour” of the subject, the ego, the thing that proclaims “I”. In Lacan's terms, this misrecognition creates an illusion or misperception of wholeness, integration, and totality that surrounds and protects the fragmented body. To Lacan thus, ego or self, or “I”-identity, is always on some level a *fantasy*, an identification with an external image, instead of being an internal sense of separate whole identity. This is why Lacan called the phase of demand, and the mirror stage, the realm of the *imaginary* as the idea of a self is created through an imaginary identification with the image in the mirror. The realm of the imaginary is where the alienated relation of self to its own image is created and maintained. The imaginary remains a realm of images, whether conscious or unconscious. It's a pre-linguistic, and pre-oedipal phase but very much grounded in visual perception, or what Lacan called “specular imaging”.

The mirror image, the whole person the baby mistakes as itself, is known in psychoanalytic terminology as an “ideal ego,” that becomes internalised, a perfect and a whole self which has no insufficiency, no lack, no notion of absence or incompleteness. Humans build their sense of “self, their “I”-identity, by (mis)identifying

with this ideal ego. The fiction of the stable, whole, unified self that one sees in the mirror becomes a compensation for having lost the original oneness with the mother's body. This accords with the passing over from nature to culture. To Lacan the child's self-concept, its ego or "I" identity never matches up to its own being. The Imaginary becomes the psychic place, or phase, where the child projects its ideas of "self" onto the mirror image it sees. The mirror stage cements a self/ other dichotomy, where previously the child had known only "other" but not its "self." For Lacan, the notion of Otherness, encountered in the imaginary phase (and associated with demand), comes before the sense of "self," which in turn is built on the idea of Otherness. Thus, the identification of the self always comes in terms of the other.

2.5.3 THE SYMBOLIC

When the child has formulated some idea of Otherness, and of a self identified with its own "other," that is, its own mirror image, then the child begins to enter the *symbolic* realm. To Lacan, the Symbolic and the Imaginary are overlapping, and in some respects they always coexist. The Symbolic order is the structure of language itself, all humans enter it in order to become speaking subjects, and to designate themselves by an "I". For Lacan these ideas — of other and Other, of lack and absence, of the (mis)identification of self with o/Other — are all worked out on an individual level, with each child, but they form the basic structures of the Symbolic order, of language, which the child must enter in order to become an adult member of culture. So, in the Symbolic, there remains a structure or structuring principle of Otherness, and of lack. The Other (with a capital O) to Lacan, is a structural position in the Symbolic order. It is the place that everyone tries to get to and merge with, in order to get rid of the separation between "self" and "other". It is, in Derrida's sense, the centre of the system, of the symbolic and/or of language itself. But the position of the Other creates and sustains a never-ending lack, which Lacan calls *desire*, (a desire to be the Other as it were) a desire to be the center of the system, the center of the Symbolic, the centre of language itself.

2.5.4 THE CENTRE

The centre is given a lot of names in Lacanian theory. It's the Other, it's also called the *phallus*. Here Lacan borrowed from Freud's original Oedipal theory. The mirror stage is pre-oedipal. He stated that the self wants to merge with the Other / mother (the most important other). It's the child's demand that the self/ other split be erased and so the child tries to fulfil the mother's desire. Unlike Freud's theory where the idea of lack is represented by the lack of a penis, in Lacan's terms, the threat of castration is a metaphor for the whole idea of Lack as a structural concept. For Lacan, it isn't the real father who threatens castration because the idea of lack, or Lack, is

essential to the concept and basic structuring of language. The Father, rather than being a person, becomes a function of the linguistic structure, a structuring principle of the Symbolic order. For Lacan, Freud's intimidating father becomes the Name-of-the-Father, or the Law-of-the-Father, or sometimes just the Law. Submission to the rules of language and thereby to the Law of the Father is required in order to enter into the Symbolic order. To Lacan the idea of the structure of language, and its rules, are specifically paternal. The Law-of-the-Father, or Name-of-the-Father, becomes another term for the Other, for the center of the system also called the phallus. The phallus, as a signifier of full presence, anchors and stabilizes the chains of signifiers which, in the unconscious, are floating and unfixed, always sliding and shifting.

One must note that the phallus is not the same as the penis. Penises belong to individuals; the phallus belongs to the structure of language itself. No one really has it, just like no one governs language or rules language. Rather, the phallus is the center. It governs the whole structure, it's what everyone (male and female) wants to have but cannot have. That's what Lacan called desire: the desire to be the centre and to rule the system, which is never satisfied because it can never be satisfied. This is because, as Lacan stated, every subject in language is constituted by / as lack, or Lack. The only reason we have language at all is because of the loss, or lack, of the union with the maternal body. In fact, it is the necessity in order to become part of "culture", to become subjects in language, that forces that absence, loss and lack.

2.5.5 DISTINCTION BETWEEN SEXES

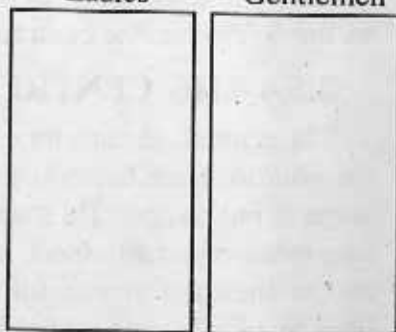
The distinction between the sexes is significant in Lacan's theory, though not in the same way it is in Freud's. This is what Lacan talked about in "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious," (741). He used two drawings there. One is of the word "Tree" over a picture of a tree — the basic Saussurean concept, of signifier (word) over signified (object).

Tree



Ladies

Gentlemen



Then he has another drawing, of two identical doors (the signifieds). But over each door is a different word: one says "Ladies" and the other says "Gentlemen."

Lacan explained: "A train arrives at a station. A little boy and a little girl, brother and sister, are seated in a compartment face to face next to the window through which the buildings along the station platform can be seen passing as the train pulls to a stop. 'Look,' says the brother, 'We're at Ladies!' cldiot! replies his sister, 'Can't you see we're at Gentlemen'." (742) Through this anecdote Lacan showed how boys and girls enter the Symbolic order, the structure of language, differently. In Lacan's view, each child can only see the signifier of the other gender; each child constructs its world-view, as the consequence of seeing an "other". As Lacan put it, "For these children, Ladies and Gentlemen will be henceforth two countries toward which each of their souls will strive on divergent wings." (742) Each child, each sex, has a particular position within the Symbolic order; from that position, each sex can only see or signify the otherness of the other sex. One might take Lacan's drawing of the two doors as doors, with their gender distinctions, through which each child must pass in order to enter into the Symbolic realm.

2.6 THE POST-LACANIAN THEORISTS

From the 1960s to the 80s a new wave mainly of French theorists and critics trained or influenced by Lacan began to extend or revise psychoanalysis even further to address institutional and ideological issues more directly. They argued that Lacan did not go far enough in probing precisely the areas characterizing his discourse, the psychoanalytic dimensions of the "subject". These post-Lacanian theorists included contributors in the late 1960s and 1970s to the French journal *Tel Quel*, feminists influenced by the theories of *deconstruction* and continental critics of the political Left.

2.6.1 CIXOUS :

Helene Cixous incorporated Lacanian strategies in feminism and deconstruction but did not challenge psychoanalytic discourse. She argued for a positive representation of femininity in a discourse that she termed 'écriture féminine'. In "The Laugh of the Medusa" she urged women to put their bodies into their writing. She enthusiastically wrote about the teeming female unconscious. She advocated an uncensoring of the woman, a recovering of her goods, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept under seal and a rejecting of guilt feelings. She was of the opinion that women's writing will eventually surpass the discourse regulating the phallogocentric system. She connected feminine writing with Lacan's pre-Oedipal and pre-linguistic imaginary phase in which difference is eradicated in a pre-linguistic Utopian unity of the child and the body of the mother.

2.6.2 KRISTEVA :

Julia Kristeva, followed Lacan in her conception of the subject and in her

problematic approach to the woman question. She dealt with twin polarities—the closed rational systems and the open, disruptive and irrational systems. She made clear demarcations between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* which she said, give rise to other polarities. She stated that in *avant-garde* literature, the primary processes invade the rational ordering of language and thereby threaten to disrupt the subjectivity of both speaker and reader. The subject no longer remains the source but becomes the site of meaning and undergoes a radical ‘dispersal’ of identity and loss of coherence. Language always retains some of the semiotic flux since for semiotic material to become symbolic there is a requirement of stabilisation, a repression of flowing and rhythmic drives (experienced by the infant in the pre-Oedipal phase). These psychosomatic pre-Oedipal drives are associated with the body of the mother. Thus the semiotic, Kristeva associated with the female body, and the symbolic with the Law of the Father which is the censoring and repressing factor instrumental in bringing discourse into being. She stated: “A woman cannot *ber; it is something which does not even belong in the order of being” \ (Marks and de Courtivron 137). As for writing, Kristeva saw women as facing two alternatives: either valorizing “phallic” dominance, associated with the privileged father-daughter relationship, which gives rise to the tendency toward mastery, or valorizing “a silent underwater body,” which entails the choice of marginalization (Marks and de Courtivron 166). The alternative she proposed is that women assume a negative function, one that would reject whole structures and explode social codes.

2.6.3 FELMAN :

Shoshana Felman also helped to shape Lacanian studies since the mid-1970s. And along with Anthony Wilden, Jane Gallop, and Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, she has been committed to exploring literary and cultural criticism in relation to what she frequently calls the force of his teaching, his “revolutionary” pedagogy. Her work involves, moreover, the movement of Lacanian studies in the 1980s toward an appreciation of Lacanian practice as actively engaged with postmodern and avant-garde modes of thought. For Felman, Lacan’s great contribution to contemporary culture was his teaching about rhetorical “performance” and “cognition,” doing and knowing. She drew on speech-act philosopher J. L. Austin’s definition of the “performative” as a rhetorical enactment, language use as separate from what it conveys, a pure doing. Rhetoric creates the “constative,” or cognitive, meaning as pure sense conveyed apart from how it came to be. The “revolutionary” dimension of Lacan’s pedagogy for Felman was the dialogism of the performative and constative, how in practice they undermine, deconstruct, and yet inform each other. These interactions of doing and undoing form the dynamic basis, said Felman, of psychoanalysis’ s “ineradicable newness” (12), its evergreen vitality and unceasing “revolutionary” nature. Building on this insight, Lacan has shown experience, largely unconscious, to be structured

like a language, since human behaviour manifests the dialectical interaction of conscious and unconscious experience, the double writing of that which is enacted beyond what can ever be known at any one moment. In Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight Felman brought pedagogy into psychoanalysis, which Lacan conceived to be fundamentally and already a teaching anyway, and to show that a pedagogue should teach in relation to the student's "unmeant knowledge" (77), the unconscious as it is inscribed but at the same time hidden in teaching as a kind of text. The "unmeant" becomes of paramount importance because "teaching, like analysis has to deal not so much with lack of knowledge as with resistances to knowledge" (79), unmeant knowledge being significant because its lapses and breaks are unconsciously motivated. In a reversal of priorities, Felman promoted "ignorance" and decentred "learning" as the primary preoccupation of teaching. Felman's rendition of Lacan was an implicit plea for adoption of a complex and subtle response to pedagogical discourse — respect for the "Other" conceived as the unconscious within language, respect given through the performative enactment of reading the unconscious text by actively recognizing resistances and absences and "unmeant" knowledge. Felman argued in her discussions of literature, criticism, and education that humans must read and interpret psychoanalytically so as to respond to the radical alterity of the impossibilities posed by the Other.

2.6.4 IRIGARAY :

Luce Irigaray's *Speculum de l'autre femme* (1974) reinforced the idea that the patriarchal oppression of women is founded on the negative constructions associated with Freud and Lacan's theories of female sexuality. With Cixious, Irigaray wanted to turn the idea of lack into an idea of excess and challenge the binary opposition that is evident in the phallogocentric system of language. The phallogocentric system generates many binary oppositions, one of which is: penis/vagina/nothing/clitoris/labia where the penis is privileged over both zero and multiples. In her article, "This Sex Which is Not One," Irigaray questioned the assumption that female sexuality is dependent upon male sexuality. She asked, and attempted to answer, such questions as: Where is female sexuality located if it always refers back to the penis? Where does female pleasure reside? What is female desire and what does it look like, if it looks like anything at all?; And why does Freud insist that the penis is the only true sex organ? Irigaray said that in this phallogocentric model, the kind of sexuality that gets privileged is one based on looking because the one sexual organ, the penis, is visible. So the Freudian model of sexuality, which privileges the penis, is based on the visual; it is scopophilic. Irigaray talked about female sexual desire without the maternal instinct, she divorced female pleasure from a woman's reproductive capacities just as in the case of men. Irigaray posited female pleasure as auto-erotic and contrasted

this auto-erotic female pleasure to the Freudian notion of the active male sexuality/passive female sexuality. In contrast to the masculine construct of language, which is rational, linear and privileged by the patriarchal culture, a woman's language, she said is filled with ebb and flow, multiple beginnings, and multiple paths. Irigaray questioned the privileging of the visual over the non-visual and stated that true heterosexuality is impossible within the Freudian system because a male's desire is to reunite with the mother's body and the female's desire is to obtain a penis. Under such models, sexuality becomes indirect: the man and woman do not relate to each other directly but respond to unmet childhood needs. They relate to each other in the roles of mother and father or look to the partner to fulfil and resolve the Oedipal complex. Thus, the couple continually miss each other under the phallogocentric Freudian system. Irigaray believed that sexuality should be reconfigured so that women and men can directly relate to each other, without the intervention of reproduction and/or a child. This reconfiguration would be based on the diffuse nature of female sexuality that is present everywhere in a woman's body and not confined to a single male sex organ. Such a system might not only liberate female sexuality but male sexuality as well, in that it might destroy the idea that male sexuality is located in only one place and thus liberate men as well to explore their own sexuality in all its facets. She envisioned a sexuality and a system based on excess and plurality, one in which females and males relate to one another directly; a sexuality and system that is limitless in scope, fluid in practice, ever-changing and ever-expanding.

2.6.5 MONTRELAY :

Michele Montrelay saw her writing as a contribution to a better understanding of the laws, structure, and dynamic of the unconscious, and was convinced that in our civilization, psychoanalysis, as theory and as treatment, was "one of the most precious, highest, most symbolic forms of freedom" (Jardine and Menke 254). She emphasized the political aspect of her work. In *V Ombre et le nom* (1977), she attempted to probe psychoanalytic concepts, such as the assumption of woman as a "dark continent" and others concerning gender relations that continue to function within Freudian discourse. Often close to representing femininity in traditional terms — the feminine as the shadow and the outside that supports culture — Montrelay was also concerned with exposing the phallogocentric bias in the Lacanian ethical hierarchy that privileges the Symbolic over the Imaginary. Rather than attempting to reverse the hierarchy, she proposed to shift the emphasis away from a hierarchy of values and to regard the imaginary not as "the poor relative" but as a necessity to give consistency to the Symbolic (155-56).

2.6.6 DELEUZE AND GUATTARI :

Felix Guattari began his work as a psychoanalyst trained in Lacan's school in Paris, and beginning in 1953 he also practiced at La Borde clinic, a radical experiment in providing non-institutionalised versions of therapy. In different ways, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari performed early "immanent" critiques of contemporary psychoanalytic and other discourses. When they began working together, they moved toward a radically "transformative" critique in the tradition of Cixous and Irigaray. Deleuze and Guattari, in short, were seeking to critique psychoanalysis to transform it altogether, ultimately to destroy it by unmasking its ideological foundation in the values of bourgeois and patriarchal culture. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1977, trans.; 1983) and *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980, trans., 1987) try to dissect psychoanalysis so as to institute truly new understandings and discourses for contemporary culture on the ashes of the old along three lines. First, they tried to expose the nature of repression and castration as fundamental to psychoanalytic machinery. Second, they critiqued the psychoanalytic characterization of the unconscious as an ideal of static being rather than active production. And third, they tried to expose the situating of discourse within the hegemonic constraints of the Oedipal narrative. The buried supposition behind the term "castration," as Deleuze and Guattari showed, is "that there is finally only one sex, the masculine, in relation to which the woman, the feminine, is [also] defined as a lack, an absence" (*Anti-Oedipus* 294). Deleuze and Guattari challenged this hegemonic version of cultural regulation as promulgated to advance a "molar" and essentialist conception of males against which they posited, the "molecular", the non-essentialist conception of the unconscious, producing positive "multiplicities" and "flows" (295), potentially not just "two sexes, but n sexes," perhaps "a hundred thousand" (296).

Deleuze and Guattari projected the "post-Oedipal" as a world without the genital and Oedipal organization characteristic of Western culture which they felt would produce, among many other things, a radically liberated human body, a "body without organs" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 285), a body of energy "flows" and "excesses" that is capable of "becoming an animal" (259) in the specific sense that psychoanalysis, with its Western belief in castration and Oedipal commitments, "doesn't understand becoming an animal" (259). As literary critics, they tended to become deconstructive readers who challenged and dismantled the unities of realism and its metonymic effects of familiarity in a text. Ultimately, they wished to deconstruct the textual authority of the paternal metaphor that is at the heart of Oedipus.

2.6.7 CHODOROW :

Another promising work in feminist psychoanalysis was Nancy Chodorow's *The*

Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (1978) where she studied and revised the pre-Oedipal phase and the process of psycho-sexual differentiation where the child begins to perceive the self as separate and develop ego and body boundaries. Differentiation, she stated, takes place in relation to the mother, the primary caretaker. The mother, a woman, becomes and remains for children of both genders "the other, or object." The child develops core gender identity concomitantly with differentiation, but the process differs in the case of boys and girls. The boy learns his gender identity as being not-female and the process requires constant reinforcement. The girl's core gender identity, Chodorow found to be positive, as it is based on sameness, continuity and identification with the mother. She stated that women's difficulties with feminine identity come after the Oedipal phase where male power and patriarchal hegemony transform the values related to sex differences. Chodorow suggested shared parenting and the involvement of men as primary caretakers of children which would have a profound influence on our sense of sex difference, gender identity and sexual preference.

2.7 REVIEW QUESTIONS : Psychoanalytic Criticism

- A.
 - 1. Explain what is meant by the *id*, the *ego* and the *superego*.
 - 2. Explain the stages that Freud mentioned in his psycho-sexual theory.
 - 3. Which 'complex' is mostly employed in traditional Freudian criticism?
 - 4. Write a short essay on Lacan's theory on psycho-analysis.
 - 5. Explain the concept of the 'Other' in Lacan.
 - 6. Explain Julia Kristeva's demarcations between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*.
- B.
 - 1. What did Freud mean by fixation? Briefly explain with an example.
 - 2. How did Holland re-conceptualise Freud?
 - 3. Explain how Klein undertook the first serious and extensive analyses of young children. How did she differ from Freud's theories?
 - 4. Explain Lacan's notion of the unconscious.
 - 5. What does Lacan mean by the *Law-of-the-Father*?
 - 6. How does Helene Cixous incorporate Lacanian strategies in feminism and deconstruction?
 - 7. Mention Luce Irigaray's contribution to Lacanian psychoanalytic criticism.

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UNIT 3 □ FEMINIST CRITICISM

Structure

- 3.0 Aims and Objectives**
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- 3.2 Feminist Theory and Criticism : The first wave**
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 - 3.3.3 Discourse**
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- 3.4 Marxist Feminism / Materialist Feminism**
 - 3.4.1 Firestone**
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 - 3.4.5 Coward, Belsey**
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- 3.5 Gynocriticism and Women's Writing :**
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- 3.7 Review Questions**
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3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES :

Feminist criticism has always been concerned with the impact of gender-bias on reading and writing. It usually begins with a critique of the ubiquitous patriarchal culture. It is concerned also with the place of female writers in the canon. Finally, it includes a search for a feminine theory or approach to texts. Feminist criticism is often revisionist. Feminism uncovers the ways in which social and cultural assumptions and structures are shaped by gender. By focusing on the extent to which traditional questions, theories and analyses have failed to take gender into account, Women's Studies (as a field) adopts a scholarly and critical perspective toward the experiences of women.

The objectives of Women's Studies include:

- finding out about women by raising new questions and accepting women's perceptions and experiences as real and significant;
- correcting misconceptions about women and identifying ways in which traditional methodologies may distort our knowledge ;
- theorizing about the place of women in society and appropriate strategies for change ;
- examining the diversity of women's experiences and the ways in which class, race, psycho-social perspectives, sexual orientation and other variables intersect with gender.

Although studying women is its starting point, by uncovering the ways in which social and cultural assumptions and structures are shaped by gender, one must not forget that Women's Studies also studies men and the world around us.

3.1 WOMEN'S STUDIES—AN INTRODUCTION

Women, like men, have always been a part of the human species and in all ages they have made up fifty percent of the human populace. The position of women however in the cultural matrix of the west has amazingly, never been equal to that of men. Women have been looked upon as inferior beings, subordinates in a totality where the two component parts — male and female — are necessary and complementary to each other. The relation of the two sexes has always been asymmetrical. The term *Man* in general represents the all-embracing term *Human*. *Man* is positive as well as neutral. *Woman*, on the other hand, is someone who is not a man, she is something negative, she is a person who is lacking in certain positive qualities — physical, moral and intellectual. This view has lasted till date down the ages, right from ancient times. Womanhood has been seen as a disadvantage, as is evident in the morning hymns of Jewish men: "Blessed be God... that he did not

make me a woman." The Bible states that Eve was created by God for Adam for his pleasure and to fill his loneliness. Aristotle said that: "The female is a female by virtue of a lack of certain qualities" and that "we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness." St Thomas Aquinas, thinking along the same lines called woman "an imperfect man." In the Aeschylus's *Oresteia* Athena grants victory after Apollo's argument that the mother has no rights of parenthood on her child. This victory asserts the rule of male principles over the sensuality of the female Furies — in other words, the rule of patriarchy over matriarchy. John Milton's personal conception of woman's status and capacities is found in *Paradise Lost*, Book IV. Adam and Eve are created: "He for God only, she for God in him" (1.299). Eve calls Adam her: "author and disposer, what thou biddest / Unargued I obey; so God ordains:/ God is thy law, thou mine..." (1.635-637). It is astonishing that woman's dependence has been thrust on her by men, it has not been the result of a socio-cultural change or a historical one. This shows that women have been inferiorized by culture and / or acculturated into inferiority.

3.2 FEMINIST THEORY AND CRITICISM : THE FIRST WAVE

Feminism developed as a formidable force, in America and in Europe throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The main impetus for feminist criticism came from the Women's Liberation movement focusing on Women's Rights and Women's Suffrage. Anglo American feminism of the early twentieth century was a reflex of these first-wave preoccupations. Around this time, many feminists were working and writing— Olive Schreiner, Elizabeth Robins, Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, Rebecca West, Ray Strachey, Vera Brittain, Winifred Holtby, Virginia Woolf, 'the founding mother of the contemporary debate' in Mary Eagleton's phrase, and Simone de Beauvoir.

3.2.1 VIRGINIA WOOLF :

Virginia Woolf offered the most important literary-critical model to feminists interested in recovering the experience of women writers. *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938) can be looked upon as two key texts which are major contributions to feminist theory. The first text *A Room of One's Own*, focuses on the history and social context of women's literary production, it gives an account of the frustrations that a fictional female researcher must go through to arrive at a theory of women and fiction. The prevalent gender bias hampers her access to the resources of the university, and historical and imaginative male accounts of woman, whether distorted by anger or by the imagination/ fail/ history and experience. Woolf imagined historical woman writers in their social contexts and searched out the sources of the bitterness she read in their works. The second text, *Three Guineas*,

examines the relations between male power and the professions of education, law, medicine among others and also analyses militarism, fascism and legal injustice as derivatives of patriarchy and early sexual division within the family. Jane Marcus, one of the active editors of Woolf collections, identifies Woolf as a socialist feminist. Like Lillian Robinson in *Sex, Class, and Culture*, Marcus asserts the importance of Woolf's radical feminist work *Three Guineas* although Woolf herself disavowed the label feminist in her text. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf advanced the notion that women indeed are victims of men but they too become schemers by acting as looking glasses which reflect back to men their desired image and thus add to both domestic and professional victimization.

Woolf as a major contributor to the feminist movement, recognized that gender-identity has always been socially constructed and needs to be challenged and transformed and she also examined the problems facing women writers because women have always faced social and economic obstacles when it came to the question of literary ambitions. Toril Moi is of the opinion that Woolf was not interested in a balance between masculine and feminine types but in a total displacement of fixed gender-identities. Woolf aimed at discovering linguistic ways of portrayal of the confined life of women and she advocated her belief that when women finally achieved socio-economic equality, nothing would prevent them from developing their artistic talents.

3.2.2 DE BEAUVOIR

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949, trans., 1953) is another trend-setting text. Coming from a French feminist and a pro-abortion and women's-rights activist, the text is an academic study that examines women from the perspectives of biology, psychoanalysis, and historical materialism, a feature in the first wave. The book slips over to the second wave feminism with its assertion of men's biological, psychological and economic discrimination against women. It traces the history of women from nomadic to twentieth-century Western culture, reviews their treatment by five literary authors and analyses their situations in contemporary life. *The Second Sex* distinguishes between biological sex and socially constructed gender and posits the destruction of patriarchy goading women to break out of men's objectification. Simone de Beauvoir viewed the relative yet hierarchical structure of gender in Western culture. She had a classic exposition of alterity (of woman as the 'Other'), Woman, she wrote, is "defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her. ... He is the Subject, he is the Absolute — she is the Other" (xvi). The alterity of woman she said, was an effect of androcentrism: "The categories in which men think of the world are established from their point of view, as absolute. ... A mystery for man, woman is considered to be mysterious in essence" (257). De Beauvoir boldly

stated that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (267), a being whose body and "relation to the world are modified through the action of others than herself" (725). In other words, womanhood is thrust upon her in accordance with patriarchal standards and not by her own preference. Women, she said, will achieve liberation only through their own agency or "positive action [in] human society" (678).

3.3 FEMINIST THEORY AND CRITICISM : THE SECOND WAVE

Second wave feminism continued to share the first wave's fight for women's rights covering all areas, but it focused primarily on the politics of reproduction, to women's experiences and sexual differences. Women's sexuality as a form of oppression came under scrutiny. Sexual difference came under five main foci: biology, experience, discourse, the unconscious and economic milieu.

3.3.1 EXPERIENCE AND ECONOMIC MILIEU

A decade after De Beauvoir, Betty Friedan came up with *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). This book analysed the situation of middle-class and upper-class women in the United States and Friedan found them suffering from a serious 'problem without a name'. Friedan noticed that as men acted in the world and women retreated to the home in the 1940s and 50s, men were empowered and women infantilised. She argued that women suffered "a stunting or evasion of growth that is perpetuated by the feminine mystique" (77). This mystique was a complacent femininity that made women economically, intellectually, and emotionally dependent upon husbands. Women continued to be told that a woman's place is in the home when Man's place was in the world that was widening. Women began to be left behind again because men continued to control their destinies with the help of their minds, that part of the anatomy, which became dormant again in the case of women. Betty Friedan stated:

Women also had minds. They also had the human need to grow. But the work that fed life and moved it forward was no longer done at home, and women were not trained to understand and work in the world. Confined to the home, a child among her children, passive, no part of her existence under her own control, a woman could only exist by pleasing man. She was wholly dependent on her protection in a world that she had no share in making; man's world. She could never grow up to ask the simple human question, "Who am I? What do I want?" ...She was, at that time, so completely defined as object by man, never herself as subject, "I", that she was not even expected to enjoy or participate in the act of sex. "He took his pleasure with her...he had his way with her", as the sayings went. (81)

Friedan felt that even if fathers tried to get sons to be "masculine," to be independent, active and strong, both parents often encouraged their daughters to be passive, weak, and grasping dependence known as "femininity," expecting her, to find "security" in a boy, never expecting her to live her own life.

Friedan's analysis was liberal in focusing on the identities of privileged women but more importantly also radical in criticizing the so-called liberal institutions—Freudian psychoanalysis, functionalist social science and sex-differentiated education offered in most universities, consumerism—all of which supported complementary sex roles. Revealing the frustrations of white, heterosexual American women without careers and trapped in the domestic sphere, Friedan for the first time put feminism on the national agenda. She went on to found NOW or the National Organisation of Women in 1966.

Second-wave feminism was thus dominated by certain bold themes—the omnipresence of patriarchal oppression, the insufficiency for women of existing political organizations and the celebration of women's difference as central to the cultural politics of liberation. It led to the critical reassessment of socialism and psychoanalysis and to the radical feminism of Kate Millett and lesbian-feminism of Adrienne Rich. It also led to the emergence of Anglo-American criticism and to the 'gynocriticism' of Showalter. The contradiction between female life and authorship was the subject of papers given by two prominent American women writers—Tillie Olsen and Adrienne Rich—at a 1971 forum sponsored by the MLA Commission on the Status of Women and later published in *College English* (1972). Olsen enumerated the experiences that prevented women from writing and movingly recounted the obstacles to her own creativity. Raising four children, working at a job, and keeping house, she wrote in snatches during bus rides from work or in the deep night hours for as long as she could stay awake ("Silences : When Writers Don't Write," *Images* 110). Rich also adverted to her own experiences: she was a daughter writing for her father, a poet learning her craft from male poets, a mother jotting fragments while her children slept, a woman who thought the choice was between love and egotism. "Revision," she argued, the act of seeing text and life "with fresh eyes," was more than a feminist critical method; it was "an act of survival" (18). A radical feminist literary criticism would take the text as a clue to "how we have been living, ...how our language has trapped as well as liberated us," and "how we can begin to see—and therefore live—afresh" (18). The point was "not to pass on a [patriarchal] tradition but to break its hold over us" (19).

3.3.2 BIOLOGY

Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970) consisted of "equal parts of literary and cultural criticism" (xii) verging toward political theory. Millett was a movement activist and doctoral student when she wrote this book as a dissertation. Defining

sexual politics as the "arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another" (23), she analysed the politics—ideological, biological, social, economic, educational, religious, psychological, and physical—that maintained the system of patriarchy. She announced her view of patriarchy that subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male and asserted that patriarchy exerts power directly or indirectly in domestic as well as civic life to constrain women. Millett distinguished between sex which is biologically determined and gender as a psychological concept which refers to culturally acquired sexual identity. She attacked social scientists who view culturally learned 'female' characteristics as 'natural'. The acting out of these gender-roles perpetuated in women's magazines and in family ideology which have always led to unequal and hierarchical relations between the sexes and this is what she termed "sexual politics". Sexual Politics was an analysis of the masculinist images of women in the historical, social and literary context. She devoted chapters to D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Norman Mailer, who mythologized a machismo "cornered by the threat of a second sexual revolution" (335), and to Jean Genet, who saw how women and homosexuals challenged the heterosexual categories. For her radical analysis, Millett was attacked in both popular and academic reviews. They accused her of scholarly improprieties and reviled her *ad feminam*. *Time* dubbed her the "Mao Tse-tung of Women's Liberation," and Norman Mailer described her as an acolyte killer with a sawed-off F shotgun ("The Prisoner of Sex", *Harper's*, March 1971). Her criticism was threatening because it was so powerful: it crossed many boundaries between disciplines, cultural domains, academic and trade readers thereby effectively revealing the pervasiveness of women's oppression in Western cultures.

Katharine M. Rogers extended the tradition of *querelle* scholarship in *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature* (1966). Rogers defined misogyny as direct and indirect "expressions of hatred, fear, or contempt of woman-kind" (xii). Her study revealed its pervasiveness in every genre—epics, lyrics, tragedies, novels, tracts, sermons, manuals and in every period from the biblical to the contemporary. Similarly, Eva Figes's *Patriarchal Attitudes* (1970) maintained that patriarchal attitudes toward women, though they were transmuted, survived intellectual change. In a critique of European thinkers—G. W. F. Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Otto Weininger, she explored the connections between will and sexual domination, sexism and racism, the categorical absolutism of German philosophy and the politics of the Third Reich.

While Friedan, Millet and others protested against the biological destiny carved out for women some radical feminists however, viewed women's biological attributes as sources of superiority rather than inferiority. They appealed to the special experience of being a woman as the source of positive female values in life and in art.

Elaine Showalter, focused on the literary representation of the sexual differences in women's writing. Taking a historical approach, Elaine Showalter contended that women writers had been forcibly alienated from their experiences. She found that nineteenth-century women were prohibited from writing what did not correspond to femininity and were loathed for doing so. Twentieth-century women, in turn, were trivialized for their portrayal of female experience, while male writers were admired for their "ruthless appropriation of life for their art" ("Women Writers and the Female Experience," *Radical Feminism* 400). Howe explained the contradiction thus: "Traditionally, a man's life is his work; a woman's life is her man. That a woman's life might have connections with her work is a revolutionary idea in that it might — indeed, must — lead her to examine and question her place as woman in the social order" ("Feminism," *Images* 254). Several studies of Mary Ellmann's in *Thinking About Women* as well as of Showalter's detailed the receptions of female-authored texts. The violent reception accorded to *Jane Eyre* was owing to its presentation of female passion and independence, thus making the sex of the author paramount in assessing it. "Many critics," Showalter noted, "bluntly admitted that they thought the book was a masterpiece if written by a man, shocking or disgusting if written by a woman" ("Women Writers and the Double Standard," *Woman in Sexist Society* 341). Carol Ohmann, in the same vein, discovered that reviewers who assumed *Wuthering Heights* was male-authored attributed power, originality, and clarity to it, while those who knew it was female-authored considered it an interesting addition to the tradition of women's novels in England. Ohmann found "considerable correlation between what readers assume or know the sex of the writer to be and what they actually see, or neglect to see, in 'his' or her work" ("Emily Bronte in the Hands of Male Critics," *College English* 909).

3.3.3 DISCOURSE

The female socio-linguist Robin Lakoff in *Language and Women's Place* (1975) stated that women's language too is inferior as it contains patterns of weakness, uncertainty, focusing on the trivial—the unserious, the frivolous, stressing on personal emotional responses. Dale Spender in his *Man Made Language* (1980) saw women oppressed by a male-dominated language. This is in tune with Foucault's argument that what is 'true' depends on who controls discourse and thus it becomes apparent that it is natural for women to be trapped inside a world of 'male-truth'.

3.3.4 THE UNCONSCIOUS

The psycho-analytic theories of Lacan and Kristeva provided the focus on the unconscious as discussed in Unit 2.

3.4 MARXIST FEMINISM / MATERIALIST FEMINISM

Although feminists and socialists have engaged in continuous conversations since the nineteenth century, those crosscurrents within literary theory that might be designated "materialist feminism" have their origins in the late 1960s with various attempts to synthesize feminist politics with Marxist analyses. Early work on this projected alliance directed itself, not to questions of literary criticism and theory, but to the problem of bringing feminist questions of gender and sexuality into some form of strategic dialogue with class analysis. In keeping with subsequent developments within the women's movement, the materialist feminist problematic has extended to questions of race, nationality or ethnicity, lesbianism and bisexuality, cultural identity, including religion and the very definition of power. Writers in the United States and the United Kingdom sometimes acknowledge the influence of French feminists such as Christine Delphy and Monique Wittig but have yet to engage fully with the critiques of Marxist theory being constructed by feminists working in other international locations.

The very term "materialist feminisms" proves controversial, since there has been little general consensus whether women's interests can, or indeed should, be addressed in terms of traditional socialist and Marxist formulas. In the United Kingdom, Juliet Mitchell's groundbreaking essay "Women: The Longest Revolution" (1966), which she expanded to book length in *Woman's Estate* (1971), initiated the revision of traditional Marxist accounts by analysing the position of women in terms not only of relations of production and private property but also of psychoanalytically based theories of sexuality and gender. Michele Barrett's highly influential *Women's Oppression Today* (1980) insisted that the way forward for feminists will necessarily involve direct engagement with and transformation of Marxist class analysis. In their editorial to the final issue of the important UK journal *m/f* (1978-86), Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie adopted a more extreme position, stating, "As socialist-feminists we were opposed to the much discussed union of Marxism and feminism" and sought instead "to problematize the notion of sexual difference itself through a fundamental critique of psychoanalytic categories (3). These differences should be understood as both intellectual and representative of a specific context of partisan disputes within the British Left. The situation however, differed in the United States, where, largely working outside the pressures of party politics but constrained by the memory of Joseph McCarthy, feminists as diverse as Lise Vogel, Zillah Eisenstein, Nancy Hartsock, and Donna Haraway identified themselves as "socialist feminists," thereby distinguishing their work from that of radical and liberal feminists, who contended that women's oppression will end with the achievement of women's power, or women's equality, within existing capitalist societies, positions strangely like the traditional

Marxist view that women's oppression would end once women entered into production. The importance of these critical positions and developments for feminist literary theory and criticism arises from their foundations in political theory, psychoanalysis, and sociology rather than from traditional literary concerns with questions of canon, form, genre, author, and oeuvre. Materialist feminist literary critics focus instead on key problems in language, history, ideology, determination, subjectivity, and agency from the basic perspective of a critique of the gendered character of class and race relations under international capitalism.

3.4.1 FIRESTONE

Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970) combined De Beauvoir's critiques of Freudian psychoanalysis and historical materialism with analyses of such cultural themes as romance. She regarded male domination as primary and quite independent of other forms of oppression — social and economic. Her theoretical aim was to substitute sex for class as the primary determinant in history. She represented the class-struggle as a product of the patriarchal family unit. Instead of analogizing from race to sex, as some feminists had done, she declared that "racism is a sexual phenomenon" (122) and examined the relations of both categories in terms of a nuclear family engaged in Oedipal dramas and capitalist transactions.

3.4.2 RUTHVEN

Marxist feminism's primary aim was to open up the complex relations between gender and the economy. K.K. Ruthven in *Feminist Literary Studies: An Introduction* observed:

In *The Origin of the Family* (1884) Engels bypasses the problem of primacy by arguing that 'the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male', thus legitimating the familiar equation of the husbands with the bourgeoisie and wives with the proletariat. Any social system in which a Marxist analysis uncovers oppressive practices becomes metaphorical in feminist rhetoric of the oppression of women: class, race, slavery and colonisation furnish the dominant tropes of oppression. If male-female relations are construed in class terms, for instance, men are always the ruling class.

Firestone's approach was markedly integrative at a time when many leftists saw no connection between the classicism or racism they opposed and women's oppression. Firestone pointed at the need for a psychosocial synthesis.

3.4.3 MITCHELL

The significance of Juliet Mitchell's work for feminist literary theory is indirect

yet fundamental. Initially trained as a literary scholar, Mitchell focused on questions concerning the family and child rearing by means of a feminist critique of psychoanalytic theories of sexual development largely based upon a literary-critical examination of texts within the Freudian and Marxist canons. Mitchell's project, continued in her influential *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974) and *Women: The Longest Revolution* (1984), which reprints her 1966 essay alongside exemplary studies of literary texts, inflects feminist politics with insights from Marxism and psychoanalysis. With Jacqueline Rose (in their edition of Jacques Lacan's *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the "ecole freudienne,"* 1982), she continued the engagement between the psychoanalytic theories of Lacan and materialist feminist thinking in Britain. Working from the Freudian principle that "the fate of the adult personality can be largely decided in the initial months of life" and the Marxist principle of dialectical materialism that "human society is, and always will be, full of contradictions" (*Woman's Estate* 118, 90), Mitchell criticized "the voluntarist underestimation of the great difficulty of psychic change," since, she argued, "the best-cared for child has a caretaker who has grown up with problems—this will always be the case. And these problems will be transmitted in an uneven way" (McRobbie 87). Mitchell's consistent emphasis upon critically reading Marxist, Freudian, and Lacanian discourses on sexuality and socialization leads to questions of ideology and literary representation that are of considerable importance for such feminist literary studies as Jacqueline Rose's *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (1986) and Jane Gallop's *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (1982), which takes *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* as its "point of departure" (xiii).

3.4.4 BARRETT

For a sociologist of knowledge like Michele Barrett literary questions were contingent rather than central. Her treatment of ideology in *Women's Oppression Today*, however, has been highly influential among feminist literary theorists. According to Barrett, the political urgencies of women's liberation bear directly on the need for a feminist analysis of "culture," and it is here that the problematic relationship of Marxism and feminism engages questions important to literary theory, in particular questions of aesthetics, subjectivity, and ideology. In "Feminism and the Definition of Cultural Politics," her 1980 lecture to the Communist University of London, Barrett addressed three issues of direct importance to materialist feminist literary theory- 1) the indeterminacy of artistic and literary meaning, 2) the relationship between women's art and feminist art, and 3) the problem of judging aesthetic value and pleasure. Barrett focused on the literary problem of "signification," the "systems of signs . . . through which meaning is constructed, represented, consumed and reproduced" (38). Artistic and literary meanings are determinable but not fixed.,

since meaning "may depend on who is reading or receiving . . . and how they do so" (39). This was not an argument for total indeterminacy, however, since for Barrett every work does carry a "dominant, or preferred, reading" (42) that limits the range of possible meanings. Barrett regarded literary texts, art objects, and dramatic performances as marked by inner contradictions that cannot easily be adjudicated by reference to the artist's life or intentions. She agreed with Rosalind Coward that women's art is not necessarily feminist, since feminism "is an alignment of political interests and not a shared female experience" (42), but was reluctant to follow Coward and abandon female experience entirely. Barrett approached the question as to how we distinguish cultural production in general from "art" within the framework of a historical materialist critique of ideology: "It is only the degradation of work under capitalist relations of production, including the degree to which workers have been stripped of mental control over their labour, that makes us perceive such a huge gulf between work and what we call 'creative' work" (48-49). Arguing that feminists ignore the dual question of aesthetic value and pleasure to their peril, Barrett found the traditional assumption that value judgments can and should be made a highly suspicious assumption for feminist politics, since such judgments about "value" invariably tend to reinforce the values of the dominant classes as apparently natural and universal. Barrett's materialist aesthetics was a seeking to democratise the relation between the producer and the consumer of art. Skills, though socially defined, are not innate but acquired and therefore improvable, while the imaginative rendering of social life in works of art and literature is typically foreclosed in much feminist criticism by an undue emphasis upon the work's content as unmediated representation. Politics came first for Barrett, since literature and art help constitute social life but do not determine it: "Cultural politics, and feminist art, are important precisely because we are not the helpless victims of oppressive ideology. We take some responsibility for the cultural meaning of gender and it is up to us all to change it" (58).

3.4.5 COWARD, BELSEY

If for Barrett questions of literature, art, and aesthetic pleasure were important but not determining — there remained those "more fundamental changes" to be worked out. For Rosalind Coward, Catherine Belsey, Toril Moi, and Cora Kaplan the critical study of literary texts became of primary importance to the development and enunciation of a feminist politics firmly committed to socialism. In *Patriarchal Precedents* (1983), Coward critically historicized from a feminist perspective the various disciplines within which sexual relations have traditionally been studied. For Coward, Lacan's observation that the unconscious is structured like a language provided the basis for a materialist feminist approach to Semiotics that addressed how different forms of popular culture help construct gendered social subjects in ways that perpetuate

oppressive social relations (*Female Desire*, 1984). Belsey's *Critical Practice* (1980) argued that "the recurrent suppression of the role of language" in traditional literary criticism is an ideological move by which the "correct" reacting of a text installs the reader as "transcendent subject addressed by an autonomous and authoritative author" (55). Belsey developed this bringing together of Lacanian and Althusserian theories of the subject in *The Subject of Tragedy* (1987), which rereads English Renaissance drama from a materialist feminist perspective, arguing that the emergence of liberal ideologies during the capitalist era has required the "interpellation" of women as, in part, willing subjects of their own oppression in relation to a normative and universal male Self. This critique of liberal humanism emphasized the political importance of history, as well as the need for readings of literary texts against the grain of their ideological commitments.

3.4.6 MOI

Moi's *Sexual / Textual Politics* (1985) challenged the humanist presuppositions informing the influential feminist literary criticism of Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Annette Kolodny, and Myra Jehlen. In their antisexist focus on female authors and readers, Moi contended, feminist literary critics adopt what Marcia Holly calls a "noncontradictory perception of the world" (10) that mystifies rather than disables patriarchal assumptions by positing for itself a place outside ideology. Celebrating women writers and readers as such re-inscribe the unitary self and thereby beg the political questions of agency and resistance, "of how it is that some women manage to counter patriarchal strategies despite the odds stacked against them" (64).

3.4.7 KAPLAN AND CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK

In Kaplan's work, and in that of Mary Jacobus and Penny Boumelha, the collective interest "in developing a Marxist feminist analysis of literature" (61) continued, producing class-sensitive critiques of sexual ideology in various literary texts of the post-industrial era in contrast to Belsey's focus on the literature of the early capitalist period. Kaplan wrote that her experience in the collective enabled her to overcome her fear of "theory," an antipathy that persisted among the U.S. feminist literary critics. Not all US feminist critics, however, shared this fear. Some of the most important US contributions to materialist feminist criticism came from socialists and feminists working directly with the interrelated literary problems of sexuality, racial difference, the politics of language, and postcoloniality, questions barely addressed by U.K. materialist feminists.

The essays in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *In Other Worlds* (1987) and the interviews in *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (ed. Sarah Harasym, 1990) emphasized the complicities and dangerous instabilities of "class,"

"gender," and "race" among the analytical languages needed to negotiate a global politics that will destabilize the continuing logic of capitalism in the contemporary postcolonial era.

3.5 GYNOCRITICISM AND WOMEN'S WRITING

In *A Literature of Their Own*, (1977) Elaine Showalter viewed the literary history of women writers, many of whom were hidden from the male-dominated history of canonical texts as it were. She traced a history which showed the configuration of their material, psychological and ideological determinants. Her study promoted both a feminist critique as well as gyno-criticism as it was concerned with women writers. She examined British women novelists since the Bronte sisters from the point-of-view of women's experience. Though she pointed at no innate female-sexuality or female-imagination, she nonetheless found a profound difference between women's and men's writings. She pointed at the fact that a whole tradition of female writing has always been neglected by male critics. She argued that literary subcultures all go through three major phases of development. For literature by or about women, she labelled these stages the Feminine, Feminist, and Female. Showalter's dates are not to be taken rigidly; they overlap, and multiple phases can be seen in a single writer. Critical of the practice of selecting only great figures for analysis, in an appendix she listed two hundred and thirteen women writers with "sociological" data, writers who provide diversity and generational links. She also avoided concepts of female imagination, preferring to look at the ways "the self-awareness of the woman writer has translated itself into a literary form in a specific place and time-span" and to trace this self-awareness within the tradition (12).

3.5.1 FEMININE, FEMINIST AND FEMALE STAGE

The first, the Feminine Stage (1840-1880) involves "imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition" and "internalization of its standards" that is, male aesthetic standards. Her "feminine" phase includes intense, compact, symbolic fiction that used "innovative and covert ways to dramatize the inner life" (27-28), as well as "an all-inclusive female realism" that was "a broad, socially informed exploration of the daily lives and values of women within the family and the community" (29). This included George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell who stuck to the immediate social and domestic circle and suffered pangs of guilt for their commitments to authorship. They also avoided coarseness and sensuality thereby abiding to limitations of expression.

The second, the Feminist Stage (1880-1920) involves "protest against these standards and values and advocacy of minority rights". "Feminists" confronted Victorian sexual stereotypes, produced socialistic theories of women's relationships

to work, class, and the family, and entertained an "all-out war of the sexes" (29). This phase, she said, includes radical feminist writers as Elizabeth Robins and Olive Schreiner who protested against male double-standards and male values and fantasized sexual separatism in Amazonian or suffragette communities.

The third, the Female Stage (1920 onwards) inherited characteristics of the former phases and also developed the idea of specifically female writing and female experience in a "phase of self-discovery, a turning inwards freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity." Early parts of the "female" phase of self-exploration were seen by Showalter as carrying "the double legacy of feminine self-hatred and feminist withdrawal" (33). The phase polarized sexuality, but the female sensibility moved from sacred to self-destructive and paradoxically failed to confront the female body. The concept of androgyny, explored from the Greeks to Bloomsbury in male as well as female authors by Carolyn Heilbrun (*Toward a Recognition of Androgyny*, 1973), came under attack as an escapist "flight" in Showalter's controversial handling of Woolf (263-97). The phase of the female novelists since 1960 operates in Freudian and Marxist contexts and for the first time accepts anger and sexuality as "sources of female creative power" (35).

3.5.2 OBJECTIVES : SHOWALTER

"Gynocritics is the name Elaine Showalter has given to those critics who wish "to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories" ("Toward a Feminist Poetics," *New Feminist Criticism* 131). Showalter increasingly showed willingness to talk about various schools of feminist theory. She found the social theory of subcultures useful to gynocriticism in "Feminist Theory in the Wilderness." In "Critical Cross-Dressing," she showed scepticism about the ability of prominent male critics, Jonathan Culler and Terry Eagleton, in particular, to turn feminist as readers without surrendering their "paternal privileges." What she feared was that "instead of breaking out of patriarchal bounds," they will merely compete with women, failing to acknowledge women's feminist contributions (143). She included feminist aesthetics and French feminism in the introduction to her edited collection *The New Feminist Criticism* and began talking more about men through the category of gender in her later edited collection *Speaking of Gender*.

Feminist freedom from male theory was a goal for Showalter, but its accomplishment remains problematic in critiques of gynocritics' practices. For example, Myra Jehlen found the self-contained gynocritical position problematic. She felt that, if, like Archimedes, the feminist shifts the world, she must position her fulcrum on male ground—she cannot work from a totally female stance. In "Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism/" Jehlen advocated attending to confrontations along

the long border conditional to dominant male traditions, achieving what she called "radical comparativism." Jehlen's isolation of politics from aesthetics in literature was regarded as suspect by Toril Moi, although both critics attend to unconscious ideology. By the late 1970s, major female-centred studies had begun to appear. In *Literary Women* (1976), Ellen Moers expressed the intention not to impose doctrine on women writers—an attitude that resembles Showalter's in its distrust of theory. She presented a practical, living history of women writers from the eighteenth century through the twentieth, attempting to shape it with their concerns and language. The description featured new anecdotal details and minute observations from manuscript sources, selected for their relevance to unique experiences of women. Many of the categories she used to discuss the history and tradition of women writers in the first half of her study were derived from traditional period and genre studies, for example, "The Epic Age," "Traditions, Individual Talent," "Realism," and "Gothic". In the second half, she set out to familiarize readers with literary feminism, a heroic structure for the female voice in literature that she called "heroicism". Her categories of heroicism incorporated characters in roles of loving, performing, and educating.

3.5.3 GILBERT AND GUBAR : THEORY

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar theorized the position of woman and the literary imagination in the nineteenth (*The Madwoman in the Attic*, 1979) and the twentieth century (*No Man's Land*, 2 volumes, 1987-89). They offered a large selection of women authors who conform to their paradigms in their edition of *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* (1985). Their approach included not just historical references to the material, social, and gendered conditions of authors' lives but also to literary canons and archives, and to popular movements and artifacts—typical strengths of American feminist theory. Like Showalter, they detected historical stages of a female literary tradition, but they grounded these in male comparisons and frequently made their points through metaphors and puns, as seen in their titles.

In *The Madwoman in the Attic* they argued that key women writers since Jane Austen achieved a voice which can be called distinctively female by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards. According to them, for early nineteenth-century women writers the dominant vision of literary creativity was paternal. Women had to cope further with male fantasies of the female. These fantasies came in angelic and monstrous versions and were imposed as literary models. The madwoman or monster repeatedly created by women writers they saw as the authors double, expressing her anxiety, rage, and "schizophrenia of authorship" (*Madwoman* 78). They detected asymmetrical male and female responses to the rise of female literary power. They showed how women emerged from their liminal position in the attic to wage the battle between the sexes.

In *The War of the Words*, Volume 1 of *No Man's Land*, which offers numerous studies of male authors, the battle is manifested in tropes of erotic dueling, the advent of the "no-man" to replace the virile man, and plots of males defeating alarming forms of female sexuality through a theology of the phallus, mutilations, rapes, and campaigns against the mothers of "castrated" sons. Women begin to have literary reactions to preceding female writers, sometimes arriving at parodic or comic treatments, as well as serious and positive ones. Gilbert and Gubar's collection of stereotypes and misogynistic plot types that progress through the decades is reminiscent of Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*. Women writers express belligerence less directly and render characters who are victorious through duplicity, subterfuge, or luck. The suffragist movement gives the early century metaphors of militarism and sacrifice. Modernist women offer private triumphs. Later women writers respond to male backlash with nightmares of defeat or dreams of triumphant women warriors.

Volume 2, *Sexchanges*, sustains the model of the eternal sex war refined into the consideration of sexchanges: "The sexes battle because sex roles change, but when the sexes battle, sex itself (that is eroticism) changes" (xi). Major changes include the rebellion against the feminisation of the American woman, powerful roles assumed by women in World War I, varied lesbian arrangements, and transvestism. A more tortured experience of Women in war emerged in Cooper, Munich, and Squier's essay collection *Arms and the Woman*.

3.5.4 GILBERT AND GUBAR : THEORETICAL MODELS

Two theoretical models in Gilbert and Gubar are worthy of mention. Their concept of the "anxiety of authorship," used perhaps too broadly to describe nineteenth-century women writers (like Harold Bloom's male-applied term "anxiety of influence") derives from Freud's psychosexual paradigm of the Oedipus complex. If women follow a normative female decree of the Oedipus complex, the father, that is, the male literary tradition, becomes the object of female desire, and the pre-Oedipal desire for the mother or her literature is renounced. Twentieth-century women writers, they said, have the option of the "affiliation complex," which allows them to "adopt" literary mothers and to escape the male "belatedness," or the "anxiety of influence" theorized by Bloom, which is in effect a biological imperative for literary descent from an originary father. Normative resolution of the Oedipus complex may leave women anxious about the fragility of paternal power, worried about a usurping paternal primacy, and fearful of male vengeance. Non-normative Freudian resolutions of the Oedipus complex offer advantages to authors such as Gertrude Stein. The resulting "masculinist complex" grants autonomy, a new maternal relation, and the creative option of male mimicry — a departure from Freud's negative judgment.

Gilbert and Gubar also implicated fantasies in theory. *The War of the Words*

focused on linguistic fantasies, and Sexchanges on fantasy identifications. The feminist linguistic fantasy grants an intuitive primacy in language acquisition to the mother rather than to the father. Proceeding from Woolf's remarks on women's language, Gilbert and Gubar suggested that women fantasize a revision not just of women's language but of women's relation to language. They advocated the overturning of male sentencing — the sentence as definitive — in judgment, decree, or interdiction. They saw agonistic oral competitiveness and the acquisition of a privileged, priestly language, as theorized by Walter Ong, as a male fertility rite, resisting the vernacular and controlling the mother tongue. One can cite modernist men such as Ezra Pound, D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, and T. S. Eliot and the deconstructionist theory of Jacques Derrida who have mystified, claimed, or transformed the mother tongue, so as to retain priestly authority. Increasingly, women writers find enabling fantasies and roles — Sappho as a predecessor, Aphrodite as an erotic authority, and transvestism as a metaphor. In the same sexchanges, men express loss and failure.

3.6 POSTSTRUCTURALIST FEMINISM/FRENCH FEMINIST CRITICAL THEORIES

3.6.1 INFLUENCES

French feminism has been deeply influenced by psychoanalysis, particularly by Lacan's reworking of Freud. Focusing on Woman yet again as the Other, French feminist theoreticians desired to break down conventional male-constructed stereotypes of sexual difference and they focused on language as the domain around which such stereotypes are structured. Barbara Johnson stated "The question of gender is a question of language" (*World* 37), and her succinct formulation of the relationship between gender and language did much to characterize the approach of a group of feminists who drew upon the discourses of poststructuralism. This kind of feminist work takes as its starting point the premise that gender difference dwells in language rather than in the referent that there is nothing "natural" about gender itself. In placing their emphasis on language, however, these feminists were not suggesting a sort of linguistic or poetic retreat into a world made only of words. Rather, for them, language intervenes in such a manner that "materiality" is not taken to be a self-evident category, and language itself is understood as radically marked by the materiality of gender. The poststructuralist focus on language thus raises fundamental questions that extend beyond matters of usage. They focused on the understanding of writing and the body as sites where the material and the linguistic intersect. Questioning the political and ethical grounds of language, the poststructuralist feminists considered here share a common opponent in patriarchal discourse, a feature that emerges in their readings

of literature, philosophy, history, and psychoanalysis. However they all counter and define patriarchal discourse in different ways.

3.6.2 CIXOUS

Helene Cixous has contributed a valuable discussion of the consequences of what she termed the "death-dealing binary thought". She lined up a list of binary oppositions some of which are cited below:

Where is she?
Activity / Passivity
Sun / Moon
Culture / Nature
Day / Night

Father / Mother
Head / Heart
Intelligible / Palpable
Logos / Pathos
Man / Woman

Nature / History
Nature / Art
Nature / Mind
Passion / Action

Cixous showed how these binary oppositions were heavily accepted in the patriarchal value system. Each binary opposition corresponds to a hierarchy where the feminine side emerges as negative or powerless. Inevitably all oppositions get hierarchical and organisation by hierarchy makes all conceptual organisation subject to Man making him the privileged one.

Cixous's study led in a certain way to bisexuality as man is trained for phallic monosexuality. Cixous went on to develop what she called "feminine writing" (*écriture féminine*), envisaged in terms of bisexuality. This in turn leads to the question: "it has become rather urgent to question this solidarity between logocentrism and phallogentrism — bringing to light the fate dealt to woman," how? one might go about such questioning is a point of dispute (*Newly* 65). She affirmed that today 'writing is woman's'. Writing becomes the passageway, the entrance, the dwelling place and the exit of the other in the woman. She viewed the libido of woman as cosmic just as her unconscious which makes her writing endless and infinite, more so because unlike man she is not invited to social success or sublimation. Literature, said Cixous, is under the command of the philosophical and the phallogentric. She

concluded that women must reject a philosophical mode of writing if they wish to write themselves, in other words, a specifically feminine discourse, and thereby resist any identification with the discourse controlled by the phallic tradition. Cixous engaged in a political project designed to create an alternative, nonphallogocentric discourse. Like Wittig, Cixous turned to fiction (*Angst, Illia, Souffles*) and became concerned with getting rid of words like 'feminine' and 'masculine/ 'femininity' and 'masculinity,' and even 'man' and 'woman' ("Exchange" 129). Cixous relied heavily upon psychoanalysis and Derridean deconstruction.

For Cixous, the space of feminine writing cannot be theorized or defined, enclosed or encoded ("Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *New French Feminisms*, ed. Marks and de Courtivron, 253). It can, however, be understood as "the ideal harmony, reached by few, [which] would be genital, assembling everything and being capable of generosity, of spending" ("Exchange" 131). Feminine writing is also the province of metaphor, not limited to written words and possibly taking the form of "writing by the voice," a harmonic *écriture féminine* metaphorized as writing in mother's milk or the uterus (*Illia* 208, *Newly*). Although her metaphors here are maternal, biologically the province of women, according to Cixous neither biological women nor men need be condemned to the space of phallogocentrism. Cixous understood feminine writing as a bisexual political act that holds open "the very possibility of change" ("Laugh" 249). Whether the emphasis is on alternative writing or subversive rewriting, what is at stake in this feminist attention to language is the relationship between the twin materialities of writing and the body. This is perhaps most obvious in Cixous's work, which specifically stresses the importance of the connection. Cixous exhorted women to write themselves and make their bodies heard in order to make "the huge resources of the unconscious" burst forth (*Newly* 94-97). She defied and challenged the traditional phallogocentric norm. Cixous constantly emphasized the role of the body in the creation of a text. She opined that repressed sexual desires can be a source of creativity and that since women are taught in patriarchal cultures to deny their libidinal desires, they are also thwarted from becoming creative artists. Cixous stated that the woman who internalizes phallogocentric criticisms begins to accuse herself of being a monster. Cixous's insights into the effects of phallogocentric dominance of literature and aesthetic value mirror Gilbert and Gubar's findings in "Infection in the Sentence". According to them, the patriarchal control of literature has profoundly crippled the female psyche. Their thesis expands upon and revises the Bloomian notion of "anxiety of influence," and they argued that "in comparison to the 'male' tradition of strong, father-son combat, however, this female anxiety of authorship is profoundly debilitating." (293). They explained that the highly creative woman suffers from mental diseases or "dis-eases": agoraphobia, anorexia, claustrophobia (295). To Cixous a woman's artistry is in itself nonconformity, a

monstrosity against phallogocentrism. Cixous argued that feminine language "will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetoric, regulations and codes." (315) She boldly stated that feminine language promises revolution on two levels. Extrinsically it triggers social and political changes. Intrinsically it undermines phallogocentric expectations and demands concerning syntax, grammar, linear thought, Aristotelian unity and narrative teleology.

3.6.3 IRIGARAY :

In a rather different move, Luce Irigaray also turned to the female body in order to develop an account of woman's pleasure that does not privilege sight. Irigaray argued that all accounts of bodily pleasure have traditionally been dominated by the scopophilic drive of male pleasure described by psychoanalysis. Deemphasizing the role played by visual pleasure, which is by definition primarily patriarchal, Irigaray went so far as to argue that "woman takes more pleasure from touching than from looking" (*This Sex* 26). Woman's pleasure, she said, for which the language of psychoanalysis is inadequate, is fluid, tactile, and, what is most important, plural. It must be noted that Irigaray's use of anatomical analogies to describe feminine pleasure (and thus to reinterpret the phallogocentric discourse of philosophy and psychoanalysis) leaves her open to charges of essentialism. Yet it is also possible to think of her work as turning to biological metaphors and images of woman already prevalent in Western discourse in order to produce a new discourse that does not see sexual difference as a question of pure anatomical difference.

According to Irigaray, women cannot simply step outside of phallogocentrism so suddenly so as to think and write in ways completely free of the rules of patriarchy, for language and discourse are themselves inscribed with those rules. Instead, women have to work like a virus from within patriarchal discourses to infect and radically change them, thus "leaving open the possibility of a different language" (*This Sex* 80). Not surprisingly, then, the discourses of philosophy and psychoanalysis become prime "hosts" for Irigaray's work. She explained, "Unless we limit ourselves naively—or perhaps strategically—to some kind of limited or marginal issues, it is indeed precisely philosophical discourse that we have to challenge, and disrupt in as much as this discourse sets forth the law for all others, in as much as it constitutes the discourse on discourse" (74). In posing this challenge, Irigaray hoped to expose the ways in which patriarchal discourses are politically determined and disrupt altogether the power structures they hold in place. With this goal in mind, Irigaray sought to disrupt the discourses of Sigmund Freud and Plato (*Speculum of the Other Woman*), Jacques Lacan and Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (*This Sex Which Is Not One*), Martin Heidegger (*L'Oubli*), Friedrich Nietzsche (*Amante Marine*), and Baruch Spinoza and Emmanuel Levinas (*Ethique*), to name only a few.

Similar political interventions have been made by Catherine Clement both in her study of opera (*Opera, or the Undoing of Woman*) and in her consideration of the sorceress and the hysteric (*The Newly Born Woman*); by Michele Le Doeuff in her interrogation of the role of lack and the place of knowledge acquisition in Western philosophy (*L'Innominable philosophique*); by Barbara Johnson in her readings of literature and Deconstruction (*The Critical Difference* and *A World of Difference*); by Julia Kristeva in her numerous works on linguistics, psychoanalysis, and literature (*Revolution in Poetic Language*, *Desire in Language*, *Powers of Horror*, *Tales of Love*, and *Black Sun*); and by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her analyses of the relationship between philosophy, Marxism, deconstruction, and subaltern studies (*In Other Worlds*).

3.6.4 KRISTEVA :

Julia Kristeva, like Woolf, saw women writers caught between the father and the mother. As writers they collude with phallic dominance, associated with the privileged father-daughter relationship on the one hand, and on the other they simultaneously flee everything phallic to find refuge in the valorisation of a silent underwater body, thus abdicating any entry into history. Kristeva's works have taken as their central concept a polarity between 'closed' rational systems and 'open' and disruptive irrational systems. She viewed poetry as poised between these two types of system. Julia Kristeva's main interest was in discourse which confronts language and thinks it against itself. She focused on the signifying process, trying to answer not only the question of exactly how language means but also what is in language that resists intelligibility and signification. She argued that structuralism, which focuses on the static phase of language and attempts to fix it and describe its details, sees it as homogeneous. Semiotics, on the other hand, which studies language as discourse articulated by a speaking subject, sees it as fundamentally heterogeneous. Kristeva gave a complex psychological account of the relationship between the normal and the poetic. She viewed human beings as a space across which physical and psychic impulses flow. The indefinite flux of impulses is regulated by family and social constraints. In the earliest pre-Oedipal stage, the flow of impulses is centred around the mother which leads to a disorganised prelinguistic flux of movements, gestures, sounds and rhythms. She called this 'semiotic' as it is an unorganised signifying process, active beneath the linguistic performance of an adult. Gradually this semiotic process gets regulated and gives way to logic and coherent syntax and rationality of the adult and this Kristeva called the 'symbolic'. For women, then, access to the symbolic order is through the father, entrapping women in THE classic double bind: if a woman identifies with the mother, she ensures her exclusion from and marginality in relation to the patriarchal order. If, on the other hand, she identifies with the father—makes herself in his image, then she ends up becoming "him" and supporting

the same patriarchal order which excludes and marginalizes her as a woman. Kristeva argued that women must refuse to accept this dilemma. If, as she argued, the Judeo-Christian culture represents woman as the unconscious of the symbolic order — basic instinctual, drive-related “jouissance,” then, from her very marginal position she can disrupt the symbolic chain. So, women must not refuse to enter the symbolic order, but neither should they adopt the masculine model of femininity. They must, in fact, uphold the Law and sexual difference within the patrilinear frame and refuse to become one of “them.” It would be interesting to add that this balancing act turned out to be much too costly for some women for whom madness and suicide became the only routes (Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath, and Maria Tsvetaeva to name a few). She spoke of Carnavalesque language that broke through the laws of language censored by grammar, semantics and their attempt to manage the voice of the other; at the same time it was a social protest which came into being in the margins of the dominant culture, but from that position it was powerful enough to begin to generate social change. She said that the avant-garde poet, man or woman, enters the Body of the Mother and resists the Name of the Father. In literature, thus, the semiotic meets the symbolic. This liberating energy, this jouissance, enacts a rapture which is close to rupture which points at anarchy. This poetic revolution, she linked with a political feminist revolution and foresaw this anarchism destroy the dominance of phallogocentrism.

3.6.5 WITTIG AND BUTLER :

Some poststructuralist feminists, however, have preferred to develop an alternative to patriarchal discourse in place of the strategy of subversive rewriting. Monique Wittig attempted to create completely new, nonphallogocentric discourses in her fictional works *Les Guerilleres* (1969, trans. David LeVay, 1971), *L'Opoponax* (1969, *The Opoponax*, trans. H. Weaver, 1976), and *Le Corps lesbien* (1973, *The Lesbian Body*, trans. David LeVay, 1975). As a counter to the heterosexual, patriarchal social contract, Wittig proposed a structural change in language that will destroy the categories of gender and sex. Frequently this change she said would take the form of experimentation with pronouns and nouns, which she called the “lesbianisation” of language. (“One Is Not” 53).

While poststructuralist feminists have brought us a long way, the most complex and, one must add, the most delightful analysis of the distinction between gender and sex belongs to Judith Butler. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (1999) she contends that “gender is not to culture as sex is to nature” (7). Rather, gender as a discursive element gives rise to a belief in a prediscursive, natural sex. That is to say, sex is retrospectively produced through our understanding of gender, so that in a sense gender comes before sex (7). Butler argues that in light of this counterintuitive situation, we should deconstruct the “gender fables [that] establish

and circulate the misnomer of natural facts” and recognize that it becomes impossible to separate out ‘gender’ from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained” (xiii, 3). The status of gender for Butler becomes a free-floating artifice, as it emerges radically independent of sex. States Judith Butler: “Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of “men” will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that “women” will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that “women” will interpret only female bodies..... *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one.” (10) Gender she says is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. Gender thus proves to be “performative”. That is to say, “gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed”(25).

3.7 REVIEW QUESTIONS :

1. Explain how the first waves of feminist theory and criticism found focus in America and Europe.
2. What was the major concern of the second wave of Feminist theory and criticism? Who were the main proponents?
3. Discuss the emergence of ‘Sexual politics’ and the kates Millet’s radical analysis of heirarchical relations between the sexes.
4. How did Robin Lakoff (1975) contribute towards the role of women in life?
5. Explain materialist feminism and its relationship with Marxist formula.
6. Who are ‘gynocritics’? Explain what Elaine Showalter meant by Gynocriticism.
7. Write short notes on :
 - (i) The Madwoman in the Attic with reference to the position of women in the 19th cent.
 - (ii) The theoretical models of Gilbert and Gubar.
 - (iii) French feminist theories.
 - (iv) Julia Kristeva’s analysis of women writers.
 - (v) Judith Britter and the sex Gender distinction.
8. What are the objectives of Feminist Criticism / Women’s Studies?
9. What are the characteristic features of First-wave feminist criticism?
10. What are the characteristic features of Second-wave feminist criticism?
11. What do you mean by Marxist Feminism?
12. Write a short essay on ‘gynocriticism’.

13. Write a short note on either Virginia Woolf or Simone de Beauvoir as early contributors to the feminist movement.
14. write a short note on Betty Friedan's hypothesis on the infantilization of women.
15. According to Kate Millet, what are the categories of politics that maintain the system of patriarchy?
16. Briefly elucidate on the three stages as mentioned in gynocriticism.
17. Write a short note on Helene Cixous and her valuable discussion of the consequences of what she termed the "death dealing binary thought".

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UNIT 4 □ NEW HISTORICISM

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives**
- 4.1 New Historicism : The beginning**
- 4.2 What is New Historicism ?**
- 4.3 Assumptions underlying the New Historical approach**
- 4.4 New Historicism : The Study**
- 4.5 Arguments of the New Historicists**
- 4.6 Comparison with Marxism**
- 4.7 Ideology**
- 4.8 Exponents of New Historicism**
 - 4.8.1 Stephen Greenblatt**
 - 4.8.2 Michel Foucault**
 - 4.8.3 Louis Montrose**
 - 4.8.4 Jonathan Goldberg**
 - 4.8.5 Clifford Geertz**
 - 4.8.6 Walter Benn Michaels**
- 4.9 Charges against New Historicism**
- 4.10 Conclusion**
- 4.11 Review Questions**
- 4.12 Bibliography**

4.0 OBJECTIVES :

The objective of this unit is to introduce you to:

- the rise and growth of the of the New Historic movement
- the basic assumptions of New Historicism
- the contribution and influence of the major "New Historicists"
- the present status of the New Historic movement

4.1 NEW HISTORICISM : THE BEGINNING

Let's first trace the rise and growth of the New Historical movement. New Historicism, as a contextual approach to literary criticism and literary theory, arose in the late 1970s and during the 1980s among some British and American critics. For

several years, many scholars in English and American universities -ranging from Fredrick Crews George Watson, and E.D. Hirsch, on one end of the scale to Fredrick Jameson, Terry Eagleton, and Frank Lentricchia on the other - had been raising a clamour for a return to histories) scholarship in the academic study of literature. The historical nature of literary works, it was said, had been badly neglected over the past half century of Anglo-American criticism. The time had come to move beyond the narrowly 'formalistic' or 'text-centered' approach to literature and, in course of time, the new movement arose to meet the demand.

New Historicism occurred mainly in response to :

- New Criticism's tendency to treat works of literature in a historical vacuum, as if a poem or novel had no relation to its historical context whatsoever.
- Political developments in the 1960s, especially a desire on the part of literary critics to figure out how understanding literature might help in understanding social problems.
- An influx of continental critics and literary theories into Britain/and the United States.
- Large number of literary persons being trained who came from other backgrounds - female, working class, increasingly, Asian America and Latino American

"New Historicist essays began appearing in the late 1970s, but the ground-breaking text was the 1980 publication of Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*. This book was follow in 1933 by the founding of the journal *Representations*, initiated by Greenblatt and several of his colleagues at the University of Berkeley, where the journal is still published. In its volumes, and in Greenblatt's many subsequent publications, can most clearly be seen the strategies of New historicism as well their limitations.

4.2 WHAT IS NEW HISTORICISM ?

Emerging in reaction against the successive ahistorical orthodoxies of New Criticism, Myth Criticism and Deconstruction, the New Historicism draws upon post-structuralist theories of discourse, Marxist theories of ideology and the work of British literary historians declares that a literary text can only be read with reference to the age in which it was written. A work of literature, as it holds, is not a transcendent document worthy of analysis, but only a representation of historical forces. It takes the social, cultural and the historical implications of the text and extends them to the economic and political texts, according to New Historicism, are simply texts and works of literature are not-given may special status because every kind of writing is the product of historical forces.

New Historicists operate by fusing two key issues in criticism since the 1960s: the

"linguistic turn" of poststructuralist and deconstructive criticism, and a return to historical readings. These two impulses are aptly summarised in Louis Montrose's often repeated catch phrase:) "the historicity of texts and the textuality of history." Texts, he insists (as do all New Historicist critics) are embedded in particular histories. Those histories, in turn, are embedded in language, since we only access those histories through the texts which represent them. Since all these texts use language which is seen as elusive and unfixed, "textual" history effectively calls for the kinds of close reading strategies which, as Stephen Greenblatt remarks in a recent essay, literary critics have as part of their "disciplinary tool kit." In their choice of text events to analyze, and in their manner of analyzing those events, New Historicists develop many of their ideas by fusing the ethnography of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz with the philosophic history of Michel Foucault.

4.3 ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING THE NEW HISTORICAL CRITICAL APPROACH

Now, let's study the basic assumptions of New Historicism. The New Historicists contend—

1. "that there is no transhistorical or universal human essence and that human subjectivity is constructed by cultural codes which position and limit all of us in various and divided ways" (88):
 - Instead of the autonomous "self" or "individual," these critics speak of subject positions— that are socially and linguistically constructed, created by various discourses of a given culture.
 - They are influenced by the work of the French theorist **Michel Foucault**, who focused upon the intricately structured power relations in a given culture at a given time to demonstrate how that society controls its members through constructing and defining what appear to be "universal" and "natural" truths.
 - They are skeptical toward any "universalizing" or "totalizing" claims, focusing rather on the specificities of a particular historical and cultural context.
2. "that there is no 'objectivity' that we experience the 'world' in language, and that all our representations of the world, our readings of texts and of the past, are informed by our own historical position, by the values and politics that are rooted in them"
 - They emphasize the necessity for self-awareness on the part of the critic, who must be constantly aware of the difficulties of seeing the past except through the lenses and cultural constructs of the present.

3. "that representation 'makes things happen' by 'shaping human consciousness' and that, as forces acting in history, various forms of representation ought to be read in relation to each other and in relation to non-discursive 'texts' like 'events'"

- Critics need to look not only at the historical causes of literary works, but also at their consequences.
- In a process of thick description, they link literary works with many other cultural phenomena of a period, including the discourse of "popular culture" and of areas like economics, law, medicine, politics, etc.

New Historicism shares the above assumptions with what is often called Cultural Studies, but cultural critics are even more likely to emphasize the present implications of their study and to position themselves in opposition to current power structures, working to empower traditionally disadvantaged groups. Cultural critics also downplay the distinction between "high" and "low" culture and often focus particularly on the productions of "popular culture."

4.4 NEW HISTORICISM : THE STUDY

New Historicist scholars begin their analysis of literary texts by attempting to look at what other texts - both literary and non-literary - a public could access at the time of writing, and what the author of the original text might have read. They also, however, attempt to relate texts to the political and socio-economic circumstances in which they originated. For example, a well-known New Historicist reading examines the travellers' tales and geographical works available to William Shakespeare about the discovery of the 'New World' and relates them to his play *The Tempest*. Therefore, this reading argues, we should interpret Shakespeare's play less as a 'timeless' literary creation and more as a product of the context in which it appeared (see contextualism, thick description), and should see it as contributing to contemporary debates about colonialism.

In this shift of focus, a comparison can be made with the best discussions of works of decorative arts. Unlike fine arts, which had been discussed in purely formal terms under the influences of Bernard Berenson and Ernst Gombrich, since the 1970s nuanced discussion of the arts of design have been set within social and intellectual contexts, taking account of fluctuations in luxury trades, the availability of design prototypes to local craftsmen, the cultural horizons of the patron, and economic considerations— "the limits of the possible" in economic historian Fernand Braudel's famous phrase.

Other than the belief that literature does not have trans-historic existence, that it ought not to be subjected to timeless criteria of value, and that therefore it should be

read as history, there are certain other common beliefs that characterise New Historicism. The first is that history itself is not something homogeneous or stable. History itself is a network of interacting institutions, beliefs and cultural power-relations, practices and products. Literary texts, like all other texts, are not merely echoes of the dominant culture or ideology but also influence the existing culture and ideology, so that the relationship is symbiotic. They influence each other. The words used for such interaction are 'negotiation', 'exchange', 'interaction', and 'circulation'.

New Historicism also considers the possession of social assets such as prestige equivalent to the of currency. The exchanges of these invisible assets are often ignored because they are not convertible into liquid assets. Thus, it is 'symbolic capital'. Just as the New Historicists contest the importance of materialise in literature, they also admit that they themselves cannot always make an adequate critique of the existing dominant ideology. Like the authors who produce the literary texts, the readers are themselves subject to the conditions and ideologies of their own era. If the ideology of the reader conforms to that of the text, he will 'naturalise' the text, that is, interpret the culture-specific and time-bound aspects as the features of universal and timeless human experience. If the ideology of the reader varies from that of the text, he will 'appropriate' the text, that is, make it conform to his own cultural possessions. The New Historical critic is therefore at risk of unquestioningly appropriating the texts written in the past. To reduce the possibility, they try to 'distance' and 'estrangle' an earlier text by emphasising the discontinuities and breaks in history.

4.5 ARGUMENTS OF THE NEW HISTORICISTS

Now, the question that arises is— where do these assumptions lead the New Historicists ?

The initial effort is to relocate the literary text among the other, traditionally nonliterary "discursive practices" of an age. The representation of character in the nineteenth-century novel, for instance, is said to be bound up with contemporary debates over parliamentary representation: or, Iago's plot against Othello is described as typical of Elizabethan attempts to deny the otherness of subject peoples. But the larger purpose of New Historicist inquiry is the reconstruction of the actual (as opposed to the "represented") relations in which people lived during a particular time. For example, in one of the most widely read essays by a New Historicist Louis Adrian Montrose interprets *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as an ideological attempt to comprehend the power of Queen Elizabeth—to make sense of it and place it safely within bounds—while simultaneously upholding the authority of males within Elizabethan culture. By citing a variety of contemporary writing (in order to reinstate

the "discursive practices" of the age), Montrose demonstrates the Elizabethans' ambivalence toward their queen: abiding respect mixed with a dark desire to master her sexually. In this context, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is reread as a fable of the restoration of male governance. Mothers are significantly excluded from the *dramatis personae* of the play, just as the danger of matriarchy (with which the Elizabethans flirted in their fascination with the myth of the Amazons) was quietly suppressed by the celebration of Elizabeth's virginity. The very real possibility that power might actually be passed from mother to daughter was concealed from women of the age by such cultural productions as Shakespeare's play, in which Elizabeth was a willing collaborator as much by her decision to remain unwed and barren as by her "cultural presence" within the play.

It is in this sense that works of literature such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are "representations" of the culture from which they emerge. They are the emanations, the active, of the culture's circumambient ideology. Literary works are both what a culture produces as well as what reproduces the ideology. The term "representations" is misleading insofar as it suggests a mimetic theory of literature. Nothing could be further from New Historicist truths. In fact, the New Historicism presumes that artistic fiction does not imitate human action; it mediates it. That is, fiction is defined as the lens through which a certain portrait of the human experience is brought into focus. And as mediation rather than as imitation of social practices, it can be thus be said to *shape* rather than to *reflect* understanding of human experience and potentiality.

In New Historicist interpretation, as a consequence, history is not viewed as the cause or the source of the work. Instead, the relationship between history and the work is seen as a dialectic: the text is interpreted as both product and producer, end and source, of history. One undeniable side benefit of such a view is that history is no longer conceived, as in some vulgar historical scholarship, as a thing wholly prior, a process which completes itself at the appearance of the work. At the same time, though, it must not be thought that the New Historicism dispenses with the cognitive category of priority. For the New Historicist it is ideology, not history, which is prior. The literary text is said to be a constituent part of a culture's ideology by virtue of passing it on; but the ideology nevertheless exists 'intact' intelligible, in a form separate from (and therefore prior to) the work. If it didn't, the critic could not discern a relationship between work and ideology; and if the ideology were not prior to the work, it wouldn't be a historical relationship.

But the apriorism of ideology in New Historicist thought raises large questions. The principal one is this: How does the critic know that the ideology located in the work of literature under discussion genuinely belongs to the past? How can he be sure that the ideology is not simply his own political sympathy which has been

injected into the work and then "located" there by means of an ingenious selection of the evidence? These questions occur spontaneously to anyone who reads very widely in New Historicist writing, so much of which expresses a politically *au courant* sympathy for exploited peoples, powerless women, workers, slaves, peasants. A critic like Stephen Greenblatt is too intelligent not to acknowledge that his own sympathy for such peoples is *a priori*. In the essay that launched the New Historicist journal *Representations*, Greenblatt interprets a Durer sketch in *The Painter's Manual* (1525) for a monument commemorating a victory over rebellious peasants—a somewhat ludicrous design topped off by a peasant stabbed in the back—as ironic and subversive. Greenblatt goes on to admit, though, that "[t]he bitter irony we initially perceived [in Durer's sketch] was constituted less by concrete evidence of Durer's subversiveness than by our own sympathy for the peasants, sympathy conditioned by our century's ideology, by recent historical scholarship, and no doubt above all, by our safe distance from the fear and loathing of 1525." He does not stop there, however. This admission, he continues, "though necessary, seems inadequate, for our solidarity with early sixteenth-century German peasants is of interest *only insofar as it seems to have been called forth by Durer's monument* and not simply read into it" (emphasis added). Yet how can the critic be certain that the work studied has not simply provided him with an occasion for a renewed outbreak of familiar feeling, like a pop song from our adolescence that reminds us of a girl we once ached for? Greenblatt passes silently over such a question. The real question for him "is how Durer could have created a brilliant, detailed, and coherent design that could! end itself to a strong interpretation so much at odds with his own probable intentions"? But this isn't a scholarly question so much as it is a dilemma for a certain kind of scholar. For such a scholar (i.e., one for whom the intentions of the artist are not normative), almost any work, no matter how brilliant, detailed, and coherent, can be made to lend itself to almost any interpretation at all. For Greenblatt, the aim of scholarship is to square the artist's intentions with the scholar's own sympathy. He simply assumes that Durer's design is "at odds" with the sympathy any sensitive modern would feel. The sympathy is treated as a fact of equal importance (and comparable ontologies! status) with the design. No effort is made to ascertain whether the design really is at odds with anything; it is simply treated as a *ob/znee* of interpretation that it must be. The critic knows because of the way he feels.

4.6 COMPARISON WITH MARXISM

Clearly in its historicism and its political interpretations, New Historicism owes something to Marxism; the fact remains the central task of the New Historicism is the same as that of Marxist criticism: first to call into question the traditional view

of literature as an autonomous realm of discourse with its own problems, forms, principles, activities, and then to dissolve the literary text into the social and political context from which it issued. In fact, the New Historicism tries explicitly to solve the theoretical difficulty in Marxist criticism of relating the cultural superstructure to the material base. Whereas Marxism (at least in its cruder forms) tended to see literature as part of a 'superstructure' in which the economic 'base' (i.e. material relations of production) manifested itself, New Historicist thinkers tend to take a more nuanced view of power, seeing it not exclusively as class-related but extending throughout society. This view derives primarily from Michel Foucault. In its tendency to see society as consisting of texts relating to other texts, with no 'fixed' literacy 'value above and beyond the way specific societies read them in specific situations, New Historicism also owes something to post-modernism. However, New Historicists tend to exhibit less skepticism than post-modernists, and show more willingness to perform the 'traditional' tasks of literary criticism: i.e. explaining the text in its context, and trying to show what it 'meant' to its first readers.

4.7 IDEOLOGY

New Historicist critics also place much emphasis on power and power struggles. The rationale is that the lowest common denominator for all human actions is power, so the New Historicist seeks to find examples of power and its disbursement in text. Power is a means through which the marginalized are controlled, and the thing that the marginalized (or, other) seek to gain. This relates back to the idea that because literature is written by those who have the most power, there must be details in it that show the views of the common people. New Historicists seek to find "sites of struggle" to identify just who is the group or entity with the most power. Relating to power in New Historicism is also contains the idea resurrected by Foucault of the panopticon, a theoretical prison system developed by English philosopher Jeremy Bentham. Bentham stated that the perfect prison/surveillance system would be a cylindrical shaped room that held prison cells on the outside walls. In the middle of this spherical room would be a large (guard tower with a light that would shine in all the cells. The prisoners thus would never know for certain whether or not they were being watched, so they would effectively police themselves and be as actors on a stage, giving the appearance of submission, although they are probably not being watched.

Foucault included this in his ideas about power to illustrate the idea of lateral surveillance, or self-policing, that occurs in the text when those who are not in power are made to believe that they are being watched by those who are. His purpose was to show that power would often change the behavior of the subordinate class, and they would often fall into line whether there was a true need to do so or not.

Insofar as Greenblatt has been explicit in expressing a theoretical orientation, he has identified the ethnography and theoretical anthropology of Clifford Geertz as highly influential.

4.8 EXPONENTS OF NEW HISTORICISM

Let's now study the works and influence of the exponents of New Historicism

4.8.1 STEPHEN GREENBLATT :

It was Stephen Greenblatt who introduced the label 'New Historicism' in his introduction to a special volume of *Genre* (1991) on Renaissance writing and New Historicism itself can be said to have begun with the book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning : From More to Shakespeare* (1980). In his introduction to the volume of *Genre*, Greenblatt claimed that the articles he had solicited were engaged in a joint enterprise, namely, an effort to rethink the ways that early modern texts were situated within the larger spectrum of discourses and practices that organized sixteenth and seventeenth-century English culture. This reconsideration had become necessary because many contemporary Renaissance critics had developed misgivings about two sets of assumptions that informed much of the scholarship of previous decades. Unlike the New Critics, Greenblatt and his colleagues were reluctant to consign texts to an autonomous aesthetic realm that dissociated Renaissance writing from other forms of cultural production and unlike the prewar historicists, they refused to assume that Renaissance texts mirrored, from a safe distance, a unified and coherent worldview that was held by a whole population, or at least by an entire literate class. Rejecting both of these perspectives, Greenblatt announced that a new historicism had appeared in the academy and that it would work from its own set of premises- that Elizabethan and Jacobean society was a site where occasionally antagonistic institutions sponsored a diverse and perhaps even contradictory assortment of beliefs, codes, and customs; that authors who were positioned within this terrain experienced a complex array of subversive and orthodox impulses and registered these complicated attitudes toward authority in their texts; and that critics who wish to understand sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writing must delineate the ways the texts they study were linked to the network of institutions, practices, and beliefs that constituted Renaissance culture in its entirety.

In some ways, Greenblatt's declaration of New Historicism's existence was a problematic gesture, for while his title quickly garnered considerable prestige for critics working in this area, it also created expectations that the New Historicists could not satisfy. Specifically, the scholars who encountered Greenblatt's term tended to conceive of New Historicism as a doctrine or movement, and their inference led them to anticipate that Greenblatt and his colleagues would soon articulate a coherent

theoretical program and delineate a set of methodological procedures that would govern their interpretive efforts. When the New Historicists failed to produce such position papers, critics began to accuse them of having a disingenuous relation to literary theory. In response to such objections, Greenblatt published an essay entitled "Towards a Poetics of Culture" (1987), which has had a profound impact on the way academics understand the phenomenon of New Historicism today. In this piece, Greenblatt attempted to show, by way of a shrewd juxtaposition of Jean-François Lyotard's and Fredric Jameson's paradigms for conceptualizing capitalism, that the general question they address, namely, how art and society are interrelated, cannot be answered by appealing to a single theoretical stance. And since the question both Lyotard and Jameson pose is one that New Historicism also raises, its proponents should see the failure of Marxist and poststructuralist attempts to understand the contradictory character of capitalist aesthetics as a warning against any attempt to convert New Historicism into a doctrine or a method. From Greenblatt's perspective, New Historicism never was and never should be a theory; it is an array of reading practices that investigate a series of issues that emerge when critics seek to chart the ways texts, in dialectical fashion, both represent a society's behavior patterns and perpetuate, shape, or alter that culture's dominant codes.

In his introduction to *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), Greenblatt indicates that his book aims to chart the ways identity was constituted in sixteenth-century English culture. He argues that the scene in which his authors lived was controlled by a variety of authorities-institutions such as the church, court, family, and colonial administration, as well as agencies such as God or a sacred book-and that these powers came into conflict because they endorsed competing patterns for organizing social experience. From Greenblatt's New Historicist perspective, the rival codes and practices that these authorities sponsored were cultural constructions, collective fiction," that communities created to regulate behavior and make sense of their world; however, the powers themselves tended to view their customs as natural imperatives, and they sought to represent their enemies as aliens or demonic parodists of genuine order. Because human agents were constituted as selves at the moment they submitted to one of these cultural authorities, their behavior was shaped by the codes that were sponsored by the institution with which they identified", and they learned to fear or hate the Other that threatened their very existence.

Since authors were fully situated within this cultural system, Greenblatt contends that their writings both comment generally upon the political struggles that emerged within the Tudor state and register their complicated encounters with authorities and aliens. To prove his thesis, he analyzes self-fashioning in a number of significant Renaissance works, and he shows that these texts record sophisticated responses to a series of cultural problems. Greenblatt demonstrates that Thomas More's late writings

are the culmination of his engagement with theological controversy, for these letters reiterate his sense that his identity is shaped by his participation in the Catholic community, and they restate his belief that Protestant theology is "an alien threat that should be rooted out of England. Edmund Spenser's Bower of Bliss scene in *The Faerie Queene* and relieves anxieties about the ways sexuality challenges the state's legitimate authority, and Thomas Wyatt's satires explore whether an aristocrat can detach himself from a court society that has become wholly corrupt.

By consistently situating the texts he studies in relation to sixteenth-century political problems, Greenblatt avoids the formalist error of consigning writing to an autonomous aesthetic realm and produce ; analyses that accord with the New Historicist premise that critics can understand Renaissance works only by linking them to the network of institutions, practices, and beliefs that constituted Tudor culture in its entirety. And if one of the aims of cultural poetics is to explain how texts are both socially produced and socially productive, Greenblatt addresses this question directly in his chapter on William Tyndale. He argues there that the invention of the printing press converted books into a form of power that could control, guide, and discipline, and he proves that texts fashioned acceptable versions of the self by narrating the story of James Bainham, that ultimate creation of the written word. Following John Foxe, Greenblatt recounts that when Bainham publicly declared his Protestant faith, he spoke with "the New Testament, in his hand in English and the Obedience of a Christian Man in his bosom," and since the "Obedience" is the title of one of Tyndale's most influential moral tracts, Greenblatt concludes that identity has been constituted by a text.

While Greenblatt's book distinctly advances the "New Historicist project of rethinking the relationship between literature and society, it also investigates the other questions that Montrose uses to define cultural poetics. Since self-fashioning is a close analogue to Montrose's own idea of subjectification, it is clear that much of Greenblatt's attention is focused on the social processes by which identity is constituted. In his chapter on Christopher Marlowe's plays, Greenblatt also offers his views on the question whether literature can generate effective resistance, and he concludes that the political ideologies and economic practices that both Marlowe and his characters seek to contest are ultimately too powerful to subvert.

Finally, concerning Greenblatt's response to the question of theory, it seems fair to conclude that at the time he wrote *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* he had already decided that no single interpretative model could explain the full complexity of the cultural process NewHistoricism investigates. Although he invokes a vast array of approaches from a considerable number of disciplines, three of his theoretical borrowings are especially significant. Following Geertz, Greenblatt argues that every social action is embedded in a system of public signification, and this premise is

responsible for one of the most spectacular features of his reading practice, namely, his ability to trace in seemingly trivial anecdotes the codes, beliefs, and strategies that organize an entire society. If cultural anthropology supplies Greenblatt with the techniques of thick description that he uses to interpret letters from colonial outposts, then Foucault offers him the theory of power that informs much of his work, for as his chapters on More and Tyndale demonstrate, Greenblatt views disciplinary mechanisms such as shaming, surveillance, and confession as productive of Renaissance culture, not as repressive of innate human potential. Lastly, in poststructuralist criticism from the 1970s and 1980s, Greenblatt finds corroboration of his idea that the self is a vulnerable construction, not a fixed and coherent substance, though he deviates somewhat from deconstructive analyses when he argues that culture, rather than language, creates the subject's instability.

4.8.2 MICHEL FOUCAULT :

Many New Historicists have acknowledged a profound indebtedness to the writings of Michel Foucault. A French philosophical historian, Foucault's studies of madness, reason, discipline, and punishment exercised huge influence through the 1970s and into the 1980s. Attention to *Madness and Civilisation* (1961) leads to a reading of texts for silences and exclusions ; *The Order of Things* (1966) suggests a search for 'epistemes' —unconscious, regulating structures that limit what can be written in any epoch; *Discipline and Punish* (1975) encourages a more political reading, one that stresses the Power effects of discourse; volumes 2 and 3 of *The History of Sexuality* (1976) sensitise the critic to the textual problematic of self-constitution. Again, like the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, Foucault refused to see an evolutionary process, a continuous development from cause to effect, from past to present toward THE END, a moment of definite closure, a Day of Judgment. No historical event, according to Foucault, has a single cause; rather, each event is tied into a vast web of economic, social, and political factors. Like Karl Marx, Foucault saw history in terms of power, but unlike Marx, he viewed power not as a repressive force or a tool of conspiracy but rather as a complex of forces that produces what happens. Not even a tyrannical aristocrat simply wields power, the aristocrat is 'himself' empowered by discourses and practices that constitute power.

New Historicists shared with him many political experiences. Foucault had witnessed the 1968 uprising in Paris, and had seen the force of protest crushed by the power of the republic. Similarly, New Historicists were young, liberal teachers who witnessed the campus protests in the United States, and the crushing of those protests by federal and state forces. Greenblatt and Montrose began writing while Ronald Reagan was governor of California and Richard Nixon president of the United States. Their fascination with the symbolics of power, the invisible forces manifested

in a street parade or a court masque, as well as with the force or power, reflect this combination of personal and intellectual experiences. Greenblatt and Montrose clearly projected their own anxieties into the European past. With Foucault to assist them, they saw not a golden age, as previous critics had done, but rather a dark mirror for their own troubled times.

The events of 1968 showed how forcefully states would seek when threatened, to enforce their own power. What preoccupied Foucault and his New Historicism follower was not so much the defeat of the "freedom fighter" but rather the capacity of the state to withstand such urgent challenges. Why had the populace not risen to support the students and workers in Paris? The answer was provided partly by Foucault and partly by the French political philosopher Louis Althusser. The state's control of its citizenry was internal rather than external. The state subjected its peoples, by creating them as subjects, devising fixed categories under which people could be described and thus controlled. This was the conjunction Foucault evoked as "power/knowledge." The categories sane/insane, homosexual/heterosexual, male/female, slave/freed could thus be used to proscribe activity. This would happen not with regulation but with more invisible forms of ideological pressure, through institutions, literature, entertainments. The populace would have the illusion of being free to choose their status and activities; in fact they would be in thrall to an omnipresent state. For many, Foucault thus made sense of the complexity of capitalist societies, saturated with media events and spectacles of pleasure. In turn he offered New Historicists insight into the complex workings of Renaissance monarchies. Renaissance England, it seemed to them, was as beset by chaos, by enemies within and without, as the contemporary world. How could you effectively rule such turmoil? Their explanations projected Elizabeth I as, a cunning constructor of images of herself and her kingdom, purveying fictions of splendour as well as propaganda to her people. Underneath the theatrical charisma, her regime was harsh and oppressive. Rebellion might be attempted but effectively would be impossible. Renaissance writers were thus trapped in subtle webs of power politics, just as New Historicists felt themselves trapped by what Althusser calls "Ideological State Apparatuses."

4.8.3 LOUIS MONTROSE :

Louis Montrose in his essay, *The poetics and Politics of Culture* (1986), provides a list of concerns shared by New Historicists that agrees with and extends Greenblatt's commentary'. Like Greenblatt, Montrose insists that one aim of New Historicism is to refigure the relationship between texts and the cultural system in which they were produced and he indicates that as a first step in such an undertaking, critics must problematize or reject both the formalist conception of literature as an autonomous aesthetic order that transcends needs and interests and the reflectionist notion that

writing simply mirrors a stable ⁴ and coherent ideology that is endorsed by all members of a society. Having abandoned these paradigms, the New Historicist, he argues, must explain how texts not only represent culturally constructed forms of knowledge and authority but actually instantiate or reproduce in readers the very practices and codes they embody.

Montrose also suggests that if New Historicism calls for a rethinking of the relationship between writing and culture, it also initiates a reconsideration of the ways authors specifically and human agents generally interact with social and linguistic systems. This second New Historicist concern is an extension of the first, for if the idea that every human activity is embedded in a cultural field raises questions about the autonomy of literary texts, it also implies that individuals may be inscribed more fully in a network of social practices than many critics tend to believe. But as Montrose goes on to suggest the New Historicist hostility toward humanist models of freely functioning subjectivity does imply that he and his colleagues are social determinists. Instead, Montrose argues that individual tendency is constituted by a process he calls "subjectification," which he describes as follows: on the one hand, culture produces individuals who are endowed with subjectivity and the capacity of agency; on the other, it positions them within social networks and subjects them to cultural codes that ultimately exceed their comprehension and control.

In another section of his essay, Montrose adds a third concern to define New Historicism: to what extent can a literary text offer a genuinely radical critique of authority, or articulate views that threaten political orthodoxy? New Historicists have to confront this issue because they are interested in delineating the full range of social work that writing can perform, but as Montrose suggests, they have not yet arrived at a consensus regarding whether literature can generate effective resistance. On one side critics such as Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield claim that Renaissance texts contest the dominant religious and political ideologies of their time; on the other some critics argue that the powers of the Tudor and Stuart governments are so great that the state can neutralize all dissident behavior. Although Montrose offers his own distinctive response to the containment-subversion problem, he insists that a willingness to explore the political potential of writing is a mark of New Historicism.

A final problem Montrose expects his New Historicist colleagues to engage might be called "the question of theory." Even as he insists that cultural poetics is not itself a systematic paradigm for producing knowledge, he argues that the New Historicists must be well versed in literary and social theory and be prepared to deploy various modes of analysis in their study of writing and culture. Montrose finds notions of textuality from Deconstruction and poststructuralism to be particularly useful for the practice of historical criticism; for their emphasis on the discursive character of all experience and their position that every human act is embedded in an arbitrary

system of signification that social agents use to make sense of their world allow him and his colleagues to think of events from the past as texts that must be deciphered. In fact, these post structuralist theories often underlie the cryptical formulations, such as "the" historicity of texts and the textuality of history that appeal so much to the practitioners of cultural poetics.

4.8.4 JONATHAN GOLDBERG :

In his introduction to *James I and the Politics of Literature* (1983), Jonathan Goldberg commends Greenblatt's study of the relationship between Renaissance texts and society, and he claims that his book, like Greenblatt's, will reveal "the social presence to the world of the literary text and the social presence of the world in the literary text" (Goldberg, *James* xv quoting Greenblatt, *Renaissance* 5). But, unlike Greenblatt, who analyzes the techniques that a number of competing institutions use to discipline behavior, Goldberg tends to focus on the ways political discourses circulate around a single authority, James I. According to Goldberg, James's Roman rhetoric is filled with contradictions, two of which are especially important. First, which James wishes to maintain the integrity of the royal line from which he descends, he also claims that he is both self-originating and the world's secret animating force. Second while James refers to kingship as a kind of performance in which his thoughts are fully revealed, he also characterizes public display - as necessarily obfuscating and opaque.

In a characteristically NewHistoricist manner, Goldberg offers a political interpretation of these inconsistencies, and he then proceeds to demonstrate that artistic productions replicate the structures of royal authority. Goldberg claims that James's emphasis on self-origination is an effort to mystify his body, to free himself from his dubious family history and to derive his sovereignty from a transcendent and eternal world. This strategy allows the king to claim that all life springs from his spiritual substance, but it also enables him to argue that he is unaccountable to the social world he governs. While the king used this doctrine of mystery and state secrecy to protect his political power, Renaissance writers appropriated his language to make sense of their own activities and experiences Ben Jonson appeals to the theory of *arcana imperii* in his masques because he wants them to point beyond themselves to the royal patron who is responsible for their existence, John Donne uses James's terms to represent the undiagnosable disease that festers within him as an undisclosed policy that governs a newly founded kingdom. If the discourse of the state secret infiltrates the body here, it also pervades the Renaissance conception of the family, for in an astonishing analysis of domestic portraits Goldberg shows that the father, modeled on royal authority, generates his lineage but remains distant and unaccountable as he dreamily gazes away from his wife and children.

From even this brief summary, we see that Goldberg shares many of the enabling

assumptions of *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* : he senses that all human activity is inevitably inscribed in a system of signification that organizes the ways agents understand their world; he views Renaissance literature as being inextricably related to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century social practices; and he conceives of the self as a culturally constituted entity that is shaped by structures of authority. The above account also hints that Goldberg's theoretical orientation is heavily Foucauldian, for his description of the ways the body is inscribed within discourse echoes Foucault's notion that disciplinary mechanisms swarm and produce their subtle effects even in the domains of human experience that seem intensely private personal.

But how does Goldberg respond to the containment-subversion problem, which is consistently investigated in New Historicist writing? We can answer this question by briefly summarizing the argument of his chapter "The Theatre of Conscience." Goldberg here examines the ways Renaissance texts replicate the second contradiction inherent in James's discourse, and he begins by suggesting that George Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois* and William Shakespeare's *Henry V* both depict characters who gain authority by using performative arts to conceal their plans and desires. But if these works concur with James's sense that power can only be maintained through opaque self-dramatization, other texts invoke the royal rhetoric of obfuscating theatricality to challenge the king's policies. Writers such as Jonson and Donne confidently satirize the tolerated licentiousness of James's court because they recognize that if the monarch is aloof, unknowable, and unaccountable, then poets can never say anything that intentionally questions royal motives. And if the censor or the king himself raises doubts about an author's loyalty that a writer can always cloak himself in the language of regal inscrutability; and claim that his works, like James's acts, were constantly being misread. Goldberg's point, then, is that subversive behavior emerges from within absolutist discourse itself, and he implies that while such structure allows writers to express feelings of disgust and contempt, it also ultimately contains the threat posed by gestures of dissent and rebellion.

Goldberg's work has helped to convince many Renaissance scholars that they should be practitioners of cultural poetics, and as a result New Historicism thrives in the field of sixteenth and seventeenth century English criticism.

4.8.5 CLIFFORD GEERTZ :

Geertz' ethnography became celebrated in the late 1960s, just as the major New Historicists were moving from graduate school into university posts. His writings have been enormously influential on New Historicist practice, especially the essays collected in *The Interpretation of Culture! Selected Essays* (1973) and *Local Knowledge. Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology* (1983). From the first New Historicists were beguiled by the much anthologized "Deep Play: Notes on the

Balinese Cock Fight" (1971); and from the second, by "Centers, Kings and Charisma, Reflections on the Symbolic, of Power" (1983), especially by the section evoking the pageantry which Queen Elizabeth I of England deployed with great political skill. Here Geertz showed literary critics how they might read Renaissance English culture in new ways. With Geertz as their great exemplar, New Historicists have completely changed criticism of Renaissance texts; those changes can now also be seen in the criticism of texts from many different periods and national cultures. Geertz practices "thick description" a term he borrows from the Oxford philosopher Gilbert Kyle. Geertz "thickly describes"—in other words, unearths the underlying meaningful structures of—local events? and local interactions, and from those interactions generalises whole societies. For Geertz the concrete or the actual must always precede the abstract. He insists on what Greenblatt calls "the touch of the real." New Historicists were excited by the advantage Geertz offered them: his ethnography always focused on what had actually happened. He spun these happenings in elegant webs of significance; he turned them into elaborately constructed fiction*. But their "touch of the real" meant that, in a crucial sense, they were more "real" than the literary fictions which New Historicists had been trained to describe: plays, poems and novels. They yearned to link those fictions with the world light and his subjects seemed to inhabit. Geertz might describe - cockfight, a Moroccan bazaar, an Islamic ritual: his eye would light on an apparently small object or event and through thick description evoke its meanings.

He, thus, showed New Historicists how they could read the advantage he offered them was an enormous expansion in the range of materials they might then read. If all events were accessed through texts, critics need not continue themselves to traditional literary and canonical texts.

A standard New Historicist essay would begin by reading an explorer's journal, an account of an exorcist, or perhaps some gossip from the court of Henry VIII! or Elizabeth I. This would be read as thoroughly* as say, New Criticism might read a sonnet. This would then be linked with other excerpt from quite different texts. Finally the New Historicist, in a standard move, would turn to a literary example, usually a small passage or a verse from a play. There would be no attempts at a complete, or "closed," reading of the text. Rather, the strategy would be to link together, somewhat loosely, a whole series of apparently unrelated items. From these readings the New Historicist would, like Geertz, then attempt to generalize the workings of a society.

4.8.6 WALTER BENN MICHELS :

In his introduction to *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism* (1987) has used New Historicist assumptions to interpret texts drawn from a later culture. In his

introduction to *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism* (1987) Walter Benn Michaels states that his aim is to study how American writing is shaped by changes in economic production, distribution, and consumption that occurred after the Civil War, and his thesis is that the literary mode commonly called *naturalism* participates in and exemplifies a capitalist discursive system that is structured by a series of internal divisions. Each significant element of American economic practice—corporations, money, commodities, and identities—is intrinsically differentiated from itself and since writing too is apart of this massive political formation, it must also display the logic of contradiction that drives mercantile culture.

Perhaps the chapter that most clearly illustrates Michaels's powers as a reader is the one from which he borrows his book's title. There Michaels discusses the late nineteenth-century debates between the goldbugs and the advocates of paper currency, and he shows that the controversy between these groups stems from competing assumptions about the nature of money itself while the defenders of precious metals sense that the value of gold resides in its innate beauty, their opponents think the gold is only desirable because it is a *representation* of money. Having delineated these opposing views, Michaels shows that both of these positions are illustrated in Frank Norris's *McTeague* for the narrative's two misers are motivated by these contradictory models of wealth. Trina's hoarding of gold enacts her society's presumption that metal is the money itself and her act encodes her culture's fear that should precious metals stop circulating, civilization will be undone. Zerkow's collecting of junk embodies his world's recognition that if wealth is an effect of representation, then anything can be converted into money, and his behavior demonstrates that a discrepancy between material and value is the enabling condition of capital. Michaels's point in producing this analysis is not that either of these theories of wealth is truer than the other but that the tension between them is a constitutive element of the discourse of naturalism and that any literary text produced at this time will display both views toward money.

By demonstrating that the logic of naturalism informs both the gold-standard debate and Norris's text, Michaels performs the first task expected of the New Historicist, namely, explaining how writing is a part of the culture in which it was produced. He turns to Norris's *Vandover and the Brute* to consider the ways that subjectivity is constructed. By means of an intricate reading operation, he shows that Vandover's consciousness is deeply divided, for while the character sometimes conceives of his self as an extension of his own animal being, at other times he discovers that his identity is a product of textual representation. But since this split neatly replicates the contradictions inherent in the nineteenth-century understanding of money, Michaels concludes that Vandover's subjectivity is fully inscribed in the discourse of naturalism. Michaels's understanding of selfhood shapes his response to

the third question that Montrose claims NewHistoricists should address, for Michaels strongly insists that the socially constituted character of human identity prevents individuals from imagining progressive alternatives to the society in which they live. Indeed, in a particularly memorable passage, he dismisses Utopian visions as fantasies of transcendence that have haunted cultural criticism from the time of Jeremiah. Finally, on the question of method, one must acknowledge that Michaels not only borrows from other scholars but actually offers insights that complicate existing theories. Although his use of Foucault's model of discourse is fairly predictable, his discussion of the ways capitalist practices conform to a structure of internal difference is innovative because, as Brook Thomas has noted, this idea indicates that the poststructuralist dismantling of the autonomous subject may be more complicit with mercantile economic systems than has often been recognized.

4.9 CHARGES AGAINST NEW HISTORICISM

In spite of gaining intellectual eminence, NewHistoricism has had to undergo severe criticisms. Firstly, it has been alleged that New Historicism tends to reduce literature to a footnote of history, and neglects uniquely literary qualities of the work in question. Secondly, Frederick Jameson argues that much Historicist criticism lacks a theory of history. That history to paraphrase the bumper sticker, "just happens without explaining why it happens in the way that it does and who is affected. The New Historicists were frequently denounced for not being intellectually coherent, for not having a proper method at all. Rather, New Historicists were seen to be arch *briocoleurs*, making up their method as they went along, concocting a paradigm stew of anthropology, Marxism, history, and psychology. And thirdly, though obsessed with the processes of power, New Historicism was also thought to be apolitical. Its readings, on the whole, suggested the monolithic and inventive nature of the state, capable of the subtlest forms of exclusion and suppression. New Historicists, moreover, had practiced their own forms of exclusion. Though they had tried to renovate the canon, they had largely focused on highly canonical figures. They were evangelists in other words, for the much spurned white males' of the literary canon. They ignored writings by women and other minorities, preferring instead another reading of *King Lear*. For some critics, New Historicists were not nearly political enough.

4.10 CONCLUSION

None of the criticisms above is likely to dampen the enthusiasms within English departments for the New Historical movement. What the New Historicism offers to students of literature is the joy of new explanations, new paradigms. It does not designate an unexplored area of scholarly investigation. It does not raise new problems.

new questions. If its attempts to "historicize" literary study were merely an inducement to look into new documents, to ask about the relation of literature to social history in a new way, the Movement would perform a service for scholarship. But it does not. The New Historicism cannot be considered a new subspecialty within the discipline of English in the same sense as the older subspecialties of textual criticism or Renaissance studies. It is instead an academic specialty in the same sense that feminism is—a school of interpretation predisposed to find the same themes in every work it reads and to explain them always in the same terms.

New Historicists like to picture themselves as challenging "the institution of criticism"—breaking loose from what Jane Tompkins describes as "the extremely narrow confines of literary study as it is now practised within the academy."

The philosopher Michael Oakeshott has pointed out that a student of the past cannot learn the history of something without first discovering what kind of thing it is. In this respect, the New Historicism is not a genuine historical inquiry; it does not inquire into the true nature of literary work, because it is confident it already knows what they are. They are agents of ideology. Contrary to appearances, the movement is not an effort to discover what it means for a literary work to be historical; it is really little more than an attempt to get literary works to conform to a particular vision of history.

By the late 1990s, New Historicism continued to inspire productive and influential work. The flagship journal *Representations* continued to publish influential materials from an eclectic range of disciplines; and New Historist studies continued to emerge.

4.11 REVIEW QUESTIONS :

1. Describe the circumstances under which New Historicism arose
2. What are the basic assumptions of New Historicism?
3. How is New Historicism related to the Marxist theory of literary criticism?
4. Who is responsible for introducing the term New Historicism? What is his contribution to the field of literary criticism?
5. Comment on Louis Montrose's remark: "New Historicism has a reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of history."
6. What are some of the allegations against New Historicism?
7. Write short notes on :
 - (a) Michel Foucault
 - (b) Jonathan Goldberg

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UNIT 1 □ LITERATURE TEACHING IN INDIA— BACKGROUND AND PRESENT SITUATION

Structure

- 1.0 English Literature teaching in India : Background and Present situation.**
- 1.1 Introduction : an outsider's view.**
 - 1.1.1. Precedent : an earlier outsider's view**
- 1.2 Justification for some form of study of English in India.**
 - 1.2.1 The "Useful in International business, Science and travel" Justification**
 - 1.2.2 The "Currency in India" justification.**
 - 1.2.3 The "Prestige" justification.**
- 1.3 English 'language' and English 'literature'.**
- 1.4 Outline of possible objectives.**
- 1.5 The specific situation.**
 - 1.5.1 Division between language and literature.**
 - 1.5.2 English and Indian language medium schools.**
- 1.6 Summary**
- 1.7 Reference**
- 1.8 Review Questions**

1.1 INTRODUCTION : AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW : ADAPTED :- ALAN DURANT

It is clear that the study of English Literature in India, despite its "striking image of static permanence, is in a period of upheaval and transition. Even if it remains absolutely, fixed, in terms of its own syllabus and methods, the whole educational context, around the subject as well as the demand for it - are undergoing changes that will ensure the subject's overall significance and influence alter, perhaps fundamentally ; in the next decade or two, Even allowing for the vicissitudes of 'Indian 'time', major change in the character of English studies must be expected to occur in the next fifty years or so, This situation - which has parallels in other parts of the world - seems one partly predictable long-term consequence of India's colonial history. In practice, it has been met in some quarters with reluctance and resistance, expressed in defence of things as they have been. In other quarters, it is greeted with positive response and innovation. It may well be that the dangers of uncertain change are in this instance outmeasured by those of keeping things as they are. But there is little

need for pessimistic calculation of either kind. It seems reasonable - and far preferable - to think present circumstances offer an opportunity for innovations which might in fact rectify idiosyncrasies in the study of English in India that have existed for over a century. The potential exists for enhancing, the subject's educational importance and reputation, rather than participating in its decline and eventual demise.

The following observations and ideas about the teaching of English Literature in India have been formed during short visits as a Specialist Lecturer for the British Council. My views are therefore those of an outsider with only superficial experience of a situation whose actual complexity is almost overwhelming. It may be helpful, all the same, for me to identify opportunities and obstacles in the study of English which have struck me; for this may stimulate discussion leading, if only, indirectly, to new kinds of argument, and initiative. In collecting my observations together, I have been encouraged by the interest shown by, virtually everyone involved in teaching literature I have talked with during my short visits to India. I have also been stimulated by my own feelings of unease with some still influential views expressed by earlier visitors to the sub-continent, especially with John Holloway's assessment in -1959, "English Literature: A World Survey, 1 : India" (Holloway, 1959). So it is perhaps a useful way of introducing my own thoughts to pick up one of two of Holloway's most general observations.

1.1.1 PRECEDENT : AN EARLIER OUTSIDER'S VIEW

Discussing the Indian- situation¹, in - 1959- John Holloway tackled the fundamental question of justifying' the study of English Literature very directly, arguing centrally that the subject can 'bring out to the student how literature is a storehouse of many of the ideas which interest him currently and practically as a citizen' (Holloway, 1959 : xii). On the question of the relation of literature teaching- to language learning, Holloway put forward a clear and decisive view : that in a satisfactory course of literary studies, students would gain a firm grasp, for purposes of their own writing, of the best that has been written in English prose. This is something which is an intrinsic part of mastering the use of the English language; but at the same time, it is part of literary studies, and I think there is no 'language class' substitute for it. No English Teacher can write (which in part means think!) like the masters of our -prose; and therefore none can hope to teach what their books cannot but teach. To say this is not of course to ignore the value of the language class; but to indicate how one part of the value of literary studies is that they make a distinctive and irreplaceable contribution to language training.' (Holloway, 1959; iii-iv).

Going on from this reasoning, Holloway laid out detailed proposals for the literary curriculum, making clear the basis of his position in the exemplary power of great works of literature. Frequently I will want to take issue with this general view as a sufficient basis for the study of English literature. Nevertheless, the strength of John Holloway's reflections on the situation in the sub-continent, taken as a whole, lies in

their clarity and explicitness. Accordingly, I will try throughout to make equally clear and explicit the bases for my own views, making it more straightforward, I hope, for others to analyse them, and show up where appropriate their limitations and possible inaccuracies.

1.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR SOME FORM OF STUDY OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

Any educational activity starts from some perception of 'need' or 'demand'. This can be vocational (linked to future employment), humanistic (linked to some notion of character-building), or socially reconstructionist (linked to a predefined social need). The worth of some form of study of English in India can be explained with arguments based on any one, or a combination of all, of these categories. In practice however, the following THREE justifications have been most influential :

1.2.1 THE 'USEFUL IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS, SCIENCE AND TRAVEL'

This familiar justification for studying English is based on the emergence of English as a world language. It finds support from the spread of jet travel, and from recent developments in telecommunications, world-diplomacy and increasingly complex and interdependent international Market. Two problems with the argument remain- clear, however - especially as regards mounting a case for studying English LITERATURE. In the first place, opportunities for travelling overseas and conducting international business are limited to a tiny fraction of the overall present number of Indian learners of English; so it is difficult to justify such learning on any scale "larger than the specialist professional training of what will remain a minority, business-class elite. Opportunities to enter this business elite do not appear to correlate to any significant degree with LINGUISTIC competence alone, but depend on a range of other aptitudes and factors. In the second place, it cannot be assumed - certainly not without argument - that the study of literary texts is directly conducive, to learning the language of international science and commerce. Although arguments for such usefulness MAY be made, there already exists a wide range of arguments against, including (specific to the Indian content) the argument that attention to past British writers such as Shakespeare and Milton has in fact contributed to the emergence of a grand, rhetorical style, which has spread from literary texts into everyday speech, leading to sometimes incongruous and occasionally comic effects as regards linguistic register in the international context of English use. Seemingly, training in ESP (English for Specific Purposes) or GPE (General Purpose English) is a more appropriate response to this particular need,. As a justification for the study of English, then, and especially of English Literature), this line of reasoning only seems persuasive if overlaid with other kinds of supplementary demand.

1.2.2 THE "CURRENCY IN INDIA" JUSTIFICATION

This second, traditional justification for studying English focuses on continuing use of the language within India. The history and context for such use will be reviewed briefly below. Certainly, if we are to believe Braj Kachru's figures regarding the press, book publishing and ; media in India (cited, selectively, in 2.2 below), there exists clear momentum for English quite in excess of any specific Government of India policy ; and this would appear to vindicate the notion of a long-term anglophone future, for which educational foundations need to be laid. There then arise, though, problems concerning the distinctiveness of the ; variety-band of English used in India, as regards the question of a ; suitable linguistic 'standard'. This general problem can be stated very briefly. To combat the elitism of the 'internationalist' perspective, it might be argued greater attention should be given to the range of varieties which collectively constitute 'Indian English', since these are the major, in some cases only, varieties of English to which learners will have repeated exposure (except perhaps on television and in the cinema). Yet to accommodate in this way to a local Indian or South Asian 'standard, based on a chosen usage within this variety-band would be to pursue a line of cultural separatism out of keeping with India's anglophone traditions and present cosmopolitan aspirations. Notice that, either way, although there would be room in line with this view for studying much recent Indian writing in English, it is difficult to see how studying the traditional corpus of English literary texts might be justified. If it is principally this view which is put forward, some degree of tension between the linguistic situation and the traditional literary canon is inevitable.

1.2.3 THE "PRESTIGE" JUSTIFICATION

Besides these two considerations, which are both concerned with communication in English as a social utility, there is a further, sociolinguistic dimension to the situation. This derives from a 'prestige' which is attached to ALL use of English, even if assigned unequally to different varieties. Undoubtedly, there IS a cline of prestige as regards varieties of English spoken (from BBC to so-called 'box-wallah'), and this is perhaps related, among other things, to the positive value often put directly (and frequently uncritically) on international contact and on new forms of Westernisation. (This view exists side by side with a very different kind of prestige invested, especially by some older speakers, in residual symbolic currencies of the British colonial period, including its ways of speech.) In social terms, the prestige of 'British English' is clearly of mixed value. Beneficially, it can support a sense of international connection and community, and in this way contribute to a notion of cosmopolitanism; detrimentally, it can serve as one further mechanism for class stratification, and for the regulation of power and influence. Such consequences of sociolinguistic factors are largely, imponderable in the abstract. But however the

particular issue is viewed, the very possibility of a prestige associated with ANY use of English rests on the language not being perceived (as in some circles it certainly is) of a lifeless relic. Complacency as regards demonstrating continuing relevance for English can accentuate this impression and in any case, -forceful and in part persuasive arguments are already widely made for ubiquitous public use of Indian languages (what were once called merely 'the vernaculars'). It is possible, of course, to argue AGAINST the demand for Indian languages as a decisive answer to unequal opportunities and social stratification linked to different levels of proficiency in English: if Hindi, for example, were to displace English altogether, it seems likely that the social judgements currently made on the basis of use of English would simply transfer onto that language, since although pressures towards social stratification may be REGISTERED in language, they certainly do not originate there. The complexity of this argument will not be easy to resolve. Its importance and sensitivity, however, make it certain that the "prestige usage" argument for English, pursued in isolation, will in future be an unreliable and incautious bet.

1.3 ENGLISH 'LANGUAGE' AND ENGLISH 'LITERATURE'

These THREE traditional arguments for continuation of the study of English in India relate to English language. They do not amount to a case for studying English Literature. Independent justification for the inclusion of literary works in the study of English needs to be made. So far, such arguments have generally involved one or more of the following components (each one characteristic of a particular theoretical orientation and pedagogic approach) :

- (i) that literature motivates students to become interested in studying language, since literature makes language lessons more 'interesting than they would otherwise be;
- (ii) that literature can provide models, or a general template, for good and stylish usage;
- (iii) that literature exemplifies various features of the organisation of all discourse, and so develops general interpretative strategies and extends communicative competence.

In each case evidence needs to be presented that literary study does', assist in the teaching of English in these ways, and that it can do so IN THIS SPECIFIC SITUATION. (A good deal of research, especially in stylistics and literary linguistics, is now concerned with exploring precisely this sort of 'applied' literary problem.)

Alternatively, if it is not the LINGUISTIC usefulness of literary study which is invoked, then directly CULTURAL arguments need to be made. These might take the form, for example, that English culture and history are intrinsically of special interest to Indians, or- perhaps that British (and / or American) culture have a special and

prominent role to play in the world. Or again, it might be argued that what is needed is, major extension in the limits set on both the 'English' and the 'literature' of 'English literature', such that cultural interest is focused in the specific social experience of the students' own country and other anglophone, ESL countries. Arguments of each kind are currently made by people working in higher education in India. In general, of course, all such cultural arguments need to demonstrate clearly that students will in fact be able to derive the cultural benefits laid claim to, given their actual reading capabilities and degree of relevant contextual knowledge.

1.4 OUTLINE OF POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES.

So far we have merely recorded the views of others as POSSIBLE lines of reasoning. What is our view ? First, there IS much to be said for the internationalist perspective : English is without doubt the principal language of science and technology in the world (as well as a major language for journalism and other kinds of publication and communications), and this is one important reason for having some degree of familiarity with it, wherever possible and practicable. Of course, familiarity for this purpose needs at lower levels to be primarily reading competence, rather than speaking competence, since the opportunity to interact in the scientific community will only exist for those who pursue their scientific studies to an advanced stage. But some basic degree of familiarity with English, would be advantageous at all levels for this area of potential application. Secondly, as well as being everywhere in use in India as the language of commercial signs and as a 'link' language between different language communities, English seems in some areas to act as one of a group of triggers to upward social mobility. Some evidence for this seems to come from the success of the commercial language teaching sector, where there is great demand for English classes. It seems to be mainly the state system of teaching English which, apparently, is failing students, who tend to enter English at higher levels very often only when other options are closed to them. Without prejudging how such alienation of students may develop or indeed whether such attitudes are reasonable or unreasonable, it seems warranted to draw from this situation the view that it is communicative skills which the students seek most, especially in speech. In this respect, there is a watershed here with the 'language of science' rationale, since the need here is primarily for performance capability in speaking rather than in reading.

This demand for proficiency primarily in spoken communication does not fit completely happily with many present courses in higher education. M.A courses especially, which shift an earlier focus in school and B.A. course on language into particular attention to literature - and which are central to the educational experience and later opinions of those who go on to teach English in schools and colleges - tend

to direct interest away from the acquisition of speech skills, and set literature up in opposition to general facility in the broader range of discourse types in English, believe the teaching of English in institutions of higher education in India has to tackle this problem very directly, if it is to retain its present level of credibility, and gradually regain further respect and influence.

Literature is useful within the process of developing reading and interactional communicative skills as a resource of especially interesting texts, culturally and historically speaking, and as a rich fund of discourse that can be used to develop all forms of language skills.

In general, then, it may be said that literature does have a role to play within the need for English outlined. It can help in three main ways :

(i) it can contribute to language-learning, by being used to develop an awareness of the operation of grammatical and discursive processes, and to encourage independent interpretative skills.

(ii) it can be used to foster kinds or extended cultural experience, of different times and different places, as well as allowing students an opportunity to explore their own senses of personal and social identity. (This is incidentally likely to motivate students in related areas of study.) Such comparative awareness of culture and experience is one necessary dimension of acquiring communicative competence within the social and historical matrix of the target language, as well as of coming to a balanced view of the relation between the culture associated with the target language and the student's own cultural background'.

(iii) in anglophone countries, literature can also be used to enhance awareness of the language situation and problems of language planning in the student's own society especially by giving attention to problems in the history of language and society and in the emergence of newly articulated kinds of experience through literary expression.

1.5 THE SPECIFIC SITUATION

We have spent some time on relatively abstract, general issues regarding the study of English. It is obvious that definite and clearly articulated objectives at this level will need to be drawn up, as the basis for future policy. But whatever the individual merits or limitations of particular arguments and approaches at this level of objectives – necessary as these are for a 'political' case for literature and to underpin syllabus planning – ANY case for studying English in India needs to be worked out against the backdrop of specific, existing educational policies, resources and constraints. If this is not done, proposals based on the objectives, no matter how carefully delineated, will be merely utopian.

Before assessing arguments for new approaches to literature, therefore, it is worth considering those aspects of these circumstances which are most likely to govern, or

at least significantly affect, what might be done in the future as regards the study either of English language or of English literature. Two issues stand out. Firstly, there is the issue of continuing division between 'language' and 'literature' teaching ; secondly, there are questions posed by institutional differences as regards the use of English as a medium in school education.

1.5.1 DIVISION BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

For a variety of reasons, the study of English in India itself underwent partition, and this division, between language, and literature, has remained deeply inscribed in higher education syllabuses and planning. The exact balance between language and literary elements varies from institution to institution and from region to region - with the only common feature being that there will be far more literature in M.A. and M. Phil courses than in B.A. courses (in which there may be little or none, except as comprehension exercises, especially for non-honours streams). This situation is changing, at different rates and in different ways around the country ; but even where there is a claim that the division is a thing of the past; there seemed to me strong evidence that it persists, showing through major reforms and cosmetic features alike.

The two faces of English studies 'language' and 'literature', are often viewed by literature teachers in India (as they are by many literature teachers in Britain) as in qualitative contrast : language work leads on to higher, literary activity, and higher study of language work is merely belated - and undignified - remedial activity. Arguably, recent changes in ELT theory and methodology have accentuated this divide, by stressing communicative interaction and the primacy of conversation, and by paying correspondingly little regard to literary TEXTS. The split between the two strands of the discipline is further aggravated, too, by a declining relevance, following 'Independence, of much in British culture, which has greatly reduced the force of purely 'culturalist' justifications for the subject. It is reasonable to suggest, in fact, that the asymmetry between a declining literary interest, and the effective servicing by ELT of increased demand for learning English as an 'international language, generates most urgently the considerable pressure for further reform in English teaching, rather than for remaining content with things as they are.

1.5.2 ENGLISH AND INDIAN LANGUAGE MEDIUM SCHOOLS.

The changing role of English in India has resulted in an extremely complicated multilingual situation. In this situation, there is no homogeneous constituency for which to develop new curricula and methods. Language education policies have therefore to be developed on the basis of a recognition of widely different linguistic EXPERIENCES. In practice, this means either broad, mixed-ability teaching, or else separation of students on the basis of primary linguistic 'medium', reflecting larger patterns of bilingualism in the society. The issue of policy raised by this situation is clearly that of 'streaming'.

As generally conceived at present, LITERATURE teaching is ill-equipped for modes of instruction targeted on different levels of linguistic competence. It will only become able to cope with these by reorganising much in its methodology, moving towards developing language skills through textual analysis, and by demonstrating how the study of literary texts supports other areas of language development. Such adaptation at the teaching level needs eventually to be accompanied by syllabus and examination reforms, to make it more possible than at present for assessment to reflect, in a broader and more flexible way, achievements made by students towards a combination of linguistic and literary goals. This may mean extending ways in which course-units can be combined (i.e. making courses modular), so that the distinctiveness of an individual student's linguistic experience and rate and degree of development can be better catered for. In the long-term future, adaptation in this direction is likely to lead to greater attractiveness of the subject to many students who feel their studies are unlikely to be rewarded within present arrangements, since even enormous amounts of work by a foreign-language learner are unlikely to match even intermittent or haphazard study by an English-using bilingual.

If there is a longterm answer to the question of English studies in multilingual situations - a crucial question for all multicultural societies in which English is used - it must lie in establishing a more varied and graded system of rewards, to reflect the very different kind of genuine development and achievement which take place.

1.6 SUMMARY

In this introductory section, we have outlined a number of reasons for thinking that fresh consideration of English literature teaching in India is needed. Then, by summarising traditional arguments in favour of the study of English language, we have drawn attention to several areas of likely complication, as regards arguing a case for teaching literature. In general, we have suggested the case for teaching literature lies centrally in its usefulness as a language teaching aid in early stages, gradually developing into greater experimentation with, and critical reflection on, language in particular forms of expression in later stages. Proposals, therefore, will be for courses which combine language and literature in mutually reinforcing ways. In courses of this kind, literature would provide one important area of discourse for linguistic comparison with other uses of language, and for developing perceptions of experience, culture and history. It will be our aim later in this module to suggest ways in which these goals might be achieved. But courses along the lines can only be planned after working through issues raised by the historical and social parameters of the present multilingual situation in greater detail. Finally, I discussed briefly two areas of difficulty likely to affect future innovations in this area: the highly differentiated nature of the student constituency for English studies, and the longstanding institutional divisions and tensions between 'language' work and 'literature' work.

1.7 REFERNECE

Holloway, John (1959), *English Literature : A world Survey, I : India.*

1.8 REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are some of idiosyncracies in the study of English in India?
2. How did John Holloway tackle the question of justifying the study of English literature in India?
3. In what ways has the emergence of English as a world language influenced English studies in India?
4. With reference to the needs of business, science, industry and travel, how would you justify the study of English in India today?

UNIT 2 □ EXPLOITING LINGUISTIC AND STYLISTIC FEATURES OF LITERARY TEXTS FOR DEVELOPING LITERARY SENSIBILITY

Structure

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Sensitizing the student of language through literature

2.2 Stylistics and the study of literature

2.3 Textual analysis for classroom use

2.4 Summing up

2.5 Reference

2.0 OBJECTIVES :

At the end of this unit you will have a clear conception of

- what is understood by literary sensibility and sensitivity to literary and linguistic structure of a text ;
- the functions of various syntactic and lexical patterns of language in any literary text ;
- the approach to the language of literature as a network of social and linguistic relationships ;
- views of critics and analysts regarding the study of Literature in the class-room ; the ways of making a text more relevant to the readers's experience.
- It is expected that a detailed reading of this unit and thorough work out of the activities will help promote a sensitivity to issues in literature teaching strategies to be discussed in the next unit.

2.1 SENSITIZING THE STUDENT OF LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE

In this section we will see how language learners can deepen their understanding of life in the country where the language is spoken and used by reading and understanding the great literary works of the country. Imaginative engagement with literature enables learners to shift the focus of their attention beyond the level of syntax and other mechanical operations.

As you read through this section you will find suggestions on ways of sensitizing the student of literature. These have been compiled by Gillan Lazar, Collie Slater

and Lindstrom (1993) and have been extracted from the book *Literature and Language Teaching*.

Literature is a valuable complement to such materials ; especially once the initial 'survival' level has been passed. In reading literary texts, students have also to cope with language intended for native speakers and thus they gain additional familiarity with many different linguistic uses, forms and conventions of the written mode: with irony, exposition, argument, narration, and so on. And, although it may not be confined within a specific social network in the same way that a bus ticket or an advertisement might be, literature can none the less incorporate a great deal of cultural information.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT

For many language learners, the ideal way to deepen their understanding of life in the country where that language is spoken - a visit or an extended stay - is just not possible. Some may start learning a language knowing that they are unlikely ever to set foot in an area where it is spoken by the majority of inhabitants. For all such learners, more indirect routes to this form of understanding must be adopted so that they gain an understanding of the way of life of the country: radio programmes, films or videos, newspapers, and, last but not least, literary works. It is true of course that the 'world' of a novel, play, or short story is a created one, yet it offers a full and vivid context in which characters from many social backgrounds can be depicted. A reader can discover their thoughts, feelings, customs, possessions; what they buy, believe in, fear, enjoy; how they speak and behave behind closed doors. This vivid imagined world can quickly give the foreign reader a feel for the codes and preoccupations that structure a real society. Reading the literature of a historical period is, after all, one of the ways we have to help us imagine what life was like in that other foreign territory: our own country's past. Literature is perhaps best seen as a complement to other materials used to increase the foreign learner's insight into the country whose language is being learnt.

LANGUAGE ENRICHMENT

We have said that reading literary works exposes the student to many functions of the written language, but what about other linguistic advantages? Language enrichment is one benefit often sought through literature. While there is little doubt that extensive reading increases a learner's receptive vocabulary and facilitates transfer to a more active form of knowledge, it is sometimes objected that literature does not give learners the kind of vocabulary they really need. It may be 'authentic' in the sense already mentioned, but the language of literary works on the whole, is not typical of the language of daily life, nor is it like the language used in learner textbooks. We would not wish students to think that Elizabeth Barrett Browning's, 'How do I love thee?' is the kind of utterance normally whispered into a lover's ear nowadays! The

objection to literature on the grounds of lexical appropriacy thus has some validity, but it need not be an overriding one if teachers make a judicious choice of the text to be read, considering it as a counterpoise and supplement to other materials.

On the positive side, literature provides a rich context in which individual lexical or syntactical items are made more memorable. Reading a substantial and contextualised body of text, students gain familiarity with many features of the written language — the formation and function of sentences, the variety of possible structures, the different ways of connecting ideas — which broaden and enrich their own writing skills. The extensive reading required in tackling a novel or a long play develops the students' ability to make inferences from linguistic clues, and to deduce meaning from context, both useful tools in reading other sorts of material as well. As we shall suggest through many activities, a literary text can serve as an excellent prompt for oral work. In all these ways, a student working with literature is helped with the basic skills of language learning. Moreover, literature helps extend the intermediate or advanced learner's awareness of the range of language itself. Literary language is not always that of daily communication, as we have mentioned, but it is special in its way. It is heightened: sometimes elaborate, sometimes marvellously simple yet, somehow, absolutely 'right'. The compressed quality of much literary language produces unexpected density of meaning. Figurative language yokes levels of experience that were previously distinct, casting new light on familiar sensations and opening up new dimensions of perception in a way that can be exhilarating but also startling and even unsettling.

For these features of literary language to be appreciated, a considerable effort is required on the part of the reader who is tackling the text in a foreign language. But with well-chosen works, the investment of effort can be immensely rewarding, the resulting sense of achievement highly satisfying. At a productive level, students of literature will, we hope, become more creative and adventurous as they begin to appreciate the richness and variety of the language they are trying to master and begin to use some of that potential themselves.

PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

Above all, literature can be helpful in the language learning process because of the personal involvement it fosters in readers. Core language teaching materials must concentrate on how a language operates both as a rule-based system and as a socio-semantic system. Very often, the process of learning is initially analytic, piecemeal, and, at the level of the personality, fairly superficial. Engaging imaginatively with literature enables learners to shift the focus of their attention beyond the more mechanical aspects of the foreign language system. When a novel, play or short story is explored over a period of time, the result is that the reader begins to 'inhabit' the text. He or she is drawn into the book. Pinpointing what individual words or phrases

may mean becomes less important than pursuing the development of the story. The reader is eager to find out what happens as events unfold; he or she feels close to certain characters and shares their emotional responses. The language becomes 'transparent' - the fiction summons the whole person into its own world.

We believe that this can happen, and can have beneficial effects upon the whole language learning process, as long as the reader is well-motivated, and as long as the experience of engaging with literature is kept sufficiently interesting, varied and non-directive to let the reader feel that he or she is taking possession of a previously unknown territory. Obviously, the choice of a particular literary work will be important in facilitating this creative relationship which the reader establishes with the text. It is this question we should like to consider next.

What

What sort of literature is suitable for use with language learners? The criteria of suitability clearly depends ultimately on each particular group of students, their needs, interests, cultural background and language level. However, one primary factor to consider is, we suggest, whether a particular work is able to stimulate the kind of personal involvement we have just described, by arousing the learners' interest and provoking strong, positive reactions from them. If it is meaningful and enjoyable, reading is more likely to have a lasting and beneficial effect upon the learners' linguistic and cultural knowledge. It is important to choose books, therefore, which are relevant to the life experiences, emotions, or dreams of the learner. Language difficulty has, of course, to be considered as well. Because they have both a linguistic and a cultural gap to bridge, foreign students may not be able to identify with or enjoy a text which they perceive as being fraught with difficulty every step of the way. In the absence of curriculum or exam constraints, it is much better to choose a work that is not too much above the students normal reading proficiency.

If the language of the literary work is quite straightforward and simple, this may be helpful but is not in itself the most crucial yardstick. Interest, appeal and relevance are all more important. In order for us to justify the additional time and effort which will undoubtedly be needed for learners to come to grips with a work of literature in a language not their own, there must be some special incentive involved. Enjoyment; suspense; a fresh insight into issues which are felt to be close to the heart of people's concerns; the delight of encountering one's own thoughts or situations encapsulated vividly in a work of art; the other, equal delight of finding those same thoughts or situations illuminated by a totally new, unexpected light or perspective: all these are incentives which can lead learners to overcome enthusiastically the linguistic obstacles that might be considered too great in less involving material.

It is therefore well worth the time spent in trying to achieve a good match between a particular group of learners and the literary work they will be asked to read.

Questionnaires on tastes and interests can be useful. Another way of proceeding is to give the class a brief summary of three or four possibilities, perhaps with short extracts from the text, and let them choose the one they find the most appealing. A close runner-up can always become the text the class works with next.

How

Once a novel or play has been chosen, how best can the teacher and students work with it? Particular answers to this question will emerge later as our activities are described. In this section we should like to examine more general principles. First we shall describe some of the approaches that are often used when literature is taught. Then we shall outline some of the aims that have guided our quest for ways of supplementing or even, in some cases, replacing these approaches.

1.2 What is distinctive about the language of literature?

One of the views of literature suggested by Lazar (1993) is that literature involves a special, or unusual, use of language. In this section we explore her idea further and consider any classroom implication arising from it.

TASK (LAZAR, 1993)

Here are number of different texts. Read through each one and decide whether or not you think it is a literary text. If not, then think about where the text might have come from. Note down any language in the text which helped you to make your decision.

- A. *As this is a small Edwardian terraced house with limited natural light, Venetian blinds were chosen to cover the windows. They screen the street scene during the day and add to the impression of space given by the light but the sunshine that streams through the blinds keeps the overall effect light.*
- B. *The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding-cake of the ceiling, and then rippled over the wine-coloured rug, making a shadow on it as the wind does at sea.*
- C. *His breast of chicken with tarragon and girolles goes back to the classic French repertoire: the skin of the fowl crisped to gold, odoriferously swathed in a thick creamy sauce, golden also, piled with fleshy mushrooms fried in butter till they take on the gleam of varnished wood.*
- D. *Just because we're deaf, it doesn't mean we've nothing between our ears.*
- E. *Cousin Nwankechukukere came back with a wardrobe the size of the Eiffel tower and such impressive ideas indicative of her profound study of de*

Gaulle, the Common Market and slimming. She had become a woman. She even changed her name. There was no fanfare about this. I had expected the usual insertion in the papers: 'I, formerly known, called, addressed as ... shall from today henceforward be known, called, addressed, etc.' and the bit about 'former documents remaining valid'. But no. Cousin Nwankechukukere just changed her name to 'NwaI. To me there was a delicious crunchiness in 'Nwan-ke-chu-ku-ke-re' a crunchiness redolent of fried corn and groundnuts eaten with coconut. It was a pity to lose all that. Furthermore Nwankcchukukerc as a name should give the bearer a superiority complex. It is a name which literally means 'She-who-is-made-by-God.'

F. "Three grey geese in a field grazing ;

Grey were the geese and green was the grazing.

G. She's been working on the project all week, but she's starting to run out of steam. She doesn't feel that her mind is operating any more.

In the task you may have found it quite difficult to identify which texts are literary and which ones are not. This is probably because there is no specialised literary language which can be isolated and analysed in the same way as the language of specific fields, such as law; or specific media, such as newspapers. It is also perfectly possible to imagine a literary context for many of the more obviously non-literary texts. For instance, example G. is an invented utterance, but it could easily be imagined as part of a dialogue in a play, novel or short story. Perhaps it is difficult deciding which texts are literary because one of the hallmarks of literature is that it feeds creatively on every possible style and register -it has become the one form of discourse in which any use of language is permissible.

Many of these features occur in other forms of discourse as well, but in many literary texts they combine to form a highly unified and consistent effect, which strongly reinforces the message of the text (Brumfit)

Here is a list of some linguistic features believed to be prevalent in literary texts. Read through the extracts in the TASK again and note down any examples of the linguistic features listed below. The first one has been done for you.

Linguistic feature	Example(s) in text
Metaphor (B.)	the frosted wedding-cake of the ceiling to run out of steam/her mind isn't working (G.)
Simile	

<i>Linguistic feature</i>	<i>Example(s) in text</i>
<i>Assonance (repetition of vowel sounds)</i>	
<i>Alliteration (repetition of consonants)</i>	
<i>Repetition of word or phrase</i>	
<i>Unusual syntactic patterns (e.g. reversing the order of subject and verb)</i>	
<i>Double, or multiple meaning of a word</i>	
<i>Poeticisms (poetic lexis)</i>	
<i>Mixing of styles/registers</i>	

We have already said that literature does not constitute a particular type of language in itself, but that it may reveal a higher incidence of certain kinds of linguistic features which are tightly patterned in the text. The features listed in the last Task are generally considered to be among those which tend to predominate in literary texts. On the other hand, we have also seen that they can be found in other forms of discourse as well, for example :

- metaphors and similes are used in everyday colloquial speech;
- assonance and alliteration can be found in children's rhymes and advertising jingles.

Task

Look again at the list of linguistic features we considered in the previous Task. Next to each one write down any form of discourse, other than literature, in which you think you might find this feature.

2.2 STYLISTICS AND THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

Stylistics has brought about a significant breakthrough in the study of literature. It has opened up new possibilities of understanding and unraveling the mysteries of literary language by providing us tools of perception and analysis.

As you work through the activities in this section you will develop a deeper sensitivity to literary structure and texture of various texts.

Since the 1950s, pedagogical stylistics has been intrinsically linked with the teaching of written texts (and especially literary texts) to speakers of English as a second language. This is despite the fact that for decades many teachers have also structured

their lessons in LI classrooms to focus upon the linguistic features of literary texts as a means of enhancing their students' understanding of literature and language. A theoretical dimension to research undertaken in the stylistics classroom has been added to this area of study.

2.2.1 ITS GOALS, THEN ARE :

- to establish a working definition of pedagogical stylistics; to identify the theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings of the discipline shared by LI and L2 practitioners;
- to point if possible towards any emerging consensus on good practice.

2.2.2 THE PRINCIPAL AIM OF STYLISTICS in the classroom is to make students aware of language use within chosen texts, and that what characterizes pedagogical stylistics are classroom activities that are interactive between the text and the (student) reader. Preliminary findings, from a pilot study involving a poem by Langston Hughes, suggest that the process of improving students' linguistic sensibilities must include greater emphasis upon the text as action: i.e. upon the mental processing which is such a proactive part of reading and interpretation; and how all of these elements - pragmatic and cognitive as well as linguistic - function within quite specific social and cultural contexts.

2.2.3 STYLE AND MEANING :

Meaning, as critics use it, apparently refers to mere sense that can be paraphrased without doing violence to the conceptual substance of the sentence; and, indeed, on this level, the doctrine of synonymity seems tenable. But as I. A. Richards reminds us, utterances viewed in their rhetorical settings exhibit a far more complicated meaning structure than mere sense can accommodate, operating on multiple levels to "give us different kinds of meaning — mere sense, sense and implications, feeling, the speaker's attitudes to whatever it is, to his audience, the speaker's confidence, and other things." Even Louis Milic acknowledges that meaning is of "two kinds. .

referential or cognitive meaning, which denotes the substance of what is being said.

and *affective or expressive meaning*, which refers to the means for producing different effects on the reader.

2.2.4 DEFINING STYLE :

A useful definition in teaching style goes like this. "Style is the adaptation of form to rhetorical aim(s)." Such a formulation preserves the classical distinction between language and thought and thus allows for the possibility of choice among alternative language structures.

It is possible, to discern three distinct categories. Considered as a purely formal feature, style may appear in instructional guises that go something like this.

"Be sure to follow the style of academic documentation" (**style as format**);

"Standard edited English is the style likely to be acceptable to your readers" (**style as grammaticality**);

"Try to write in a clear and readable style" (**style as precision**);

"Varied sentence patterns promote a pleasing style" (**style as syntactic variation**).

"Density of embedding is characteristic of a mature style" (**style as syntactic complexity**); "Modern readers prefer a plain style" (**style as linguistic register**).

Such stylistic counsel is common in composition teaching. They constitute, in short, a pool of linguistic resources from which the writer draws as occasion demands, keeping in mind as he or she does so that they are options entirely relative to the specific rhetorical task at hand.

A second category calls attention to the dependence of linguistic forms on such extralinguistic constraints as occasion, audience, and genre. This kind of stylistic instruction at least adjusts formal elements to the demands of the rhetorical situation, usually by proposing levels of diction (e.g., formal, informal, colloquial) appropriate to specified types of discourse, and by outlining strategies for gaining special emphasis or effect.

This type of style convention may be referred to as the "rhetorical profile" that a particular discourse requires.

The third category, which is the least amenable to classification, and, indeed, few textbooks accord it much space, may be called the aesthetics of style, by which is meant a union of form and substance that manages to make style itself expressive of the meaning structures set forth.

Studies in the aesthetics of prose style can equally help us enrich student perception of the rhetoric of style. Though addressed for the most part to a scholarly audience, such studies afford insights into the congruence of style structures and content that can be adapted to classroom use. Possibly the fullest guide to this type of style study is David Lodge's *Language of Fiction*, which argues that the language of literary prose is "essentially rhetorical," offering in support verbal analyses of passages drawn from literary texts.

REFERENCES :

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L. A. Richards, *Interpretation in Teaching* (New York : Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), p.135.

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Stanley Fish, "Literature in the Reader : Affective Stylistics," *New Literary History*,
2 (Autumn, 1970), 123-161.

2.3 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS FOR CLASSROOM USE

While analyzing a text you will notice how particular language forms function to convey specific messages, or how they justify literary intuitions. Through these tasks you will not only use your existing knowledge of the language to understand and appreciate literary texts, but also develop your own perception of the language itself.

Analysing a text for classroom use

In order to devise activities which use stylistic analysis, we ourselves need a procedure or strategy for analysing the text. Here is one possible procedure which involves two main steps :

STEP 1

While looking at a particular text, note down any linguistic features which are particularly noticeable. These features may be noticeable because they recur with unexpected frequency in the text; because they deviate slightly from what might be considered more grammatically or lexically usual; or because, if these features were paraphrased or rewritten in a slightly different way, a very different effect would be created.

STEP 2

Develop a series of questions which alert us to these features, and encourage to reach an interpretation or appreciation of the text bearing these features in mind. [Ref. Lazar, 1993]

We now apply this procedure to the opening paragraphs of V. S. Naipaul's novel *A House for Mr. Biswas* (Penguin, 1969).

In the Figure the opening paragraphs of the novel have been marked for any unusual or noticeable linguistic features. Decide if you would underline or add any others.

Ten weeks before he died, Mr Mohun Biswas, a journalist of **Sikkim Street, St James, Port of Spain**, what was sacked. He had been ill for some time. In less than a year he had spent more than **nine weeks** at the **Colonial Hospital** and convalesced at home for even longer. When the doctor advised him to take a complete rest the *Trinidad Sentinel* had no choice. It gave Mr. Biswas **three months' notice** and continued, up to the time of his death, to supply him every morning with a free copy of the paper.

Mr. Biswas was **forty-six** and had children. He had no money. His wife Shama had no money. On the house in **Sikkim Street** Mr. Biswas owed, and **had been owing** for **four years, three thousand** dollars. The interest on this, at **eight per cent**, came to **twenty dollars** a month. Two children were at school. The two older children, on whom Mr. Biswas might have depended, were both abroad on scholarships.

Figure Extract annotated for noticeable linguistic features

TASK

Here are some questions for you based on the text above. Go through the questions yourself and note your answers.

- (a) Write down all the examples you can find in the text of exact numbers, figures or other precise details describing Mr Biswas and his situation. What effect do you think is created by using all these details?
- (b) In the opening lines of the text we are told that Mr Biswas was sacked. The author could also have said:
'Mr Biswas was dismissed,'
'Mr Biswas lost his job.'
How would the use of these phrases in the passage have changed its meaning?
- (c) In what situation is it common to use the phrase 'I/We have no choice'? Do you think the newspaper had no choice in sacking Mr Biswas? What is the effect of using the phrase here?
- (d) In the second paragraph two phrases are repeated. Which ones are they? What do you think is the effect of repeating them?
- (e) In the second paragraph we have the phrase '... Mr Biswas had been owing for four years ...'. What tense is used here? It is probably more grammatically correct to use the phrase 'he had owed' (past perfect) since

verbs of possession such as owe, belong, etc. are not usually used in the continuous form. What is the effect of using this tense here?

- (f) What feelings do you have for Mr Biswas after reading these two paragraphs? Why do you think this is so?

TASK

Here are some statements about using stylistic analysis. Decide whether you think each statement is always true, sometimes true or never true.

- (a) Stylistic analysis can provide us with a basic procedure for appreciating or interpreting a text, but it cannot actually interpret the meaning of the text for them. This is because all interpretations of a text are necessarily incomplete and subjective, rather than complete and objective.
- (b) The use of grammatical terminology when doing stylistic analysis with students only serves to confuse and alienate them.
- (c) Stylistic analysis, if applied too rigidly, treats the text as a self-contained entity with little reference to the social, cultural or historical background in which it is grounded. By concentrating on the language of the text in isolation teachers may neglect to provide students with important background information which could be required to make sense of the text.
- (d) When doing stylistic analysis we should avoid providing our own ready-made interpretation of the text. The aim of using stylistics is to engage readers in the complex process of making-sense of a text rather than of reaching a definitive view of that text's meaning.
- (e) Stylistic analysis is a rather mechanical approach to studying literature- it deadens our emotional response to what we are reading.
- (f) Stylistic analysis is a useful way of revising grammar and vocabulary and increasing our overall language awareness.

2.4 LITERATURE AS CONTENT : HOW FAR TO GO ?

One of the possible approaches to teaching literature is to make literature itself the content of the course. This kind of approach examines the history and characteristics of literary movements; the social, political and historical background to a text; the biography of the author and its relevance to his or her writings; the genre of the text, etc. Some language teachers would argue that this type of approach is really the province of the literature teacher rather than the language teacher, and only successful when used with learners who have a specialist interest in the study of literature. Nevertheless, there are important elements in this approach which can be usefully

applied to the teaching of literature in the language class. In this section we explore these elements further.

TASK A

Here is the beginning of a fairly long poem. Read it, and then write a very brief paragraph (not more than 50 words) describing what you think the poem is about.

Andrea del Sarto

(Called The Faultless Painter')

- But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
5. I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
10. Oh, I'll content him, - but tomorrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if - forgive now - should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
15. And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,

Once you have finished Task A, read the following information relating to the poem and then complete Task B

BACKGROUND TO 'ANDREA DEL SARTO'

- The poem 'Andrea del Sarto' was written by Robert Browning (1812-1889) and first published in the second volume of *Men and Women* on 10 November 1855.
- Browning was a poet who successfully mastered a range of styles, and particularly delighted in the natural rhythms of everyday speech.
- Many of Browning's more famous poems, including 'Andrea del Sarto', are dramatic monologues. A dramatic monologue is a poem in which the poet invents a character, or more commonly, uses a character from history or legend. The poem is delivered as though by this person, sometimes but not always, to an imagined listener. The speaker in the poem is not

identified with the poet, but is dramatised through what he or she says. In this way, the speaker is made to reveal himself or herself in an ironic way to the reader.

- Andrea del Sarto was a Renaissance painter and contemporary of Raphael and Michelangelo. He was born in Florence in 1486. In 1517 he married a beautiful widow, Lucrezia del Fede, who was often his model. Between 1518 and 1519 he went to France at the invitation of Francis I. He died in 1531 at the time of the plague in Florence. He was known as the 'Faultless Painter' because of the perfection of his technique.
- Browning was generally familiar with the work of Andrea del Sarto, and probably based the information about the painter on Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*.
- Fiesole is a town in the-hills just north-east of Florence.'

TASK B

Look again at the opening lines of *Andrea del Sarto* and the paragraph you wrote describing them. Has the background information you have just read altered your understanding or appreciation of the opening lines of the poem? In what way(s)? Which information did you find helpful to your understanding of the poem? Which information did you find irrelevant or distracting?

TASK C

Below are some responses from teachers to the tasks you have just completed. Decide which one is closest to your own reaction. Would you want to add any more thoughts or feelings of your own ?

- A. *I found that the background information provided really enhanced my understanding of the opening lines of the poem. It made the situation far more vivid, and gave me clues as to how to read the poem. Without knowing the context to which the poem relates it is difficult to understand what it is about.*
- B. *I don't really see the point of providing background information. if a poem or piece of literature is good, then it should speak for itself and be universally understood.*
- C. *The background information feels like a burden to me - as if I have the whole heavy weight of centuries of English literature bearing down on me. It makes me feel as if my own response to the poem will be totally inadequate compared to that of all the critics and professors who have written about the poem.*
- D. *The background information made me feel I'd learned something new which*

I'd be able to apply to other poems by Browning - if I ever get round to reading them !

- E. *I find it a great relief to have a little help with reading the poem, rather than always having to fall back on my own interpretation.*

2.5 THE ROLE OF METALANGUAGE

In this unit we have explored some possible approaches to using literature in the language classroom, and the implications of these 'different' approaches. A further question which arises from such an exploration is how far we should make use of literary metalanguage or terminology with our students. Let us now review some of this terminology, and then think about how useful it might be in the classroom.

Below is a list of some of the terms which are often used when discussing literature. In fact, some of them are terms for figures of speech which are equally common in everyday language. Each term is accompanied by a definition. Below the definitions are a list of examples. They match the definitions, but are in a different order.

TASK

Match the terms with the example of each one that follows.

METAPHOR : a comparison made between things which are unlike each other by describing one as if it were the other.

SIMILE : an explicit comparison made between two unlike things which is usually indicated by using the words 'like' or 'as'.

PERSONIFICATION : a kind of metaphor in 'which' abstract or inanimate objects are described as if they were alive and animate.

PARADOX : a statement which appears to be contradictory or absurd, but may be true.

OXYMORON : a combination of neighbouring words which seem apparently contradictory or incongruous.

METONYMY : a figure of speech in which the name of a thing is substituted for another thing with which, it is usually associated.

SYNECDOCHE : the whole of something is used to mean the part of it, or part of it is used to mean the whole.

APOSTROPHE : the direct addressing of an abstract quality, object or absent person.

ALLITERATION : the repetition of the initial consonant sounds in two or more consecutive words.

ASSONANCE : the repetition of identical or similar vowels sounds, usually in the middle.

Examples

A. with the smoking blueness of Pluto's gloom... '(D. H. Lawrence, *Bavarian Gentians*)

B. 'War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength.' (George Orwell, 1984.)

C. The pen is mightier than the sword. (E. G. Bulwer-Lytton,

D. ... Mrs Spragg herself wore as complete an air of detachment as if she had been a wax figure in a shop-window. (Edith Wharton, *The Custom of the Country*.)

E. 'O heavy lightness! serious vanity!' (W. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*.)

F. "... His crypt the cloudy canopy..." (Thomas Hardy, *The Darkling Thrush*.)

G. I have no relative but the universal mother Nature: I will seek her breast and ask repose.' (Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*.)

H. 'Milton! Thou shouldst be living at this hour.' (William Wordsworth, *London*, 1802.)

I. 'I should have been a pair of ragged claws

Scuttling across the floor of silent seas.' (T. S. Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*.)

J. 'Dorothea by this time had looked deep into the ungauged reservoir of Mr Casaubon's mind...' (George Eliot, *Middlemarch*.)

UNIT 3 □ FORMULATING STRATEGIES, METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING LITERATURE

Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 What is literature ?

3.2 Issues in the teaching of literature in India.

3.3 Why use literature in the classroom ?

3.4 The Text, the Reader and the Teaching of Literature

3.5 Classroom Approaches to the Teaching of Literature

3.6 Reference : SOURCE MATERIAL – Provocations (1993)

– Literature and Language Teaching (1993)

3.0 OBJECTIVES :

In this unit we will explore some of the basic issues and concerns relevant to teaching literature in the Indian context. We have looked at some of the ways in which literary materials can be exploited in the classrooms for the purpose of developing literary sensibility in our students. In relation to the ideas suggested in the earlier unit we will now consider

- (i) some of the approaches strategies and techniques that might help the teacher of literature to make principled and informed decisions about how and why literature can be used in the classroom.
- (ii) how every literary text is different
- (iii) how every literature teaching situation is different
- (iv) how every theory explaining literature or how to use it is different.

After reading this unit carefully you will be able to draw on the range of insights available and then develop an approach appropriate and relevant to your students.

3.1 WHAT IS LITERATURE ?

In the process of trying to answer this very basic question , try working out a few tasks. (Adapted from Lazar, 1993)

Task 1

A group of teachers from all over the world were each asked to write — down a definition of literature. Read through their definitions and then write down your own definition of literature.

- A. Literature is 'feelings' and 'thoughts' in black and white.
- B. Literature is the use of language to evoke a personal response in the reader or listener.
- C. Literature is a world of fantasy, horror, feelings, visions'. . . put into words.
- D. Literature means ... to meet a lot of people, to know other different points of view, ideas, thoughts, minds ... to know ourselves better.

Task 2

Here are a number of other quotations which 'define' literature. As you read them, think about the following questions.

(a) Are there any similarities between the definitions given here and the ones above?

(b) Which definition(s) do you reject? Why?

(c) Which definition conforms most closely to your idea of what literature is? Why?

- A. Literature could be said to be a sort of disciplined technique for arousing certain emotions, (Iris Murdoch, *The Listener*, 1978.)
- B. Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree. (Ezra Pound, *How to Read*, Part II.)
- C. The Formalists' technical focus led them to treat literature as a special use of language which achieves its distinctness by deviating from and distorting 'practical' language. Practical language is used for acts of communication, while literary language has no practical function at all and simply makes us see differently. (Selden, 1989, pp. 9-10.)
- D. ...one can think of literature less as some inherent quality or set of qualities displayed by certain kinds of writing all the way from *Beowulf* to Virginia Woolf, than as a number of ways, in which people *relate themselves* to writing.' It would not be easy to isolate, 'from all that has variously been called 'literature', some constant set of inherent 'atures'. . . Any bit of writing may be read 'non-pragmatically', if that is what reading a text as literature means, just as any writing may be read 'poetically'. If I pore over the railway timetable not to discover a train connection but to stimulate myself general reflections on the speed and complexity of modern existence, then I might be said to be reading it as literature. (Eagleton, 1983, P.9)
- E. Literature is the question minus the answer.

(Roland Barthes, *New York Times*, 1978)

F In the allocation of the label 'great literature' to a literary work we feel that value judgement is constituted by the social and historical conditions which determine our particular ideology. The teachers and professors who have the power to decide which books make up an English Literature syllabus reflect in their choices, and in the knowledge of the literature which they survey, a fundamental structure of beliefs and interests which reflect the particular culture or section of society into which they were born and in which they grew up. (Brumfit and Carter, 1986, p. 17.)

G. Literature, fiction, poetry, whatever, makes justice in the world. That's why it is almost always on the side of the underdog. (Grace Paley, Ms, 1974)

Task 3

Each one of the quotations in Task 2 has certain implications for the approach we adopt to using literature in the language classroom. These implications are examined in the seven paragraphs below. Match each paragraph with the relevant quotation in Task 2.

1. One of our main aims in the classroom should be to reach our students to read literature using the appropriate literary strategies. This involves them not in reading for some practical purpose, for example to obtain information, but rather in analysing a text; in terms of what it might mean symbolically or philosophically. Students may have already acquired this kind of literary competence in their own language, in which case we simply need to help them to transfer these skills. If not, we need to find ways of engendering the necessary competence.
2. Our main task in the classroom is to pinpoint how far literary language deviates from ordinary language. This obviously poses a problem for student - to what extent will they be confused or misled by studying deviant rather than normal language, and how far is this a useful activity for them?
3. Literary texts have a powerful function in raising moral and ethical concerns in the classroom. The tasks and activities we devise to exploit these texts should encourage our students to explore these concerns and connect them with the struggle for a better society.
4. The texts traditionally prescribed for classroom use may generally be accorded high status, but often seem remote from, and irrelevant to, the interests and concerns of our students. In fact, being made to read texts so alien to their own experience and background may only increase students' sense of frustration, inferiority and even powerlessness. We therefore need to select texts for classroom use which need not be part of the traditional

- literacy canon but are related to the lives and interests of our students.
5. Our main aim when using literature with our students is to help them unravel the many meanings in a text. Students often need guidance when exploring these multiple levels of meaning in a literary text -We need to devise materials and tasks which help them to do this.
 6. Literature provides wonderful source material for eliciting strong emotional responses from our students. Using literature in the classroom is a fruitful way of involving the learner as a whole person, and provides excellent opportunities for the learners to express their personal opinions, reactions and feelings.
 7. We should not expect to reach any definitive interpretation of a literary text with our students. Rather we should use the text as the basis for generating discussion, controversy and critical thinking in the classroom.

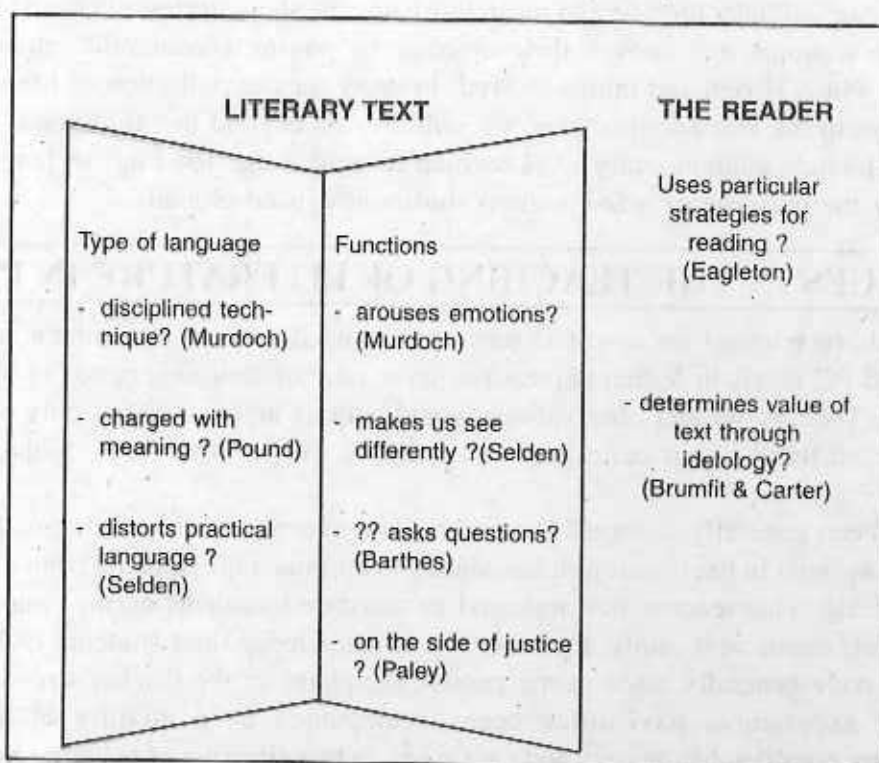


Figure 1.1 : Defining literature : the issue (Lazar, 1993)

Task 4

Think about a group of students you are teaching now or have taught in the past. Perhaps you have used some literature with them already or perhaps you are planning to do so. Do any of the thoughts or ideas mentioned in the previous three activities seem relevant to your teaching of these students? If so, why? If not, why not? Are there any other implications arising from the various definitions of literature which you think should be considered with regard to these students?

Task 5

Figure 1.1 is a diagram which recaps and sums up some of the questions and thoughts raised about literature in Tasks 1 to 3. Look at it and then decide if there are any more ideas you want to add. Then think back to your original definition of literature in Task 1. Do you still agree with it or would you like to change it in some way? Why?

We have seen that defining literature is no easy task, and that there is considerable controversy among literary theorists and critics as to how this can be done. For our purposes, we will take literature to mean those novels, short stories, plays and poems' which are fictional and convey their message by paying considerable attention to language which is rich and multi-layered. In order for our definition of literature to be relevant to the classroom teacher, we will also go beyond the traditional literary canon to include contemporary works which recognise that the English language is no longer the preserve of a few nations, but is now used globally.

3.2 ISSUES IN THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE IN INDIA

It would be relevant for us at this stage to read what some of the eminent teachers at UG and PG levels in Indian universities have said on their experience of teaching literature. Their views and observations would help us understand not only our own problems but those of our colleagues and students. This is what A. K. Sinha (1993) had to say :

It has been generally observed that, with some exceptions, the teacher of English literature in India in the recent past has tended to approach his students from a certain high pedestal. This teacher has appeared to the dazed students as the 'maker', an omnipotent, omniscient entity, the reservoir of knowledge, and students of English literature have generally acted as the passive recipients of the teacher's revelations, and their experiences have often been accompanied by a mixture of interest, enthusiasm, considerable anxiety and confusion. In this situation of teaching literature by 'magical' powers, lecture plan, outline and minute preparation have been generally ignored. In most cases, the teacher has just walked into the English literature classroom and harangued the students in a lecture full of sound and fury.

But who is the teacher actually talking to? After all, a teacher is an individual person speaking to other persons. He has to see if what he is saying makes sense, is communicated properly and is also received well. The personality of the teacher is vital. But it should not be so awe-inspiring that the message does not reach home clearly.

Let me raise here just three overwhelming questions which ought to be addressed to the teachers of English literature in India :

1. How many of us realise when our students have switched off and have started giving us mesomorphic stares ?
2. How many of us bother to find out whether what we are saying is relevant?
3. How many of us try to make things 'apparently irrelevant' important and comprehensible?

A teacher of English Literature in India should respond to these cues in various and complex ways often combining both management and instruction in his teaching strategies. He should not be overawed by his classroom, confused by it as a bewildering kaleidoscope of people, behaviour, events and interactions only dimly understood. He should also not overawe his students with a lecture that is merely let loose with full-throated ease, being too removed from real life or the classroom situation. It is true that the rapidity, variety and complexity of classroom behaviour, often fulfilling multiple functions, are not easily comprehended. But the teacher must immediately know whether the students are following him or not. A good teacher of English literature in India can always communicate properly and strike a neat balance between what the students think they need and what he himself thinks they should, may or would need.

This what Prof. S. Mahalanobis has said in her article on 'Student—Teacher Interaction' in the *Literature teaching* : (Provocations, 1903)

In Calcutta University the only indicator for the college and university teacher is the traditional canon-oriented course-content (syllabus) with the humanist-artistic-stylistic emphasis. The existing English literature course is intended to help the student to assimilate the best that has been thought and said in the western tradition. For working within that constraint the English literature teacher today, directs the student from *what is* said to *how* it is said, to ...tone, style, figures of speech, devices of presentation'; .. trains him or her in the study of texts by aiding the development of independent skills such as

- (a) language-communication skills
- (b) descriptive-analytic skills
- (c) relatively structured activities on specific texts.

The first requirement in the framing of any course-structure is the interest and involvement of students in their course-work, to find in it the contemporary, the

living and the relevant. Secondly, teachers need to present these courses by innovative methods, to improve the effectiveness of postgraduate teaching and learning. The paucity of research on systematic, innovative development in postgraduate teaching methods is most distressing. The onus is on us teachers to take time out of our own 'career-advancing' research work to find out ways and means to reinstate literary study as a meaningful activity. The canon can be challenged and be replaced or (preferably) supplemented with Indian and Third World materials more relevant to our sense of angst and crisis. But apart from the inevitable danger of innovations petrifying into canons, we will be faced with an acute sense of deprivation. The Wife of Bath, Leontes and Micawber exist in non-colonial, permanently human (not necessarily universal) situations. Are they to be rolled down to oblivion in our frenzied, relentless pursuit of change?

Prof. Susan Oomen in her article 'Approaching the Classroom' has said,

Some of the problems that I seem to come across across in the teaching of English literature, specifically in the environment where I work — a women's college with under graduate, postgraduate and research programmes —

1. A student mentality, which causes the entire burden of the teaching process to fall on the teacher. The teacher ends up with the meaningless responsibility of seeing that a course is 'taught'. Such a self-defeating slant takes on negative implications when student-teacher personalities are not balanced or are at odds.
2. English literature is not a commonly favoured course any more—the priorities seem to be economics, commerce, mathematics and history. This leaves the teacher to deal with students who have not, very often, the aptitude. (This however is not a comment on student intelligence or temperament.)

Given this environment, I try to identify tasks for the postgraduate student:

1. To read and write (to grasp and interpret, and formalise and present),
2. To organise thinking and writing,
3. To approach text analysis as a basic tool,
4. To interpret texts and look at production of meaning,
5. To be able to work in theory, whether of criticism or literary discourse,
6. To be able to work in perspectives,
7. To be able to do all the above independently.

The teacher of English literature in India has to move towards the concept of world literature, making the students conscious of the infinite variety and representations of human nature. Literature probes deeply into life, its meanings and values and goes far beyond sociology in this respect. The teacher of English literature in India has to maintain a committed, constructive involvement in the classroom activities and remember that teaching is both managerial and instrumental in nature.

It is important to observe here that educational research has for a long time been employed in attempting to make reliable, systematic judgements about the effects of different types of teaching. However, its contribution in our sphere has been somewhat limited. The English teacher's instructional function in India has to be carried out in a complex environment. He should, therefore, try to understand how his own personality interacts with the context in which he works to mould the learning experiences of his students. Teaching English literature in India is not concerned only with instruction. The teacher is viewed, and should view himself, as fulfilling a number of other functions.

The teacher often plays an important role in the lives of students and his influence undoubtedly extends far beyond formal learning. In the process of teaching English literature in India, attitudes and relationships are formed just as knowledge and skills are gained.

Therefore, the teacher of English literature in India has to remember that the content of the course that he has to deliver to his students is actually plastic material in his hands. He must plan beforehand the teaching styles that he is going to use, and yet remain flexible in the actual classroom. For he cannot predict usefully which style he is going to use when. Last minute changes or adjustments may, and often are, required, depending on the exact demands of the classroom situation. The personality of the teacher has to be multidimensional, and he has to keep the needs of the hour in mind.

3.3 WHY USE LITERATURE IN THE CLASSROOM ?

Once you are a student of a course leading to a PG degree in Teaching English Language and literature the question *Why use Literature in the classroom ?* inevitably arises. It would not be totally inappropriate here to examine the reasons for using literature not only for developing literary sensibility but also for encouraging language acquisition and skill development.

Let us work out a few tasks before examining the reasons for using literature. These tasks have been adapted from Lazar (1993).

Task 6

Below is a list of reasons for using literature with the language learner. Think about which reasons are the most important. List your reasons in order of importance.

Literature should be used with students because :

- it is very motivating ~ it is authentic material
- it has general educational value
- it is found in many syllabuses

- it helps students to understand another culture
- it is a stimulus for language acquisition
- it develops students' interpretative abilities
- students enjoy it and it is fun
- it is highly valued and has a high status
- it expands students' language awareness
- it encourages students to talk about their opinions and feelings.

Are there any other reasons for using literature that you want to add to this list?

Task 7

In the previous task you ranked reasons for using literature with the language learner in order of importance. The text which follows discusses some of these reasons in a little more depth. Read through the text, and then decide whether you would still rank the reasons for using literature in the way that you did.

Examining the reasons for using literature

MOTIVATING MATERIAL

In many countries around the world, literature is highly valued. For this reason, students of English may experience a real sense of achievement at tackling literary materials in the classroom. If students are familiar with literature in their own language, then, studying some literature in English can provide an interesting and thought-provoking point of comparison. This may apply equally well if students come from a culture with a rich oral tradition, where the body of written literature is fairly established. Ask students to retell short stories from their own culture, for example, before getting them to read an authentic story in English on a similar theme, could be highly motivating.

Literature exposes students to complex themes and fresh, unexpected uses of language. A good novel or short story may be particularly gripping in that it involves students in the suspense of unravelling the plot. This involvement may be more absorbing for students than the pseudo-narratives frequently found in course books. A play may engage students in complicated adult dilemmas. A poem may elicit a powerful emotional response from students. If the materials are carefully chosen, students will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives.

ACCESS TO CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Literature can provide students with access to the culture or the people whose language they are studying. But this is an area of some complexity. To begin with, the relationship between a culture and its literature is not at all simple, since few novels or poems could claim to be a purely factual documentation of their society.

Some novels, short stories and plays may achieve the illusion of representing reality, but they are, in the end- works of fiction. It has been argued that poetry has possibly an even more indirect link with the 'real world' since it creates its meaning by an orientation towards language itself (Widdowson, 1985, p. 149).

Secondly, if we do assume that a literary text in some way "reflects" its culture, then exactly what aspect of that culture is being mirrored and how reliably? There is a danger that students will fall into the fallacy of assuming that a novel, for example, represents the totality of a society, when in fact "it is a highly atypical account of one particular milieu during a specific historical period. And if we are considering the issue of "... how far a literary work genuinely represents its culture, then we are inevitably drawn into the question: of how culture is defined.

A further issue to consider is that English is now used globally as a first, second and foreign language. How far the language can be separated from culture is a difficult and intriguing question. Literary texts in English reflect the rich and fascinating diversities of our world. They are written by authors living in many different countries and widely -divergent cultures. By exposing our students to literature in English, it seems that we should be asking them to think about the range of cultures from which literature in English is produced. But frequently.

ENCOURAGING LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

In many countries around the world students have fairly limited access to spoken English, and written English often takes on primary importance for stimulating language acquisition. Literature may provide a particularly appropriate way of stimulating this acquisition, as it provides meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting new language. Obviously, at lower levels, students may be unable to cope on their own with an authentic novel or short story in English. Any extensive reading we encourage them to do-outside the classroom would probably need to be of graded material, such as graded readers. But at higher levels, students may be so absorbed in the plot and characters of an authentic novel or short story, that they acquire a great deal of new language almost in passing. The reading of literature then becomes an important way of supplementing the inevitably restricted input of the classroom. And if recorded literary material is available, then students can acquire a great deal of new language by listening to it.

One of the debates centred around literature teaching in the language classroom is whether literary language is somehow different from other forms of discourse in that it breaks the more usual rules of syntax, collocation and even cohesion. This seems to be particularly true of poetry. Teachers often express concern that in using literature with our students, we are exposing them to 'wrong' uses of language. Let us consider

these examples which seem to break, or at least bend, the usual rules and patterns we may be trying; to teach :

A. A grief ago (Dylan Thomas)

B. ... a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens.. (F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin, 1983)

C. Though wedded we have been

These twice ten tedious years ...

(Cowper's *The Diverting History of John Gilpin* - quoted in Leech, 1988.)

In Example A the abstract noun *grief* replaces what is visually a noun denoting a time period, like day or month. In Example B ashes are described as "growing" - an unusual collocation, and one it is unlikely students will "find in a dictionary. Example C is a poetic re-ordering of syntax, since usually the past participle *wedded* would follow *we have been*. By focussing on the 'deviant' use of *we* we are helping students language focus not only to become aware of specific stylistic effects in this literary work, but also to consider how this effect is achieved by departing from a norm. At the same time, we are involving them in the process of discovering more generalisable features of language like collocation. In other words, using literature with students can help them to become more sensitive to some of the overall features of English.

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' INTERPRETATIVE ABILITIES

Any learning of a new language would seem to involve the learner in the forming of hypotheses and the drawing of inferences, whether these relate to when a particular idiom is used appropriately, how far a grammatical rule can be generalised or what is implied behind the literal meaning of what someone says in a conversation. It has been argued that literature is a particularly good source for developing students' abilities to interpret meaning and to make interpretations (see Rossner's interview with Widdowson in *ELT Journal* 37/1). This is because literary texts are often rich in multiple levels... of meaning, and demand that the reader/ learner is actively involved in 'teasing out' the unstated implications and assumptions of the text. In a poem, for example, a word may take on a powerful figurative meaning beyond its fixed dictionary definition. Trying to ascertain this significance provides an excellent opportunity for students to discuss their own interpretations, based on the evidence in the text. Thus, by encouraging our students to grapple with the multiple ambiguities of the literary text, we are helping to develop their overall capacity to infer meaning. This very useful skill can then be transferred to other situations where students need to make an interpretation based on implicit or unstated evidence.

EDUCATING THE WHOLE PERSON

The linguistic benefits of using literature with the language learner have been mentioned. But literature may also have a wider educational function in the classroom in that it can help to stimulate the imagination of our students, to develop their critical abilities and to increase their emotional awareness. If we ask students to respond personally to the texts we give them, they will become increasingly confident about expressing their own ideas and emotions in English. They will feel empowered by their ability to grapple with the text and its language, and to relate it to the values and traditions of their own society. (Gillian Lazar, 1993)

3.4 THE TEXT, THE READER AND THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

You have read about theories in respect of Reader response to texts. In this section we will consider what some of the experts have to say in particular about the relevance of the text and reader centred approaches implicit in the New Criticism.

THE READER AND THE TEXT

In the previous unit we concentrated on looking at the literary text and on the extent to which there are objective properties of literary language which clearly differentiate literature from other forms of discourse. In this Unit we transfer our attention to the reader of the text. Below are two examples of ways in which the reader's experience has a bearing on the way a text will be interpreted.

Task 8

Read both examples and note down any implications for teachers using literature in the language classroom.

Example 1: From a university study

In 'Cultural Knowledge and Reading' by M. S. Steffensen and C. Joag Dev (Alderson and Urquhart, 1984, p. 53) a study conducted at the University of Wisconsin is described. The study examined the way in which even highly proficient readers of English process texts when reading. Subjects from India and the United States were asked to recall two parallel texts describing Indian and American weddings. The information they recalled was then analysed for the amount recalled and the types of errors made, in order to ascertain whether cultural background made a difference.

From this analysis it was concluded that reading comprehension is a function of cultural background knowledge. If readers possess the schemata assumed by the writer, they easily understand what is said in the text and also make the necessary inferences about what is implicit, rather than stated. By schemata was meant the abstract cognitive

structures which incorporate generalised knowledge about objects and events. For example, the schemata concerning a wedding might include knowledge about the roles of the bride and groom and other family members, what clothing is traditionally worn, who is invited, where the wedding is held, what rituals form part of the ceremony and so on. Obviously, these schemata will differ cross-culturally.

Example 2: From two book reviews

The following are two different opinions of Mrs Ramsay, a character in 'To the Lighthouse' by Virginia Woolf (published May 1927). The novel was reviewed in July 1927 by Conrad Aiken, an American novelist and poet (quoted in Majumdar and McLaurin). In his review Aiken admired Woolf's bold experimental technique, but he described her novels as having an "odd and delicious air of parochialism, as of some small village-world, as bright and vivid and perfect in its tininess as a miniature: a small complete world which time has somehow missed". He then went on to describe all Virginia Woolf's female characters, including Mrs Ramsay, as "the creatures of seclusion, the creatures of shelter; they are exquisite beings, so perfectly and elaborately adapted to their environment that they have taken on something of the roundness and perfection of works of art".

In 1975 Barbara Bellow Watson, a feminist literary critic, said this of Mrs Ramsay: "Because Mrs Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* is a domestic, nurturing woman, her figure may not be immediately recognized as the powerful feminist statement it is. (quoted in M. Evans, 1982, p. 405).

Task 9

What different views of Mrs Ramsay are being expressed by the two reviewers? Can you suggest any reasons for this? Do you think this has any implications for using literature with the language learner?

In both of the examples above, it was implied that the meaning of a text can never be fixed or frozen, but that different readers of a text make sense of it in their own way. As Selden (1989, p. 79) puts it, readers can be free to enter a text from any direction, but there is no correct route. Below are a few factors which may be important in influencing, or even determining, the interpretation that readers make of a literary text :

- the historical period in which the reader is living;
- the class/social position of the reader;
- the reader's religious beliefs.

Task 10

- (a) What other factors could you add to this list ?
- (b) Now decide which of the factors listed, and the ones you may have added,

might be the most important in influencing the interpretation that your own students might make of a literary text. Why ?

Task 11

We have just suggested that the meaning of a literary text can never be fixed. But this can be problematic for some teachers and students. Look at the objections to the suggestion that the meaning of a literary text can never be fixed. Think about your own response to the objections.

- A. It is all very well to argue that the meaning of a literary text can never be fixed, but try telling that to my students! They insist that there is one way of understanding a text, and that I must know what it is. My refusal to provide this interpretation is seen as mean and wilful. I actually think my students have a point, since in their exams they are expected to come up with one particular interpretation and I doubt if variations on this would be acceptable.

Can you identify with the teacher's objections above? Can you think of any ways of overcoming the problems she describes?

- B. If we accept that there is no, fixed meaning to a literary text, are we then suggesting that u//y interpretation is valid? Surely the danger of this view is that we are then opening the way to accepting all and every interpretation of a text, however unlikely or implausible it may seem to us.

Do you think we should accept any interpretation of a text that our students offer us? Why ? If we only find certain interpretations acceptable, what criteria do we use to decide what is acceptable or not ?

In this section we have explored the notion that the meaning of a literary text can never be fixed, but is manufactured by the reader. Individual readers make sense of texts in very different ways, depending on the society they live in and their personal psychology.

Task 12

What implications do you think this might have for the kinds of tasks and activities we use to exploit literary texts with the language learner?

- What is 'literary competence' ?
- How important is it for language teachers and students ?

Most language teachers are familiar with Chomsky's notion of 'grammatical competence'. This is the idea that all speakers of any language possess an internalised grammar which allows them to produce and understand utterances which they may not have heard before, provided that these utterances conform to the grammatical rules of the language they are speaking. In the same way, some theorists, in particular Culler, have argued that effective readers of a literary text possess *literary competence*.

in that they have an implicit understanding of, and familiarity with, certain conventions which allow them to take the words on the page of a play or other literary work and convert them into literary meanings. For example, when you were looking at the texts - one a simple sentence taken at random from a newspaper and the other a rewriting of the same sentence as if it were a poem - the chances are that their form on the page cued you in to different ways of responding to them. Perhaps you treated the newspaper sentence in a rather objective way, simply using it to gain certain facts. On the other hand with the poem's sentence, you may have assigned certain meanings to it which had remained latent or unexplored in the newspaper text. For example, you might have read it as an ironic comment on the elaborate security surrounding a presidential visit. If so, you were implicitly drawing on certain conventions about how a poem is to be read and understood. Any such conventions of interpretation apply equally well to other literary genres such as the novel, short stories and plays.

What exactly are these conventions which go towards making up a reader's literary competence? Defining them is no easy task. In very-broad terms, it has been said that we are reading something as literature when we are interested in the 'general state of affairs' to which it refers rather than its pragmatic function in the real world (Brumfit and Carter, 1986 p. 16). Thus, when reading a newspaper article we expect it to be verifiable with reference to a world of facts, whereas when reading literary texts we are interested in what Brumfit has described as metaphorical or symbolic meanings which 'illuminate our self-awareness' (Brumfit, Carter and Walker, 1989, p. 27).

While it is extremely difficult to itemise all the skills that go towards making up 'literary competence, it is important for teachers to identify at least some of the more important skills which make up literary competence.

One reason for this is that too often when reading literature, students are expected, as if by osmosis, to acquire a kind of competence in reading literature. Teachers are able to recognise this competence when they see it (for example in an exam essay about a set book) but just what its components are remains mysterious to teachers and students alike. Far better for all would be an explicit and public statement of what skills and sub-skills students need to acquire as components of literary competence'. Depending on the nature of the course and the type of students involved these might include anything from recognising and appreciating a full range of genres (from sonnets to allegories) to simply following the plot of a short story. But by drawing up an explicit list of these skills, teachers would be able to plan their materials and courses with a clearer goal in mind and students would have clearer procedures and techniques for dealing with literary texts.

So just how important is it, for teachers using literature with the language learner, that students acquire 'literary competence'? This surely depends on the purpose for which the literature is being used. A useful distinction here is the one that has been

made between the study of literature and the use of literature as a resource for language teaching (Maley, *ELT Documents* : 130, p. 10).

The study of literature makes literature itself the content or subject of a language course, while the use of literature as a resource draws on literature as one source among many different kinds of texts for promoting interesting language activities. Clearly, if it is the study of literature which is our aim then developing the literary competence' of our students is crucial. This, for example, might be the case for a group of learners at tertiary level. On the other hand, if we wish to use literature as a resource, then we may not aim to teach 'literary competence' but it is possible that our students will begin to acquire it through their exposure to literary texts. This might be the case if we are simply using literature as a resource on an occasional basis with our students, for example the use of a poem now and again with a class of adult learners. We should not expect such students to develop literary competence without deliberately developing and using tasks and activities which help them to do so.

Task 13

You are teaching a general English class. As part of their course, your learners are required to read and study a play on 'which they will be tested at the end of the year. Although your aim is to teach language, not literature, it is still important for your learners to begin to develop the necessary competence to understand and interpret a play. What specific literary skills do you think they need in order to be able to do this? Note down any skills connected with understanding and interpreting a play that you would like your learners to acquire over the year.

THE LITERARY TEXT

We read on, caught up in the discourse, involved in creating a world with language, and learning language at the same time as we use it in the realization of another reality. Far from being diminished, human experience is extended. (Henry Widdowson 1981, 213)

The major difficulty encountered by language learners when they deal with written texts stems from the passage from a more orate to a more literate mode of speech. A frequent complaint from students, as they enter the intermediate level, is: 'The first year was fun we could talk about ourselves and our daily lives. Now that we are reading these texts, I have nothing to say. From the here-and-now communicative activities of the elementary levels to the more text-bound discussions of the intermediate and advanced, students feel a lack of continuity that is both disappointing and frustrating.

They thought they understood what it meant to talk like members of French or German speech communities; all you needed was to abide by their grammatical and lexical rules. Now it appears that the rules in the use of written language are of a

different order. Speakers and writers make choices that are not always predictable and codifiable. There is a difference between the generic reality of the dictionary and the particular reality of written texts. How can students be led to see that particularity is something that can be pleasurable, and that; it is jointly achieved between them and the text? How can the spoken skills they developed in the first year to express general meanings be now put to use to express particular meanings?

Many arguments have been made in recent years for including literary texts in the readings taught in language classes. More than any other text, it is said, the piece of literary prose or poetry appeals to the students' emotions, grabs their interest, remains in their memory and makes them partake in the memory of another speech community. In my opinion students are more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally in learning English. Excellent stimulus for groupwork, utility to represent the particular voice of a writer among the many voices of his or her community and thus to appeal to the particular in the reader. After years of functional approaches to language learning that helped learners approximate the voice of the larger speech community, there is a renewed interest for the individual voice and the creative utterance. The literary text is the epitome of the double-voiced discourse. Bakhtin attributes to the writer: "The writer is a person who is able to work in a language while standing outside language, who has the gift of indirect speaking" (1986 : 110).

In this respect, as J. H. Miller (1992) has said, literary and non-literary discourse differ in degree but not in kind. The newspaper article, the essay and the short story are on a continuum from single voiced to double voiced discourse. Foreign language learners have to be exposed to different types of texts, from the most conventional to the most particular, but if they are eventually to find their own voice in the foreign language and culture, literary texts can offer them models of particularity and opportunities for the dialogic negotiation of meaning.

In this section we have explored the notion that literary language is relative rather than absolute, in that certain texts or parts of a text may exhibit more of those linguistic features associated with literature than others (Brumfir and Carter, 1986). Literary language, is therefore not completely separate from other forms of language. This obviously has some implications for the use of literature in the language classroom. Think about your views on this as you complete the statements below.

Task 14

Read the statements below and complete them by choosing (a) or (b), according to your views on literary language and teaching.

1. Since literary language is not completely different or separate from other kinds of language
 - a) *there is no real point in using literature with language students.*
 - b) *studying literary texts can help to improve students' overall knowledge of English.*

2. By contrasting literary texts with other forms of discourse
 - a) *the superiority of literary language can be demonstrated.*
 - b) *students can be sensitised to the wide range of styles in English and the different purposes for which they can be used.*
3. Reading literary texts
 - a) *will help our students to understand and appreciate multiple levels of meaning, metaphors and phonological patterning in many other types of texts.*
 - b) *is a limited skill which does not transfer easily to the reading of other types of texts.*
4. In order to appreciate a literary text
 - a) students will need some assistance in understanding and analysing the linguistic features which make up a text..
 - b) organisation and intuition are all that are needed.

3.5 CLASSROOM APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

In this section we will discuss some of the problems faced by teachers in the literature classroom and some of the major strategies adopted to overcome them. A few other approaches which have been tried out successfully both in the Indian context and in other countries will be also be highlighted.

Let us examine the possible approaches which you could draw on when using literature with your students. Pinpointing possible approaches can help us to select and design materials for classroom use, as well as to assess the suitability of published materials. We begin by considering these approaches in very general terms.

Task 15

Below are descriptions of three possible approaches, the methodological principles underlying each one and some notes about the selection and organisation of the material that they use. Read through them - are any similarities between these approaches, and your thoughts on the teaching of literature.

1. A language-based approach

METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Studying the language of the literary text will help to integrate the language and literature syllabus more closely. Detailed analysis of the language of the literary text will help students to make meaningful interpretations or informed evaluations of it. At the same time, students will increase their general awareness and understanding of English. Students are encouraged to draw on their knowledge of familiar

grammatical, lexical or discoursal categories to make aesthetic judgements of the text.

SELECTION AND ORGANISATION OF MATERIAL

Material is chosen not only for the way it illustrates certain stylistic features of the language but also for its literary merit.

METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

This is the most traditional approach, frequently used in tertiary education. Literature itself is the content of the course, which concentrates on areas such as the history and characteristics of literary movements; the social, political and historical background to a text; literary genres and rhetorical devices, etc. Students acquire English by focussing on course content, particularly through reading set texts and literary criticism relating to them. The mother tongue of the students may be used to discuss the texts, or students may be asked to translate texts from one language into the other.

2. Literature as content

METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

This is the most traditional approach, frequently used in tertiary education. Literature itself is the content of the course, which concentrates on areas such as the history and characteristics of literary movements; the social, political and historical background to a text; literary genres and rhetorical devices, etc. Students acquire English by focussing on course content, particularly through reading set texts and literary criticism relating to them. The mother tongue of the students may be used to discuss the texts, or students may be asked to translate texts from one language into the other.

SELECTION AND ORGANISATION OF MATERIAL

Texts are selected for their importance as part of a literary canon or tradition.

3. Literature for personal enrichment

METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Literature is a useful tool for encouraging students to draw on their own personal experiences, feelings and opinions. It helps students to become more actively involved both intellectually and emotionally in learning English and hence aids acquisition. Excellent stimulus for groupwork is provided.

OBSERVATIONS OF EXPERTS [Ref. Provocations, Orient Longman, 1993]

Vanamala Viswanatha of Bangalore University speaks of a Literature student at PG level moving from initial response to critical interpretation.

Having suggested that the critic should be used in class formatively, I would now

like briefly to describe my experience of the next teaching unit which only in retrospect I am able to see as an attempt at working out the argument in practice. This unit involved the teaching of Wordsworth's Immortality Ode. As a first step towards primary response, I asked the class to read the poem silently once and then got different students to read out the various stanzas thus establishing contact between the reader and the text. The meanings of difficult words were glossed by the joint effort of the class. As it is a long poem, I set them the task of dividing it into smaller thought units. This required them to view the poem as a whole and recognise its constituent parts. Various possibilities were discussed which were productive in themselves as various perceptions about the structure of the poem were shared. Indeterminate meanings and heterogeneous responses are not a luxury that only bright teachers with brighter students can handle, but they are an essential part of literature teaching. The consensus was that the first part (stanzas 1 to 4) described a crisis in the form of the question,

Whither is fled the visionary gleam

Where is it now the glory and the dream ?

While the second (5-8) attempted to answer it with a note of despair, there was greater hope in the third, part (9-11). Textual data was closely examined by students to support or reject the various proposals made about this thematic analysis.

After the learners had shared their initial perceptions of the poem, another task was discussed: 'Describe the nature of the loss that the poet is mourning'. Again different answers were tried and they could be narrowed down to three or four possibilities after some discussion. I later presented the views of different critics on the issue by reading out selected portions from each critic. They were: (a) Geoffrey Durrant, (b) CM. Bowra., (c) Lionel Trilling, (d) Cleanth Brooks. We could see that some of these views were similar to the ones the learners had already mentioned and we compared the route by which the critic and those learners who agreed with his reading had arrived at that conclusion. This examination also revealed to us the specific orientations of different critics." [PROVOCATIONS, 1993]

CLASSROOM APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

The more practical aspects of TELI will be discussed in the form of certain approaches and strategies of engagement which can be employed in the literature classroom.

The next three paragraphs give an account of what some of the eminent teachers of literature have practiced in their classes.

OBLIQUE APPROACH

According to Don Slater of University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

The 'oblique approach' is a term coined by John Crompton, Newcastle University and it has gained wider currency in the United Kingdom at least. The phrase suggests a range of alternative strategies in negotiating, devising and setting students' assignments. The oblique approach is not asserted as a new orthodoxy replacing traditional academic models such as essays, seminar papers, etc. But the oblique approach (sometimes misheard as 'a bleak approach'!) offers both a greater opportunity of student involvement, and the possibility that the topic may be tailored to the needs of the individual student and her or his knowledge, level, and experience.

It makes sense that the means of assessment, as well as the chosen topic, be varied according to the individual. The traditional essay question can be an ineffective blunt instrument in finding out what - to use the current jargon - the student can 'know, understand and do'. A traditional essay question on, say, *Sons and Lovers* might demand that students 'discuss the relationship between Paul Morel and his mother in the novel', and such an exercise would yield up a variety of responses, with perhaps the majority of essays rehearsing familiar arguments and using critical material inertly. Of course some students write excellent essays but if we as teachers are interested in formative as well as summative assessment we should examine how essay performance can be enhanced by a variety of written tasks along with discursive answers.

So an assignment from an oblique approach to the same topic in *Sons and Lovers* might ask students to imagine the wording of Mrs Morel's will. A student could write,

To my son Paul I leave this wedding photograph in a silver frame so that he can remember me as I was....

The open-ended nature of the task gives the student access to a kind of personal recognition which the inflexible essay may not offer. Each response has to be justified and located in the text and cannot be used as an excuse for any bizarre flights of fancy. The academic fear of 'personal response' is based as much on prejudice as on fact and is similar to the denial, in the teaching of drama, of any performance-related context which requires the student to say how a director or an actor would interpret the lines.

If we look at the list of 'oblique approaches' from the Open University 'manual' for the training of English teachers we find eighteen possible ways of responding to literary texts, apart from 'the 'scholarly essay. Diaries kept by characters, for example the Ancient Mariner, or 'genre transformations' may be more immediately accessible. It is a more inviting list than a set of exam questions for the student who is more 'media literate' say, or who is interested in the perspective of a minor character not usually honoured with exam status. These ideas can be used in different ways—as opening up the initial response to a text, they might be discussed informally or in

note form. Or they could prompt longer and more polished alternative versions submitted for formal assessment.

RESPONDING TO LITERARY TEXTS – Approaches to Course work

The 'scholarly' essay characteristic of many examination questions is only one way of responding to literary texts and of demonstrating appreciation and understanding of their structure, meaning and style. Responding to literature (and to non-literary texts for that matter) can be thought of as a process which involves the reader in a 'dialogue' with the text. One of the advantages of coursework is that it gives students the chance to engage in many different forms of 'dialogue' with texts, and to demonstrate interpretation- and understanding in a variety of ways, both through talk and writing.

Listed below are a number of ideas which teachers have suggested for coursework assignments involving responses to literature:

1. Interviews, either enacted in speech or in written scripts (e.g. between biographer and character or between barrister and 'villain'),
2. Diaries kept by characters, for example, by the Ancient Mariner,
3. 'Genre transformations', turning a scene from a novel into a play, poem, etc.,
4. 'Write-ons'—alternative endings or about what happened to characters ten years later, etc.,
5. Letters, for example, to or from character or from reader to character, etc.,
6. Facsimile newspaper or news articles, dealing with events in the text,
7. Group discussions exploring issues relating to plot, motivation, style, etc.,
8. Dramatic reconstructions of episodes or themes,
9. Making video films, for example 'documentaries' on issues or themes depicted in text,
10. Games, for example, board games based on plot,
11. Comparison of book and film versions of a text,
12. Reading 'logs' or journals recording students' personal comments and evaluations of texts studied,
13. Cassette-recorded accounts, in which students, when they feel ready, record their own responses to a text, choosing aspects that interest them personally,
14. Imaginative or personal writing in response to an 'atmosphere' created in the texts,
15. Reconstructions from the perspectives of minor characters.

Milind Malshe, while presenting a taxonomy of issues, observes " Don Slater's admirable demonstration (which was not a prescription) of how practical drama can be used in the teaching of Shakespeare, and how an 'oblique approach' can be employed in the classroom for eliciting original responses to literary texts,

must be mentioned in this context. Dramatisation as a teaching strategy recommended by P. Rajani and B. Chandnka as well, V. Bharathi and A. Giricihar Rao, while emphasising the performance aspect of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have reported how participating in the performance of the play helped them to discover several ways of 'speaking true'.

C.T. Indra has brought out the usefulness of the New Critical method in developing the learner's literary sensibility and communication skills. Using the structuralist concept of 'literary competence', Vanamala Viswanatha demonstrated how critical interpretations can be gradually built up from the 'primary responses' of the students. Shanta Mahalanobis and Susan Oommen discussed how an interactive approach to literary texts is helpful; A.K. Sinha tried to show the importance of teaching styles and the teacher's person.

A good teacher must possess the ability to lift a play from the page, so as to imaginatively envisage a performance when all that is available is the printed word. But unfortunately most teachers in the country are not sufficiently acquainted with theatre, and cinema is an inadequate substitute for an authentic theatrical experience. So, considering the limitations of a teacher and also bearing in mind the restrictions imposed upon him by the classroom situation, the text of any play is treated as literature and a critical evaluation of it would constitute literary criticism in a very broad sense. This literary response, perforce, is bound to be different from theatrical criticism, which is based on the evaluation of a play in performance. The former becomes an academic exercise while the latter provides an account of a living experience.

But since a play is to be taught and not performed, could we not combine the literary aspect with its potential on the stage and give our students the benefit of both experiences? Raymond Williams feels that this is possible. He observes that in much contemporary thinking, a separation between literature and theatre is constantly assumed; yet the drama is, or can be, both literature and theatre, not the one at the expense of the other, but each because of the other.

He is of the opinion that a literary text and a theatrical representation of it are not separate entities but constitute a unity. He seems to suggest that the textual analysis and the performance should have a close correspondence. This correlation may be achieved by a deliberate exercise of the imagination.

ACTIVITIES FOR A LITERATURE CLASS

Task 15

Here are a number of fairly typical language-based activities which make use of a literary text in the classroom. While you read through them, decide what the main language aim of the teacher is in using this activity with his or her students.

ACTIVITY 1 : (UPPER INTERMEDIATE UPWARDS.)

Groups of students are each given different -sections of a dialogue from a play, which they then have to rewrite in reported speech using a range of verbs (e.g. suggest, mumble, wonder, etc.). When they are finished, they give their reported versions to members of another group to transform into dialogues, which are then compared with the originals from the play. Finally, students are reminded about such points as tense changes, when the direct reported speech.

ACTIVITY 2 : ('LATE INTERMEDIATE UPWARDS.)

Students are given a piece of descriptive writing from a novel or short story from which all adverbs and adjectives are removed. They rewrite the text adding those they think will liven it up, and compare their version with the original. They may use dictionaries to help them.

ACTIVITY 3 : (INTERMEDIATE UPWARDS)

After they have read it, students are given three different summaries of a short story. They have to decide which summary is the most accurate.

ACTIVITY 4 : (INTERMEDIATE UPWARDS)

Students read a dialogue from a play or a novel and then improvise their own roleplay of what happens next..

ACTIVITY 5 : (ELEMENTARY UPWARDS)

Students are given three very short and simple poems in English, but without their titles. They are also given a list of six titles - three genuine and three invented. After reading the poems, they have to decide which title is the most appropriate for each poem.

ACTIVITY 6 : (INTERMEDIATE UPWARDS)

Students are given an extract from a novel or short story in which all tenses are removed. They are provided with the actual verbs to fill in. After completing this task, they compare their text with the original.

ACTIVITY 7 : (ADVANCED)

Students are given three different critical opinions of a play or novel they have read. They have to decide which they find the most convincing or accurate.

After you have decided what the language aims of each activity are, think about these questions :

(a) For which of the activities above do you think the teacher's aim could have been achieved equally well by using a non-literary text? What particular advantages might there be in using literary texts instead of non-literary texts to teach or revise

a particular area of language?

(b) Are there any activities above which you think would help students to improve, their competence in reading a literary text?

(c) Think about some of the activities or techniques that you commonly make use of in the classroom. For example, you may:

- ask students to answer True/False questions about a reading comprehension
- ask students to provide synonyms for any new items of vocabulary you teach.
- ask students to read a text aloud to practise their pronunciation.

PRE-TEACHING ACTIVITIES

The following are suggestions for teachers about how to teach literary texts in language classes.

Choice of text.

Rather than selecting a text exclusively on the basis of thematic interest and linguistic simplicity, the teacher may wish to consider other criteria:

- Does the text lend itself more to an efferent or an aesthetic kind of reading ?
- Is the narrative structure predictable or unpredictable ?
- Are the cultural allusions clear or unclear to foreign readers ?
- Are the silences in the text understandable to foreign readers ?

A linear, predictable narrative structure on a familiar theme with easy-to-fill silences elicits more readily a response from a foreign reader, but it can also be deceptive and tempt students into reading only on an efferent level. A linguistically easy text might present a narrative sophistication that is unfamiliar to the students, thus raising their aesthetic curiosity.

Reader reaction,

Before teaching a text, the teacher may wish to examine his or her own reaction as reader: What is it that he likes or is touched by in the text? What is it he does not like? Whatever the reasons (emotional resonances or personal contexts of experience, aesthetic pleasure or intellectual satisfaction), the teacher's initial reaction to the text will be his most valuable asset in teaching it. Ideally, a teacher should never have to teach anything to which he or she is totally indifferent; even hating a text can be the best incentive to find out something about that text and oneself as a reader.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

It is important to develop a personal response by understanding the experience expressed through the text. Beyond the paraphrasable content, what human experience or theme is the text trying to express in words? For example, Paul's attempts to write the note to his wife rather than discuss the matter with her, and his final decision not to leave, convey a feeling of incommunicability and powerlessness. Language teachers are sometimes afraid to identify and have their students respond to such general

human themes, and yet, more often than not, what a literary text puts into words are elemental experiences of life and death: love, fear, loss and alienation, wonder, motion and stillness. Once the teacher has allowed the text to make sense for him or her, he may want to find out how other readers have interpreted that text (colleagues, friends, literary critics). It is also a good idea for the teacher to enrich his or her reading of that particular text by comparing it with other texts by the same author, and by gathering information about the biography of the author, the period, and so on.

Textual clues

The teacher will want to identify the main textual features that convey the theme of the text. For example, the feeling of pettiness and confinement in *San Salvador* is rendered by the short static sentences describing minute details of objects on Paul's desk and by the repeated statement (*He sat there*). This step is essential if the teacher wants to prevent class discussion from meandering into vague generalities that have nothing to do with the text. He or she wants to elicit students' responses to the text, not loose associations with the topic.

Focus

The teacher probably wants to choose no more than main points he or she wants to make in class that day about the text (or section of the text if read over several lessons). These points may pertain to both the story level and the level of discourse. It is wise to free oneself from any 'coverage syndrome': what has not been covered today can be dealt with in another way another time or with another text. Furthermore, students can be trusted to discover things on their own.

Pedagogic format

The teacher will need to decide beforehand what classroom format best suits the teaching of the points he or she wishes to bring across: whole class discussion, individual student report, role-play, group work, or pair work. The following are suggestions for teachers about how to teach literary texts in language classes. It is good to be ready to switch lesson plan if the class arrives unprepared: for example, giving them ten minutes to read portions of the text silently in class, or selecting a passage to read together intensively. It is less useful to try and reconstruct what happened over ten pages if half the class has not read the text.

Presentation of the text,

The teacher may want to practise the initial 'performance' of the text in front of the class, either by memorizing the poem, by practising, reciting the poem or reading the story aloud, or giving a paraphrase of the content of the text.

GETTING READERS TO RESPOND

Techniques for prompting readers' responses are described below. They provide a contrastive backdrop of a more orate type to the more literate mode of a literary text. They respect the orate mode of the reader's voice and the more literate mode of the literary text, but have both interact as the reader adds his or her voice to the voices in the text, and participates thereby in the construction of its meaning.

TEACHING THE NARRATIVE

As with any literary text, the dialogue between the reader and the text will lend itself to the two levels that of the story and that of the discourse structure of its narration.

EXPLORING THE STORY

Many excellent suggestions have been made to activate the readers' cognitive processes while reading and make the text relevant to students' lives. Let me just mention a few.

Isenberg (1990) offers information-processing techniques to explore the when? what? why? how? of the story-line:

- formulate questions.
- establish logical and analogical relationships
- select/reject information
- group/regroup, organize/reorganize facts and events
- generalize
- rank in order of importance
- explore consequences of actions, generate alternatives, predict outcomes
- evaluate.

Rankin (1989), van Eunen (1987) suggest various ways of enlisting these different cognitive operations when teaching the German short story or fairy tale. In ESL classes, di Pietro (1987) has students rewrite story-lines through strategic scenarios. Collie and Slater (1987) offer a host of communicative activities to bring the story to life when teaching novels, short stories, drama, and poetry. They generally entail:

- gathering the facts (linguistic and referential)
- brainstorming plans and intentions
- relating both to the reader's, personal experience.

Most of these activities exploit the referential aspect of texts for the language learner.

However, if reading literary texts in language classes is meant not only to reinforce students' personal experiences, but to expand the range and the depth of those experiences, these activities are not sufficient. The following example, taken from Collie and Slater (1987) will illustrate the limits of story-based activities.

The class has finished reading William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. An 'Inquest on Board Ship' activity is suggested. This activity has three parts:

First Part : a general brainstorming session with the whole class. Imagine that on the way home the Chief Officer decides to investigate what really happened on the islands. What questions would he need to ask? What answers would be given by Ralph? Jack? Roger?

Second part : Role-play/improvisation. Roles are distributed : the presiding officer, his panel of inquiry, five boys. With the help of the recorded questions and answers, they enact the inquest scene.

Third part : The verdict. The class is divided into groups of four or five, representing the presiding officer and his panel of inquiry. They have just witnessed the questioning of the five boys, and their task is 'now to arrive at a verdict, and to write a report on the incident, which includes recommendations for the treatment of the boys when they return to England.

(Collie and Slater 1987: 161)

TEACHING POETRY

By virtue of their iconicity and their obvious formal aspects, poems are ideally suited to have learners experience early on the two main features of aesthetic experience: distance and relation. Poetry first detaches the readers from their usual frames of reference by immersing them in a world of sounds, rhythms, stress, and other formal features of speech. It then sensitizes them to the relationship between what linguists call the referential and the expressive aspects of language, or what cognitive scientists call 'content space'— that is, ideas, facts, and beliefs— and 'rhetorical space', or mental representation of actual or intended text (Scardamalia and Bereiter 1985). This rhetorical space is based on new ways of forming sounds, new ways of shaping words, phrases, sentences, of structuring discourse, of relating to other texts, and of conceptualizing experience.

I will suggest three ways of encouraging the aesthetic reading of poetic texts. One seeks to 'celebrate' poetry by giving it its full physical form; the second strives to understand poetry by exploring multiple meanings and perspectives; the third attempts to create poetry by having the students experiment themselves with new relationships of form and meaning.

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UNIT 1 □ TESTING OF LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERATURE

—Teaching and Testing.

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Backwash
- 1.2 Inaccurate Tests
- 1.3 The Need for Tests
- 1.4 Testing and Assessment
- 1.5 What is to be done
- 1.6 Reader Activities and Review Questions
- 1.7 Further Reading

[Reference : Testing for Language Teachers, Arthur Hughes 2003 CUP]

TEACHING AND TESTING

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Many language teachers harbour a deep mistrust of tests and of testers. The starting point for this module is the admission that this mistrust is frequently well-founded. It cannot be denied that a great deal of language testing is of very poor quality. Too often language tests have a harmful effect on teaching and learning, and fail to measure accurately whatever it is they are intended to measure.

1.1 BACKWASH

The effect of testing on teaching and learning is known as backwash, and can be harmful or official. If a test is regarded as important, if the stakes are high, preparation for it can come to dominate all teaching and learning activities. And if the test content and testing techniques are at variance with the objectives of the course, there is likely to be harmful backwash. An instance of this would be where students are following an English course that is meant to train them in the language skills (including writing) necessary for university study in an English-speaking country, but where the language test that they have to take in order to be admitted to a university does not test those skills directly. If the skill of writing, for example, is tested only by multiple choice items, then there is great pressure to practise such items rather than practise the skill of writing itself. This is clearly undesirable.

We have just looked at a case of harmful backwash. However, backwash can be positive. In the development of an English language test for an English medium university in a non-English-speaking country this was clearly observable. The test

was to be administered at the end of an intensive year of English study there and would be used to determine which students would be allowed to go on to their undergraduate courses (taught in English) and which would have to leave the university. A test was devised which was based directly on an analysis of the English language needs of first year undergraduate students, and which included tasks similar as possible to those which they would have to perform as undergraduates (reading text book materials, taking notes during lectures, and so on).

The introduction of this test, in place of one which had been entirely multiple choice, had an immediate effect on teaching: the syllabus was redesigned, new books were chosen, classes were conducted differently. The result of these changes was that by the end of their year's training, in circumstances made particularly difficult by greatly increased numbers and limited resources, the students reached a much higher standard in English than had ever been achieved in the university's history. This was a case of beneficial backwash.

Davies (1968:5) once wrote that 'the good test is an obedient servant since it follows and apes the teaching. I find it difficult to agree, and perhaps today Davies would as well. The proper relationship between teaching and testing is surely that of partnership. It is true that there may be occasions when the teaching programme is potentially good and appropriate but the testing is not; we are then likely to suffer from harmful backwash. This would seem to be the situation that led Davies in 1968 to confine testing to the role of servant to the teaching. But equally there may be occasions when teaching is poor or inappropriate and when testing is able to exert a beneficial influence. We cannot expect testing only to follow teaching. Rather, we should demand of it that it is supportive of good teaching and, where necessary exerts a corrective influence on bad teaching. If testing always had a beneficial backwash on teaching, it would have a much better reputation among teachers.

One last thing to be said about backwash in the present section is that it can be viewed as part of something more general - the *impact* of assessment. The term 'impact', as it is used in educational measurement, is not limited to the effects of assessment on learning and teaching but extends to the way in which assessment affects society as a whole, and has been discussed in the context of the ethics of language testing (see Further Reading).

INACCURATE TESTS

The second reason for mistrusting tests is that very often they fail to measure accurately whatever it is that they are intended to measure. Teachers know this. Students' true abilities are not always reflected in the test scores that they obtain. To a certain extent this is inevitable. Language abilities and literary sensibilities are not easy to measure; we cannot expect a level of accuracy comparable to those of measurements in the physical science. But we can expect greater accuracy than is frequently achieved.

Why are tests inaccurate? The causes of inaccuracy (and ways of minimising their effects) are identified and discussed in subsequent units, but a short answer is possible here. There are two main sources of inaccuracy. The first of these concerns **test content** and **test techniques**. To return to an earlier example, if we want to know how well

someone can write, there is absolutely no way we can get a really accurate measure of their ability by means of a multiple choice test. Professional testers have expended great effort, and not a little money, in attempts to do it, but they have always failed. We may be able to get an approximate measure, but that is all. When testing is carried out on a very large scale, when the scoring of tens of thousands of compositions might not seem to be a practical proposition, it is understandable that potentially greater accuracy is sacrificed for reasons of economy and convenience. But this does not give testing a good name! And it does set a bad example.

The second source of inaccuracy is lack of *reliability*. This is a technical term. For the moment, it is enough to say that a test is reliable if it measures consistently. On a reliable test you can be confident that someone will get more or less the same score whether they happen to take it on one particular day or on the next whereas on an unreliable test the score is quite likely to be different, depending on the day on which it is taken. a two origins. The first is the interaction between the person, taking the test and features of the test itself. Human beings are not machines and we therefore cannot expect them to perform exactly the same way on two different occasions, whatever test they take. As a result, we expect some variation in the scores a person gets on a test, depending on when they happen to take it, what mood they are in, how much sleep they had the night before. However, what we can do is ensure that the test themselves don't increase this variation by having useless instructions, ambiguous questions, or items that result in guessing on the part of the test takers. Unless we minimise these features, we cannot have confidence in the scores that people obtain on a test.

The second origin of unreliability is to be found in the *scoring of a test*. Scoring can be unreliable in that equivalent test performances are accorded significantly different scores. For example, the same composition may be given very different scores by different markers (or even by the same marker on different occasions). Fortunately, there are ways of minimising such differences in scoring. Most (but not all) large testing organisations, to their credit, take every precaution to make their tests, and the scoring of them, as Reliable as possible, and are generally highly successful in this respect. Small-scale testing, on the other hand, tends to be less reliable than it should be.

1.3 THE NEED FOR TESTS

So far this chapter has been concerned with understanding why tests are so mistrusted by many language teachers and justified. One conclusion drawn from this is that we would be better off without language tests. Teaching is, attend all, the activity primary. Within teaching systems, too, so long as it is thought appropriate for individuals to be given a statement of what they have achieved in a second or foreign language, tests of some kind or another will be needed. They will also be needed in order to provide information about the achievement of groups of learners, without

which it is difficult to see how rational educational decisions can be made. While for some purposes teachers' informal assessments of their own students are both appropriate and sufficient, this is not true for the cases just mentioned. Even without considering the possibility of bias, we have to recognise the need for a common yardstick, which tests provide, in order to make meaningful comparisons.

1.4 TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

The focus of this unit is on more or less formal testing. But testing is not, of course, the only way in which information about people's language ability can be gathered. It is just one form of a assessment, and other methods will often be more appropriate. It is helpful here to make clear the difference between formative and summative assessment. Assessment is formative when teachers use it to check on the progress of their students, to see how far they have mastered what they should have learned, and then use this information to modify their future teaching plans. Such assessment can also be the basis for feedback to the students. Informal tests or quizzes may have a part to play in formative assessment but so will simple observation (of performance on learning tasks, for example) and the study of portfolios that students have made of their work. Students themselves may be encouraged to carry out self-assessment in order to monitor their progress, and then modify their own learning objectives.

Summative assessment is used at, say, the end of the term, semester or year in order to measure what has been achieved both by groups and by individuals. Here, formal tests are usually called for. However, the results of such test should not be looked at in isolation. A complete view of what has been achieved should include information from as many sources as possible. In an ideal world, the different pieces of information from all sources, including formal tests, should be consistent with each other.

1.5. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

The teaching profession can make three contributions to the improvement of testing: they can write better tests themselves; they can enlighten other people who are involved in testing processes; and they can put pressure on professional testers and examining boards, to improve their tests. We aim to help you do all three. The first aim is easily understood. One would be surprised if we did not attempt to help teachers write better tests. The second aim is perhaps less obvious. It is based on the belief that the better all of the stakeholders in a test or testing system understand testing, the better the testing will be and, where relevant, the better it will be integrated with teaching. The stakeholders I have in mind include test takers, teachers, test writers, school or college administrators, education authorities examining bodies and testing institutions. The more they interact and cooperate the basis of shared knowledge

and understanding the better and more appropriate should be the testing in which they all have a stake. Teachers are probably in the best position to understand the issue, and then to share their knowledge with others.

For the reader who doubts the relevance of the third aim, let this section end with a further reference to the testing of writing through multiple choice items. This was the practice followed by those responsible for TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) - the test taken by most non-native speakers of English applying to North American universities. Over a period of many years they maintained that it was simply not possible to test the writing ability of hundreds of thousands of candidates by means of a composition: it was impracticable and the results, anyhow, would be unreliable. Yet in 1986 a writing test (Test of Written English)! in which candidates actually have to write for thirty minutes, was introduced as a supplement to TOEFL. The principal reason given for this change was pressure from English language teachers who had finally convinced those responsible for the TOEFL of the overriding need for a writing task that would provide beneficial backwash.

1.6 READER ACTIVITIES AND REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Think of tests with which you are familiar. What do you think the backwash effect of each of them is? Why?
2. Consider these tests again. Do you think that they give accurate or inaccurate information? What are your reasons for coming to these conclusions?

1.7 FURTHER READING

Rca-Dickens (1997) considers the relationship between stakeholders in language testing and Hamp-Lyons (1997a) raises ethical concerns relating to backwash, impact and validity. These two papers form part of a special issue of *Language Testing* (Volume 14, Number 5 devoted to ethics in language testing. For an early discussion of the ethics of language testing, see Spolsky (1981). The International language Testing Association has developed a code of ethics (adopted in 2000) which can be downloaded from the Internet (see the book's website). Kuman (2000) is concerned with fairness and validation in language testing. Rca-Dickens and Gardner (2000) examine the concept and practice of formative assessment. Alderson and Clapham (1995) make recommendations for classroom assessment. Brown and Hudson (1998) present teachers with alternative ways of assessing language. Nitko (1989) offers advice on the designing of tests which are integrated with instruction. Ross (1998) reviews research into self assessment. DeVicenzi (1995) gives advice to teachers on how to learn from standardised tests. Ciipps and Raven (P)1M draw attention to the possible dangers of inappropriate assessment. For an account of how the introduction of a new test can have a striking beneficial effect on teaching and learning, see Hughes (1988a).

UNIT 2 □ MODIFICATION AND INNOVATION IN TESTING AND QUESTION FRAMING

Structure

- 2.0 Achieving beneficial backwash
- 2.1 Stages of Test Development
- 2.2 Writing and Moderating Items
- 2.3 Trialling of Items
- 2.4 Common Test Techniques

2.0 ACHIEVING BENEFICIAL BACKWASH

Backwash is the effect that tests have on learning and teaching. There has been evidence of a much interest in backwash than was previously the case, and its importance in language testing is generally accepted. There has been research, there have been calls for an explicit model of backwash which can be tested empirically, and an entire issue of Language Testing has been devoted to the topic. Backwash is now seen as a part of the impact a test may have on learners and teachers, on educational systems in general and on society at large.

It is certain that over the next few years further research into backwash will result in a better understanding of the processes involved and how different variables contribute to its effect in different situations. .

Test the abilities whose development you want to encourage

For example, if you want to encourage oral ability, then test oral ability. This is very obvious, yet it is surprising how often it is not done. There is a tendency to test what is easiest to test rather than what is most important to test. Reasons advanced for not testing particular abilities may take many forms. It is often said, for instance, that sufficiently high reliability cannot be obtained when a form of testing (such as an oral interview) requires subjective scoring. This is simply not the case. The other most frequent reason given for not testing is the expense involved in terms of time and money.

It is important not only that certain abilities should be tested, but also that they should be given sufficient weight in relation to other abilities.

Sample widely and unpredictably

Normally a test can measure only a sample of everything included in the specifications. It is important that the sample taken should represent as far as possible

the full scope of what is specified. If not, if the sample is taken from a restricted area of the specifications, then the backwash effect will tend to be felt only in that area. If, for example, a writing test were repeatedly, over the years, to include only two kinds of task: compare/contrast; describe 'interpret a chart or graph, the likely outcome is that much preparation for the test will be limited to the— two types of task. The backwash effect may not be as beneficial as it might have been had a wider range of tasks been used.

Whenever the content of a test becomes highly predictable, teaching and learning are likely to concentrate on what can be predicted. An effort should therefore be made to test across the full range of the specifications (in the case of achievement tests, this should be equivalent to a fully elaborated set of objectives), even where this involves elements that lend themselves less readily to testing.

Use direct testing

Direct testing implies the testing of performance, skills, with texts and tasks as authentic as possible. If we test directly the skills that we are interested in fostering, then practice for the test represents practice in those skills. If we want people to learn to write compositions, we should get them to write compositions in the test. If a course objective is that students should be able to read scientific article then we should get them to do that in the test. Immediately we begin to test indirectly, we are removing an incentive for students to practise in the way that we want them to.

Make testing criterion-referenced

If test specifications make clear just what candidates have to be able to do and with what degree of success, then students will have a clear picture of, what they have to achieve. What is more, they know that if they do perform the tasks at the criterial level, then they will be successful on the test, regardless of how other students perform. Both these things will help to motivate students. Where testing is not criterion-referenced, it becomes easy for teachers and students to assume that a certain (perhaps very high) percentage of candidates will pass, almost regardless of the absolute standard that they reach.

The possibility exists of having a series of criterion-referenced tests, each representing a different level of achievement or proficiency. The tests are constructed such that a 'pass' is obtained only by completing the great majority of the test tasks successfully. Students take only the test (or tests) on which they are expected to be successful. As a result, they are spared the dispiriting, demotivating experience of taking a test on which they can, for example, respond correctly to fewer than half of the items 'and yet be given a pass). This type of testing, I believe, should encourage positive attitudes to language learning.

Base achievement tests on objectives

If achievement tests are based on objectives, rather than on detailed teaching and textbook content, they will provide a truer picture of what has actually been achieved. Teaching and learning will tend to be evaluated against those objectives. As a result, there will be constant pressure to achieve them.

Ensure the test is known and understood by students and teachers

However good the potential backwash effect of a test may be, the effect may not be fully realised if students and those responsible for teaching do not know and understand what the test demands of them. The rationale for the test, its specifications, and sample items should be available to everyone concerned with preparation for the test. This is particularly important when a new test is being introduced, especially if it incorporates novel testing methods. Another equally important reason for supplying information of this kind is to increase test reliability.

Where necessary, provide assistance to teachers

The introduction of a new test may make demands on teachers to which they are not equal. If, for example, a longstanding national test of grammatical structure and vocabulary is to be replaced by a direct test of a much more communicative nature, it is possible that many teachers will feel that they do not know how to teach communicative skills. One important reason for introducing the new test may have been to encourage communicative language teaching, but if the teachers need guidance and possibly training, and these are not given, the test will not achieve its intended effect. It may simply cause chaos and disaffection. Where new tests are meant to help change teaching, support has to be given to help effect the change.

Counting the cost

It is unlikely to have escaped the reader's notice that at least some of the recommendations listed above for creating beneficial backwash involve more than minimal expense. The individual direct testing of some abilities will take a great deal of time, as will the reliable scoring of performance on any subjective test. The production and distribution of sample tests and the training of teachers will also be costly. It might be argued, therefore, that such procedures are impractical. But this would reveal an incomplete understanding of what is involved. Before we decide that we cannot afford to test in a way that will promote beneficial backwash, we have to ask ourselves a question: What will be the cost of not achieving beneficial backwash? When we compare the cost of the test with the waste of effort and time on the part of teachers and students in activities quite inappropriate to their true learning goals (and in some circumstances, with the potential loss to the national economy of not

having more people competent in foreign languages), we are likely to decide that we cannot afford not to introduce a test with a powerful beneficial backwash effect.

Reader activities

1. *How would you improve the backwash effect of tests that you know? Be as specific as possible.*
2. *Rehearse the arguments you would use to convince a sceptic that it would be worthwhile making the changes that you recommend.*

Further reading

Alderson and Wall (1993) question the existence of backwash. Wall and Alderson (1993) investigate backwash in a project in Sri Lanka with which they were concerned, argue that the processes involved in backwash are not straightforward, and call for a model of backwash and for further research.

Language Testing 13, 3 (1996) is a special issue devoted to back wash. In it Messick discusses backwash in relation to validity, Bailey (1996) reviews the concept of backwash in language testing, including Huchers's (1993) proposed model.

Hamp-Lyons's (1997a) article raises ethical concerns in relation to backwash, impact and validity. Her 1997b article discusses ethical issues in test preparation practice for TOUR., to which Wadden and I bike (1999) take exception. Hamp-Lyons (1999) responds to their criticisms.

Brown and Hudson (1998) lay out the assessment possibilities for language teachers and argue that one of the criteria for choice of assessment method is potential backwash effect.

1. In much of this work the word 'washback', rather than 'backwash' has been used. Where 'washback' came from we are not sure. What we do know is that we can find 'backwash' in dictionaries, but not 'washback'.

2. Bearing in mind what was said earlier it is important that the scoring or rating of test performance (as well as the means of elicitation) should be valid.

2.1 STAGES OF TEST DEVELOPMENT

This unit begins by briefly laying down a set of general procedures for test construction. These are then illustrated by two examples: an achievement test and a placement test.

In brief, the procedures recommended are these:

1. Make a full and clear statement of the testing 'problem'.
2. Write complete specifications for the test.
3. Write and moderate items.

4. Trial the items informally on native speakers and reject or modify problematic ones as necessary.
5. Trial the test on a group of non-native speakers similar to those for whom the test is intended.
6. Analyse the results of the trial and make any necessary changes.
7. Calibrate scales.
8. Validate.
9. Write handbooks for test takers, test users and staff.
10. Train any necessary staff (interviewers, raters, etc.).

Before looking more closely at the set of procedures, it is worth saying that test development is best thought of as a task to be carried out by a team. It is very difficult for an individual to develop a test, if only because of the need to look objectively at what is being proposed at each stage of development. This difficulty can be seen most clearly at the stage of item writing, when faults in an item which are obvious to others are often invisible to the person who wrote the item. Writing items is a creative process, and we tend to think of our items as minor works of art or even it sometimes seems, our babies. We do not find it easy to admit that our baby is not as beautiful as we had thought. One of the qualities to be looked for in item writers, therefore, is a willingness to accept justified criticism of the items they have written. Other desirable qualities - not only for item writers but for test developers in general - are: native or near-native command of the language, intelligence, and imagination create contexts in items and to foresee possible misinterpretations.

1. Stating the problem

It cannot be said too many times that the essential first step in testing is make oneself perfectly clear about what it is one wants to know and for what purpose. The following questions, the significance of which should be clear from previous sections, have to be answered :

- (i) What kind of test is it to be? Achievement (final or progress), proficiency, diagnostic, or placement?
- (ii) What is its precise purpose?
- (iii) What abilities are to be tested?
- (iv) How detailed must the results be?
- (v) How accurate must the results be?
- (vi) How important is backwash?
- (vii) What constraints are set by unavailability of expertise, facilities, time (for construction, administration and scoring)?

Once the problem is clear, steps can be taken to solve it. In addition, however, efforts should be made to gather information on tests that have been designed for

similar situations. If possible, samples of such tests should be obtained. There is nothing dishonourable in doing this; it is what professional testing bodies do when they are planning a test of a new kind.

2. Writing specifications for the test

A set of specifications for the test must be written at the outset¹.

This will include information on: content, test structure, timing, medium/channel, techniques to be used, criteria levels of performance, and scoring procedures.

(i) Content

This refers not to the content of a single, particular version of a test, to the entire potential content of any number of versions. Samples of this content will appear in individual versions of the test.

The fuller the information on content the less arbitrary should be the subsequent decisions as to what to include in the writing of any version of the test. There is a danger, however, that in the desire to be highly specific, we may go beyond our current understanding of what the components of language ability are and what their relationship is to each other. For instance, while we may believe that many sub-skills contribute to the ability to read lengthy prose passages with full understanding, it seems hardly possible in our present state of knowledge to name them all or to assess their individual contributions to the more general ability. We cannot be sure that the sum of the parts that we test will amount to the whole in which we are generally most directly interested. At the same time, however, teaching practice often assumes some such knowledge, with one subskill being taught at a time. It seems to me that the safest procedure is to include in the content specifications only those elements whose contribution is fairly well established.

The way in which content is described will vary with its nature. The content of a grammar test, for example, may simply list all the relevant structures. The content of a test of a language skill, on the other hand, may be specified along a number of dimensions. The following provides a possible framework for doing this. It is not meant to be prescriptive; readers may wish to describe test content differently. The important thing is that content should be a fully specified as possible.

Operations (the tasks the candidates have to be able to carry out). For a reading test these might include, for example: scan text to locate information; guess meanings of unknown words from context.

Types of text For a writing test these might include: letters, forms, academic essays up to three pages in length.

Addressees of texts This refers to the kinds of people that the candidate is expected to be able to write or speak to (for example, native speakers of the same age and

status); or the people for whom reading and listening materials are primarily intended (for example, native speaker university students).

Length of text(s) For a reading test, this would be the length of the passages on which items are set. For a listening test it could be the length of the spoken texts. For a writing test, the length, of the pieces to be written.

Topics Topics may be specified quite loosely and selected according to suitability for the candidate and the type of test.

Readability : Reading passages may be specified as being within a certain range of readability.

Structural range

Either: (a) a list of structures which may occur in texts.

or (b) a list of structures which should be excluded

or (c) a general indication of range of structures (e.g. in terms of frequency of occurrence in the language)

Vocabulary range This may be loosely or closely specified.

Dialect, accent, style This may refer to the dialects and accents that test takers are meant to understand or those in which they are expected to write or speak. Style may be formal, informal, conversational, etc.

(ii) Structure, time, medium, channel and technique.

The following should be specified :

Number of items (in total and in the various sections)

Number of passages (and number of items associated with each)

Medium/channel (paper and pencil, tape, computer, face-to-face, telephone, etc.)

Timing (for each section and for entire test)

Techniques What techniques will be used to measure what skills or subskills?

(iii) Criterial levels of performance

The required level(s) of performance for (different levels of) success should be specified. This may involve a simple statement to the effect that, to demonstrate 'mastery', 80 per cent of the items must be responded to correctly.

For speaking or writing, however, one can expect a description of the criterial level to be much more complex.

Accuracy Pronunciation must be clearly intelligible even if still obviously influenced by LI. Grammatical/lexical accuracy is, generally high although some errors that do not destroy communication are acceptable.

Appropriacy The use of language must be generally appropriate to function. The overall intention of the speaker must be generally clear.

Range A fair range of language must be available to the candidate. Only in complex utterances is there is a need to search for words.

Flexibility There must be some evidence of flexibility to initiate and concede conversation and to adapt to new topics or changes of direction.

Size Must be capable of responding in shortform answers when appropriate. Should expand utterances with occasional prompt from the Interlocutor.

(iv) Scoring procedures

These are always important, but particularly so when scoring will be subjective. The test developers should be clear as to how they will achieve high reliability and validity in scoring. Which rating scale will be used? How many people will rate each piece of work? What happens if two or more raters disagree about a piece of work?

2.2 WRITING AND MODERATING ITEMS

Once specifications are in place, the writing of items can begin.

(i) Sampling

It is most unlikely that everything found under the heading of 'Content' in the specifications can be covered by the items in any one version of the test. Choices have to be made. For content validity and for beneficial backwash, the important thing is to choose widely from the whole area of content. One should not concentrate on those elements known to be easy to test. Succeeding versions of the test should also sample widely and unpredictably, although one will always wish to include elements that are particularly important.

(ii) Writing items

Items should always be written with the specifications in mind. It is no use writing 'good' items if they are not consistent with the specifications. As one writes an item, it is essential to try to look at it through the eyes of test takers and imagine how they might misinterpret the item (in which case it will need to be rewritten). Even if there is no possibility of misinterpretation, test takers (especially intelligent ones) may find responses that are different from, but equally valid as, the one intended. Mention of the intended response is a reminder that the key to an item (i.e. ,1 statement of the correct response or responses) is an integral part of the item. An item without a key is incomplete.

The writing of successful items (in the broadest sense, including, for example, the setting of writing tasks is extremely difficult. No one can consistently produce perfect items. Some items will have to be rejected, others improved.

(iii) Moderating items

Moderation is the scrutiny of proposed items by (ideally) at least two colleagues, neither of whom is the author of the items being examined. Their task is to try to find weaknesses in the items and, where possible, remedy them. Where successful modification is not possible, they must reject the item. It is to be hoped, of course, that they will not find fault with most of the items that they moderate and that they can therefore accept them. A checklist of the kind in Table I (designed for moderating grammar items) is useful to moderators.

2.3 INFORMAL TRIALLING OF ITEMS ON NATIVE SPEAKERS

Items which have been through the process of moderation should be presented in the form of a test (or tests) to a number of native speakers twenty or more, if possible. There is no need to do this formally; the test' can be taken in the participants' (Add) own time.

Table 1 Moderation of grammar items

	YES	NO
1. Is the English grammatically correct?		
2. Is the English natural and acceptable?		
3. Is the English in accordance with the specifications?		
4. Does the item test what it is supposed to test, as specified ?		
5. The correct response cannot be obtained without the appropriate knowledge of grammar (other than by random guessing)		
6. Is the item economical?		
7. (a) Multiple choice— is there just one correct response? (b) Gap filling - are there just one or two correct responses?		
8. Multiple choice: Are all the distractors likely to distract ?		
9. Is the key complete and correct ?		

The native speakers should be similar to the people for whom the test has been developed in terms of age, education, and general background. There is no need for them to be specialists in language or testing. It is preferable that they should not be, since 'experts' are unlikely to behave in the way of naive test takers that is being looked for.

Items that prove difficult for the native speakers almost certainly need revision or replacement. So do items where unexpected or inappropriate responses are provided. Of course, people taking a test on their own language will have lapses of attention. Where these can be recognised, the responses should not count against the item.

Trialling of the test on a group of non-native speakers similar to those for whom the test is intended

Those items that have survived moderation and informal trialling on native speakers should be put together into a test, which is then administered under test conditions to a group similar to that for which the test is intended. Problems in administration and scoring are noted. It has to be accepted that, for a number of reasons, trialling of this kind is often not feasible. In some situations a group for trialling may simply not be available. In other situations, although a suitable group exists it may be thought that the security of the test might be put at risk. It is often the case, therefore, that faults in a test are discovered only after it has been administered to the target group. Unless it is intended that no part of the test should be used again, it is worthwhile noting problems that become apparent during administration and scoring, and afterwards carrying out statistical analysis of the kind.

2.4 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS OF THE TRIAL; MAKING OF ANY NECESSARY CHANGES

There are two kinds of analysis that should be carried out. The first is statistical. This will reveal qualities (such as reliability of the test as a whole and of individual items (for example, how difficult they are, how well they discriminate between stronger and weaker candidates.)

The second kind of analysis is, qualitative. Responses should be examined in order to discover misinterpretation, unanticipated but possibly correct responses, and any other indicators of faulty items. Items that analysis shows to be faulty should be modified or dropped from the test. Assuming that more items have been trialled than are needed for the final test, a final selection can be made, basing decisions on the results of the analyses.

7. Calibration of scales

Where rating scales are going to be used for oral testing or the testing of writing, these should be calibrated. Essentially, this means collecting samples of performance (for example, pieces of writing) which cover the full range of the scales. A team of 'experts' then looks at these samples and assigns each of them to a point on the relevant scale. The assigned samples provide reference points for all future uses of the scale, as well as being necessary training materials.

8. Validation

The final version of the test can be validated. For a high stake or published test, this should be regarded as essential. For relatively low stakes tests that are to be used within an institution, this may not be thought necessary, although where the test is likely to be used many times over a period of time, informal, small-scale validation is still desirable,

9. Writing handbooks for test takers, test users and staff

Handbooks (each with rather different content, depending on audience) may be expected to contain the following :

- the rationale for the test ;
- an account of how the test was developed and validated ;
- a description of the test (which may include a version of specifications)
- sample items (or a complete sample test) ;
- advice on preparing for taking the test ;
- an explanation of how test scores are to be interpreted
- training materials (for interviewers, raters.....
- details of test administration.

2.5 COMMON TEST TECHNIQUES

What are test techniques ?¹

Quite simply test techniques are means of eliciting behaviour from candidates that will tell us about their language abilities. What we need are techniques that will elicit behaviour which is a reliable and valid indicator of the ability in which we are interested

Multiple Choice items

Multiple choice items take many forms, but their basic structure is as follows :
There is a stem :

Enid has been here

half an hour.

and a number of options one of which is correct, the others being distractors :

- A. during B. for C. while D. since

It is the candidate's task to identify the correct or most appropriate option (in this case B). Perhaps the most obvious advantage of multiple choice, is that scoring can be perfectly reliable. Scoring should also be rapid and economical. A further considerable advantage is that, since in order to respond the candidate has only to make a mark on the paper, it is possible to include more items than would otherwise be possible in a given period of time. As we know already this is likely to make for greater test reliability. Finally, it allows the testing of receptive skills without requiring the test taker to produce written or spoken language.

The advantages of the multiple choice technique were so highly regarded at one time that it almost seemed that it was the only way to test. While many laymen have always been sceptical of what should be achieved through multiple choice testing, it is only fairly recently that the technique's limitations have been more generally recognised by professional testers. The difficulties with multiple choice are as follows.

(a) The technique tests only recognition and knowledge.

(b) Guessing may have a considerable but unknowable effect on test scores

If multiple choice is to be used, every effort should be made to have at least four options (in order to reduce the effect of guessing). It is important that all of the distractors should be chosen by a significant number of test takers who do not have the knowledge or ability being tested. If there are four options but only a very small proportion of candidates choose one of the distractors, the item is effectively only a three-option item.

(c) The technique severely restricts what can be achieved.

(d) It is very difficult to write successful items

A further problem with multiple choice is that, even where items are possible, good ones are extremely difficult to write. Professional test writers reckon to have to write many more multiple choice items than they actually need.

(e) Backwash may be harmful

It should hardly be necessary to point out that where a test that is important to student is multiple choice in nature, there is a danger that practice for the test will have a harmful effect on learning and teaching. Practice at multiple choice items will not usually be the best way for students to improve or prove their command of language.

(f) Cheating may be facilitated

The fact that the responses in a multiple choice test a, b, c, d are so simple makes them easy to communicate to other candidates non-verbally. Some defence against this is to have at least two versions of the test, the only difference between them being the order in which the options are presented.

All in all, the multiple choice technique is best suited to relatively infrequent testing of large numbers of candidates. It is not to say that there should be no multiple choice items in tests produced regularly within institutions. In setting a reading comprehension test, for example, there may be certain tasks that lend themselves very readily to the multiple choice format, with obvious distractors presenting themselves in the text. There are real-life tasks (say, a shop assistant identifying which one of four dresses a customer is describing) which are essentially multiple choice. The simulation in a test of such a situation would seem to be perfectly appropriate. What the reader is being urged to avoid is the excessive, indiscriminate, and potentially harmful use of the technique.

Yes/No and True/False items

Items in which the test taker has merely to choose between YES and NO, or between TRUE and FALSE, are effectively multiple choice items with only two options. The obvious weakness of such items is that the test taker has a 50% chance of choosing the correct response by chance alone. In my view, there is no place for items of this kind in a formal test, although they may well have a use in assessment where the accuracy of the results is not critical. True/False items are sometimes modified by requiring test takers to give a reason for their choice. However, this extra requirement is problematic; first because it is adding what is a potentially difficult writing task when writing is not meant to be tested (validity problem), and secondly because the responses are often difficult to score (reliability and validity problem).

Short-answer items

Items in which the test taker has to provide a short answer are common, particularly in listening and reading tests.

Examples : (i) What does 'it' refer to? (ii) Why did Hannibal enjoy eating brain so much?

Advantages over multiple choice are that :

- guessing will (or should) contribute less to test scores;
- the technique is not restricted by the need for distractors (though there have to be potential alternative responses);

- cheating is likely to be more difficult;
- though great care must still be taken, items should be easier to write.

Disadvantages are;

- responses may take longer and so reduce the possible number of items ;
- the test taker has to produce language in order to respond ;
- scoring may be invalid or unreliable, if judgement is required ;
- scoring may take longer.

The first two of these disadvantages may not be significant if the required response is really short (and at least the test takers do not have to ponder four options, three of which have been designed to distract them). The next two can be overcome by making the required response unique (i.e. there is only one possible answer) and to be found in the text (or to require very simple language). Looking at the examples above, without needing to see the text, we can see that the correct response to Item (i) should be unique and found in the text. The same could be true of Item (ii), Item (iii), however, may cause problems (which can be solved) by using gap filling, below).

Short-answer questions have a role to play in serious language testing. Only when testing has to be carried out on a very large scale would I think of dismissing short answer questions as a possible technique because of the time taken to score. With the increased use of computers in testing (in TOEFL, for example), where written responses can be scored reliably and quickly, there is no reason for short answer items not to have a place in the very largest testing programmes.

Gap filling items

Items in which test takers have to fill a gap with a word are also common, Gap filling does not always work well for grammar or vocabulary items where minor or subtle differences of meaning are concerned.

When the gap filling technique is used, it is essential that test taker be told very clearly and firmly that only one word can be put in each gap. They should also be told whether contractions I'm, isn't it's the one word. (Dounting contract ions as one word is advisable, as it allows greater flexibility in item construction.)

Gap filling is a valuable technique. It has the advantage of the short answer technique, but the greater control it exercises over the test takers means that it does not call for significant productive skills. There is no reason why the scoring of gap filling should not be highly reliable, provided that it is carried out with a carefully constructed key on which the scorers can rely completely (and not have to use their individual judgement).

UNIT 3 □ EVALUATING AND MARKING CRITERIA

Structure

- 3.0 Developing alternative test items.
- 3.1 An inventory of question types.
- 3.2 The literature Test – a working document.

3.0 DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE TEST ITEMS

The discussion above gives the test writer clear messages about question types.

1. In a foreign language context, test items need to be written to meet student level, not tutor expectations. This means that, where students are failing to meet standards in a test, the test items rather than the students need to be re-evaluated.

2. In practical terms, this means that test items be guided or controlled, rather than wholly open-ended. Compare, for example, the following two question types :

- a) The Duke in Measure for Measure is nothing more than contriving, sermonizing waxwork' (John Wain). Discuss.
- b) Rank these statements about the Duke in Measure for Measure, No. 1 should be the statement you most agree with. No 7 should be the statement you least agree with. Justify and explain your ranking order.
 - (i) It is the Duke who initiates and controls-the controlled experiment that forms the action, (F.R. Leavis)
 - (ii) The disguised monarch, who can lean the private affairs of his humblest subject, becomes a son of earthly Providence, combining omniscience and omnipotence, (R.W. Chambers)
 - (iii) The Duke is essentially a wise and noble man who has erred from an excess of goodwill. (Elizabeth Pope)
 - (iv) The Duke surely appears throughout —less in the guise of Providence than as an image of the comic dramatist himself, trying to impose the patterns of art upon a reality which resists such schematization. (Anne Burton)
 - (v) Shakespeare does not seem to have felt able to whip up any real interest in such a contriving, sermonizing waxwork. (John Wain)
 - (vi) The Duke, for all his detachment, is not fully in charge of events (Derek Travers).
 - (vii) Ridiculous (William Empson).

3. Test items should require contact with actual text, eliminating the possibility of dependence on prepared notes. For example, compare the following two question types :

- a) Write on Wordsworth's use of imagery and metaphor in one of the 'Lucy' poems.
- b) Read the two texts below. Underline the words or phrases which different. Why do you think the poet chose these words and phrases ?

TEXT A

She dwelt, among th'untrodden way?

Beside the springs of Dove,

A Maid whom there wore none to praise

And very few to love.

A Violet by a mossy stone

Half hidden from the Eye

Fair, as the star when only one is shining in the sky; She liv'd un-nown,
and few could know

When Lucy ceased to be; But she is in her Grave, and Oh !

The difference to me.

TEXT B

She lived by the river Dove, in a quiet part where not many people walked.
Nobody praised her, and very few people loved her.

She was shy and simple. Nobody knew her, and not many people knew
when she died. Things aren't the same for me now she is dead.

4. Test items need to give abstract concepts a practical and concrete focus. Compare the two examples below.

- a) Outline the characteristics of the *bildungsroman* or biographical novel. Illustrate your answer by reference to at least one *bildungsroman* you have read.
- b) Read the text below. How would you evaluate the importance of each detail in the text, if it opens a novel called:

i Murder at Marplethorpe

ii The Personal History of David Marplethorpe

Account for your responses

The clock on the mantelpiece said ten thirty but someone had suggested that the clock was wrong. As the figure of the dead woman lay on the bed in the front room, a no less silent figure glided! rapidly from the house. The only sounds to be heard were the ticking of the clock and the wailing of an infant.

5. Linguistic support needs to be provided, where linguistic difficulties may conflict with the literary skills being tested. For example, in the 'Lucy' poems above, the following vocabulary items have been glossed for the student:

dwell -live
springs-river

This allows the student to concentrate on other literary and linguistic features, and makes the test a learning activity.

6. Test items should require the application of skills and principles, rather than 'display'. Compare the following question types :

- a) Discuss the importance of setting in *The Great Gatsby*. How does setting contribute to the plot ?
- b) Read the final paragraph of *The Great Gatsby*. What predictions could you make about the plot, setting and characters of the novel, if this were the opening?

How would these predictions differ from the actual novel?

7. Ideally, one test item should test one skill, or cluster of skills. The two questions about bildungsroman at 4 above illustrate this point. The second question type allows student and examiner to focus on the skill of identifying genre, rather than on essay-writing. It follows that the more global and "open-ended" a test item, the more demands are being made on 'hidden' skills which are difficult to quantify and measure.

8. Test items can encourage the learner to transfer skills from familiar texts to unfamiliar ones.

Respond to these statements about reading poetry by writing a letter beside each statement with the following code :

- A: I agree strongly
B: I agree in some situations" it depends
C: I can't decide
D: I disagree

Then justify your decision,

1. To understand a poem you need to know about the life of the poet.
2. To understand a poem, you need to know about the literary traditions that influence it,
3. You can only understand the message of the poem if you understand every word of it.
4. To appreciate a poem, you need to understand and apply terms such as alliteration, assonance, metaphor, conceit.

Now apply your choices and observations to the poem below, Are your decisions about reading poetry true of this poem? Discuss why-or why not.

Keep off the grass

The grass is a green mat
trimmed with gladioli

red like flames in a furnace.
The park bench, hallowed,
holds the loiterer listening
to the chant of the fountain
showering holy water on a congregation
of pigeons.

**KEEP OFF THE GRASS.
DOGS NOT UNDER LEASH FORBIDDEN.**

Then madam walks her Pekinese,
bathed and powdered and perfumed.
He sniffs at the face of the 'Keep Off' sign
with a nose as cold as frozen fish
and salutes it with a hind paw
leaving it weeping in anger and shame,
(Mbuyiseni Oswald Mtshali. *Born South Africa 1940*)

9. Questions can encourage examinees to identify with and personalise the texts they meet.

Read the poem below. Change any words or phrases which would be different where you live. Rewrite these words so the poem describes a scene in your own country. Which version do you prefer? Why?

Grandfather's Holiday

Blue sky, paddy fields, grandchild's play,
Deep ponds, diving-stage, child's holiday;
Tree shade, barn corners, catch-me-if-you-dare,
Undergrowth, parul-bushes, life without care.
Green paddy all a-quiver, hopeful as a child,
Child prancing, river dancing, waves running wild.

Autumn sailing in, now, steered by your play,
Bringing white siuli-flowers to grace your holiday.
Pleasure of the chilly air tingling me at night.
Blown from Himalaya on the breeze of your delight.
Dawn in Asvin, flower-forcing roseate sun,
Dressed in the colours of a grandchild's fun.

(Rabindranath Tagore. Trans. William Radice)

10. Strategies found to be motivating in the classroom can be translated into the test situation by:

- (i) eliminating the element of interaction (if necessary);
- (ii) providing realistic time constraints;
- (iii) ensuring the students have sufficient resources to complete the task without further guidance;
- (iv) defining the required performance so that it can be objectively assessed.

Three examples follow: a traditional test question; a motivating classroom task; and a revised test question, based on the classroom task.

Traditional test item:

Discuss the literary and stylistic features of the following extract from a D.H. Lawrence short story. To what extent does this extract represent characteristics that you feel to be typical of Lawrence ?

Classroom activity :

Students work in groups of three.

Student A has an extract by Ernest Hemingway

Student B has an extract by James Joyce

Student C has an extract by D.H. Lawrence

Task: Compare the three texts in your group. Decide which of the three is by D.H. Lawrence. Find at least five examples in the text to justify your choice. Then compare your choice to those of other groups.

Revised test item:

Students are given all three texts. The texts are shortened to allow for a time constraint.

Task : Compare the three texts. Decide which of the three is by D.H. Lawrence. Find at least five examples in the text to justify your choice.

The problem solving is adaptable to the test context, and is motivating for the examinee. Problem-solving tasks include identifying the author, matching texts, guessing the correct title, and identifying it and decoding unfamiliar words/phrase/concepts.

11. The final message to the test-writer is the need for balance, in order to obtain a balanced profile of the student. Thus a test may include a balance of controlled, guided and free test items; test items covering both discrete literary skills and global competence; and test items at all points along the continuum from receptive to productive.

3.1 AN INVENTORY OF QUESTION TYPES

The following list is by no means comprehensive. However, it summarises the task types discussed in this unit, the aims of the task, and any problems that may be encountered in achieving these aims.

Task	Skills/Aims
compare a literary text/non-literary paraphrase	the task focuses attention on 'literary' features: it provides a concrete context to demonstrate appreciation: language support is provided
rank a series of statements about a text and justify your choice	the task gives the student autonomy to select his/her own arguments: it also provides guidance in formulating an argument
select a title for a text/respond to difference titles	the task gives the student an opportunity to demonstrate sensitivity to genre in a problem-solving context
identify the 'odd one out' from a group of texts—by a different author/from a different work	the task requires the student to identify the characteristics of a text through problem-solving: 'discriminatory' skills are thus applied, rather than displayed.
match texts beginnings and endings, character and setting	as with the task above, a context is given for close analysis of style/content/context
deduce the meaning of culturally alien words/phrases in the text	encourages the student to use learning strategies that have been developed in the classroom
rewrite these phrases to make them culturally accessible	encourages the student to identify with and create texts of their own; focuses on cultural and social context and its manifestation in language

3 The third part of the test would involve response to prepared texts, and a range of tasks that draw more widely on both receptive and productive skills.

The test rubric makes clear the time constraints not only of the test as a whole, but of its parts.

Part 1: 3 hours

Read'in groups the extract from Athol Fugard's *My Children, My Africa*.

Elect a director, co-director and stage manager.

Allocate roles to each member of the group.

Discuss your interpretation of the roles.

Plan your props and position on the 'stages'.

You have up to 2 hours to do this.

After 2 hours you will be invited to present your extract to other members of the class.

Part 2: 1 hour

You will have 1 hour to read the extract from *Swami and his Friends* and answer 12 short questions about its language and content.

Spend about 5 minutes on each question.

After this part of the test, you will have a half hour break.

Part 3: 1½ hours

You will have 90 minutes to answer 6 questions.

You will answer 2 questions on each of the texts that you have prepared.

Spend about 15 minutes on each question.

3.2 The literature test: a working document

The unseen test is here presented in full, as a working document to demonstrate the principles and procedures outlined above.

Readers will note :

1. That the test works with variations of the multiple choice question. This provides 'face validity' for groups who expect to be tested in this way.
2. In all cases, however, random selection is monitored by an 'extension' activity that incites justification of choices.

R.K. Narayan *Swami and his Friends*

Swami's father felt ashamed of himself. He was going to cross the street, plod through the sand, and gaze into the Sarayu — for the body of his son! His son, Swami, to be looked for in the Sarayu! It seemed to him a ridiculous thing to do. But what could he do? He dared not return home without some definite news of his son, good or bad. The house had worn a funeral appearance since nine o'clock. His wife and his old mother were more or less dazed and demented. She-his wife-had remained cheerful till the Taluk Office gong struck ten, when, her face turning white she had asked him to go and find out from Swami's friends and teachers what had happened to him.

He did not know where Swami's headmaster lived. He had gone to the Board School and asked the watchman, who misdirected him and made him wander over half the town without purpose. He could not find Mani's house. He had gone to Ranji's house, but the house was dark, everybody had gone to bed, and he felt that it would be absurd to wake up the household of a stranger to ask if they had seen his son. From what he could get out of the servant sleeping in the veranda, he understood that Swami had not been seen in Rajam's house that evening. He had then vaguely wandered the streets. He was doing it to please his wife and mother. He had not shared in the least his wife's nervousness. He had felt all along that the boy must have gone out somewhere and would return, and then he would treat him with some firmness and nip this tendency in the bud. He had pent nearly an hour thus and gone home. Even his mother had left her bed and was hoping agitatedly about the house, praying to the God of the Thirupathi Hills and promising him rich offerings if he should restore Swami to her safe and sound. His wife stood like a stone image, looking down the street. The only tranquil being in the house was the youngest member of the family, whose soft breathings came from the cradle, defying the gloom and heaviness in the house.

Before you read the text:

If a member of your family suddenly disappeared, which of these emotions would you feel ?

Put a ✓ beside the emotions you would feel.

worried	surprised	embarrassed
amused	frightened	

Add 2 more feelings of your own.

This extract is about a father whose son has disappeared.

Read the extract right through once.

Then read it through again slowly and answer the questions.

The questions in Section One ask you for information in the same order as the text.

The questions in Section Two ask for your impressions of the text as a whole.

SECTION ONE

(Lines 1—5)

1. Underline the adjective which describes best the feelings of the father.

unhappy angry nervous guilty amused

Find a word or phrase in the text which means the same as the word you have underlined.

2. What do you think is the Sarayu?
Tick ✓ the hex you think is correct.

a building		
a cinema		
a river		
a forest		

Write down the words in the text which helped you make this decision.

(Lines 5—12)

3. Underline the adjective which describes the feelings of his wife best,
hysterical angry surprised unhappy

Find a word or phrase in the text which means the same as the word you have underlined.

4. Are these statements true or false?

If the statement is false, write a correct statement underneath. One example has been done for you,

	True	False
a) The watchman directed the father to the headmaster's house. <i>The watchman gave the wrong directions. The father got lost</i>		x
b) The house had been miserable all day,		
c) Swami's mother became worried after ten o'clock,		
d) The old grandmother remained cheerful.		

(Lines 12-20)

5. The father visited several places.
Tick ✓ the places below which he visited.

the Board School		
Mani's house		
Rajami's house		
the house of strangers		

6. Which people did the father speak to?

the watchman

Rajam

strangers

the servant

Mani

(Lines 25-35)

7. Match the half sentence in column A with the correct half sentence in column B.

Draw arrows \leftarrow ————— \rightarrow to show which parts match.
One example has been drawn for you.

Column A	Column B
the father	just waits silently
Rajam's family	thinks there is no real problem
The old mother	thinks only the gods can help now
Swami's mother	has gone to sleep

8. Complete the following sentences, with one word only.

When Swarni returns, the father plans to be

The only calm person in the house is the

Write down the words in the passage, - which describe.

how the father will behave when Swami returns

what the calm person is like

9. Write the name of the four characters in the story, at the point a long this line that describes them best.

quite calm

a little worried

worried

very worried

SECTION TWO

10. Look at the adjectives you wrote down in question 1. Does the father feel the same as you? Complete one of these sentences:

Yes, we both feel

No, I would feel

but the father felt

11. What do each of the four characters do to solve the problem of Swami's disappearance ? _____

Choose the correct word from the list below

The father _____

The mother _____

The old woman _____

The fourth person _____

sleeps

prays

waits

gets angry

goes searching

Which of these things would you do ?

Finish the sentence below.

If my son/daughter/younger brother/sister disappeared, I would

12. Swami is in fact quite safe. The father finds him in the next part of the story.
What do you think the boy was doing ?
Where do you think the boy was ?
Spend 5 minutes writing down your ideas.

4.0 Measuring the effectiveness of the test

After piloting the test with a group of students, the team worked with the following checklist of questions. As a result of these questions, the test was refined and improved for its final stages and submission to the Governors.

1. Was there a wide spread of marks ?
If not, does the test need to be made easier, or more difficult ?
2. Does each individual test paper offer a rounded profile of the student's abilities ? If not, are there some skills or task types which are under-represented ?
3. Do tutors feel that this profile represents what they know of the student ?

If not, does the result under-or over-represent the student's ability? What other variables may account for this?

4. Do tutors agree to the mark'- for both the— subjective and the objective items? If not, do criteria need to be more precisely clarified?
5. Have all test questions and multiple choice distractors been equally selected? If not, should these be rewritten?
6. Do tutors feel that their expectations were met? If not, are their expectations unrealistic?

Or do the test questions need to be rewritten to generate more precisely what was expected?

Designing a literature test involves clarifying goals at every step. It also involves establishing consensus amongst the varied goals and expectations likely to exist in any team of literature specialists.

This unit has outlined the procedures of clarification, consensus, test design, writing, piloting and refinement.

Whilst this may seem a time consuming exercise, ultimately it is time saving. It ensures that tutors, testers and students have the same goals and expectations; and it ensures that the test provides students and tutors with fair, clear and precise information about those expectations, and how far they have been met.

Notes

The set texts cited in this paper are as follows:

Maya Angelou (1984) *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Virago, London,
Mira Nair and Sooni Taraporevala (1989) *Salaam, Bombay*, Penguin, India.
Derek Hudson (ed.) (1956) *Modern English Short Stories*, Oxford University Press.

Stories cited from the above anthology were;

Virginia Woolf *The Duchess and the Jeweller*

Frances Towers *The Little Willow*

Eric Linklater *Sealskin Trousers*

Wole Soyinka (ed.) (1975) *Poems of Black Africa*, Heinemann, London.

R.K. Narayan (1980) *Swami and Friends*, University of Chicago Press.

Jack Hydes (ed.) (1985) *Touched with Fire*, Cambridge University Press.

Athol Fugard (1990) *My Children, My Africa*, Faber, London.

APPENDIX 1 : WITH EXAMINATIONS IN MIND

Some students who are reading works of literature in a foreign language will be working towards a written examination, usually involving essay writing. Sometimes the essays will need to be written in the target language.

Essay writing and examinations are frequently a lonely business. The element of competition and the awarding of marks compound this isolation. In our view, essay writing and marking need to be explored and shared so that the processes at work can be better understood. Every literature essay is a form of communication between writer and reader. Poor marks indicate that the two of them are not in tune: the writer is not meeting the expectations of the reader. Clearly the teacher's written comments or class discussion of an essay question will help students to understand what is expected of them but the teacher has many other helpful options available.

Asking students to set essay questions enables them to appreciate how the working of the question determines what will be relevant in the answer and also gives them a greater sensitivity to the sort of question that particular literary works seem to demand.

Exchanging essays and then marking and reporting on them, or even marking and commenting on their own essays, prior to handing them in to the teacher, can help students to develop greater awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Brainstorming for the relevant content of an essay in groups prior to individual writing is another way of restoring a social dimension to the planning of essays.

With weaker groups, the teacher can supply a checklist of possible points for inclusion in an essay. Students can then be asked to prioritise the points and group them, having first deleted any that are considered irrelevant.

We hope that some of the activities we have described in this module will help students to have a more thorough basic understanding of the literary work and a strong sense of involvement with it. These two factors will help to add substance and life to essay writing in literature.

For teachers seeking an attractive activity that integrates many of the above awareness exercises, the following simulation is offered. It requires a total of about two to two-and-a-half hours in all, although the items can also be done separately.

The Examinations Board - a simulation

The idea for this simulation was born out of a desire to make students more aware of what they are doing - and why - when they write literary essays to prepare for examinations. It can be done in part, or according to choice and available time.

Step 1: The sub-committee of the National Examinations Board

Students are divided into small groups, each one representing a subcommittee of

the Examinations Board, whose task is to write the questions to be set on an English Literature examination.

We assume a class size of 20 for the purpose of illustrating the simulation, but it can be adapted to other class sizes. Four groups of five students each receive:

- A tasksheet (example follows).
- A sample NEB exam paper, showing the kind of questions set.*

Students read the instructions and the sample papers on other work of literature; then they write two questions for the exam to be set on the work they have been studying.

Discussion and writing take about 20 minutes.

The exam questions sub-committee

You are a member of the exam questions sub-committee of the National Examinations Board.

You are meeting to devise two essay questions for this year's NEB English Literature exam. The two questions will be based on;

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

This book has not been used on the NEB Literature syllabus before. The tradition in the NEB is to offer candidates a choice of one from four questions on each work on the syllabus.

The four questions correspond to these four categories: *

- a) One question on a character or characters in the work.
- b) One question on one of the major themes in the work.
- c) One 'context' question - that is, using a short quotation from the book as the basis for interpretation and comment.
- d) One free or open question with no restrictions.

Your sub-committee is concerned only with two questions: of type (a) and (c) above.*

You can consult your sheet of sample NEB questions on other works of fiction to get some idea of the 'house style'. Please do not imitate any of these questions.

You must submit your two questions after a maximum of 20 minutes' discussion.

Tasksheet 1

* We give two 'sample papers' of different levels, as examples: one is on the sh story 'Sredni Vashtar' by Saki, with literary questions set at a pre-university level for students who have been studying literature as part of a syllabus; the other, G. B. Shaw's Pygmalion has questions set for advanced students not sitting a specifically literary paper but an exam with a literary essay as part of a language composition paper (for example, Cambridge Proficiency in English). Teachers working for a set exam syllabus might wish to include their own past papers at r stage of the simulation

** Note to teacher: Vary these categories evenly so that two questions are produced in each category. For example; group 1 - (a) and (c); group 2 - (b) and (d); group 3 - (a) and (d); group 4 - (b) and (c).

NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD
English Literature Syllabus A

Tuesday 12th June 200X 9am-12am

3 hours

PAPER 1 SHORT STORIES

Answer three questions only from this paper: one question only may be selected from each one of the sections A, B and C.

SECTION A: 'Sredni Vashtar' by Saki

1. 'Although Mrs De Ropp is the victim in this short story, our sympathy lies with the young boy, Conradin.' Do you agree with this view? Discuss with detailed reference to the story,
2. 'Religion is one of the ways used by human beings to dispose of their enemies,' Discuss, with specific reference to 'Sredni Vashtar',
3. 'I thought you liked toast,' she exclaimed, with an injured air observing that he did not touch it. 'Sometimes,' said Conradin,

Explain how this quotation relates to the story as a whole, and especially of the depiction of the relationship between the two main characters,

4. Discuss the way in which the author brings out the intensity of the emotions simmering in the De Ropp household.

NEB/EL/SB (7/9)

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Discussion and writing take about 20 minutes.

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NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD
English Literature Syllabus A

Tuesday 12th June 200X 9am-12am

3 hours

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Answer three questions only from this paper: one question only may be selected from each one of the sections A, B and C.

SECTION A: 'Sredni Vashtar' by Saki

1. 'Although Mrs De Ropp is the victim in this short story, our sympathy lies with the young boy, Conradin.' Do you agree with this view? Discuss with detailed reference to the story.
2. 'Religion is one of the ways used by human beings to dispose of their enemies,' Discuss, with specific reference to 'Sredni Vashtar'.
3. 'I thought you liked toast,' she exclaimed, with an injured air observing that he did not touch it. 'Sometimes,' said Conradin.

Explain how this quotation relates to the story as a whole, and especially of the depiction of the relationship between the two main characters.

4. Discuss the way in which the author brings out the intensity of the emotions simmering in the De Ropp household.

NEB/EL/SB (7/9)

NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD

English Literature Syllabus B

Wednesday 14th May 200XX

2pm-4pm

2 hours

PAPER 3 DRAMA

Answer two questions only from this paper: one question from section A and one question from section B.

SECTION A : Pygmalion by G.B. Shaw

1. Compare and contrast the characters of Professor Higgins and Alfred Doolittle.
2. What is the importance of Colonel Pickering in this play?
3. Towards the end of the play Higgins says to Liza: *I presume you don't pretend that I have treated you badly?* 'What do you think? Has Higgins treated Liza badly?
4. The way you speak is at least as important as what you are. Do you agree? Discuss with reference to Pygmalion.

Step 2: The executive committee of the National Examinations Board

When time is up and the first task has been finished, students are told to write down the two questions set by their group. Each student now becomes a representative of his or her sub-committee, sent to a meeting of the National Examination Board's executive committee.

The teacher regroups 20 students into five executive committees of four students: each student coming from a different sub-committee, and each bringing his or her sub-committee's two questions.

An easy way of achieving this change-over is as follows: when the teacher gives out task sheets to the sub-committees in step 1, he or she labels them: A - B - C - D' - E, giving one to each member of the group. When the second committee is formed, he or she tells all the A's to go together to one corner of the room; all the B's to go to another corner, etc. In this way, five groups are formed, each consisting of one student from sub-committee 1, bringing with him or her questions (a) and (c); one student from 2, with questions (b) and (d); one student from 3, with questions

(n) and (d) and one student from 4, with questions (b) and (c).

Each member of the new executive committee is now given **Tasksheet 2**. Regrouping, discussion and selection of question should take about 20 minutes.

The executive committee of the National Examinations Board

You are the executive committee of the NEB, and you have been asked to make the final choice of four questions for this year's English Literature examination. You have eight questions submitted by the sub-committees: two for each of the categories (a), (b), (c) and (d).

Your final choice must be : four questions in all, one for each category,

You have 15 minutes to make your selection.

Tasksheet 2

Step 3: The NEB plenary meeting

All students now meet together with the teacher as vote counter. Each executive committee reports its choices; then, the teacher nominates the final four on the basis of which questions were chosen most often. Any two questions chosen from the same category which have the same number of inclusions are put to an immediate vote.

The marking scheme sub-committee

You are a member of the NEB's marking scheme sub-committee. You are meeting to assign weighting to a number of qualities which the NEB seeks in literature essays.

Your decisions will form the basis of the marking scheme for all NEB examiners.

The NEB supplies a 'list of criteria'. Study the list and add any criteria which you think are missing. Then assign marks to the criteria you consider important, remembering that each essay answer is marked out of a total of 100 marks.

For simpler calculations, you may wish to work in multiples of ten.

Tasksheet 3

This meeting should take no longer than 15 minutes. The final four questions are recorded and submitted to the NEB for inclusion on the English Literature examination paper.

The first part of the simulation is now concluded. It usually takes about one hour. The next step can follow immediately, if another hour is available, or it can be done in a later lesson, as appropriate.

Step 4: The marking scheme sub-committee

The class goes back to its original four groups of five students. Each group receives:

- Tasksheet 3.
- A 'list of criteria' from the NEB.

The time allowed for this task is approximately one hour. Each member of the sub-committee should keep a copy of the weighting decided.

NEB marking criteria

Criterion	What is meant by this criterion	Marks assigned
1. knowledge of the book	Candidate shows, thorough and detailed familiarity with the work.	
2. essay structure	Candidate organises his or her essay in a systematic and logical way.	
3. language	Candidate's use of language is accurate, varied and clear.	
4. illustration	Candidate quotes from the book to support arguments made, amply and relevantly.	
5. relevance	Candidate answers question directly, with no unnecessary material.	
6. coverage	Candidate deals with all main aspects of the topic set.	
7. originality	Candidate expresses his or her own criticism and interpretations, in a personal way.	
Sub-Committee	can offer alternative criteria if they wish:	

Step 5: Homework

The teacher asks the class to do a test run of the exam paper questions by choosing to answer one as their homework.

Step 6: Individual marking of essays

Without pilot discussion, the teacher asks each student to mark his or her own essay using, his or her sub-committee's marking scheme and heading the final mark out of 100 should be recorded. The teacher checks all the essays, marks them in his or her own way, then discusses with the Student, either in a written note or in an individual interview, the differences he or she sees between his or her marking scheme and the student's self-marked total.

This can lead to a very useful discussion between the teacher and the class, in which the teacher establishes his or her own view of what the 'real examination board's criteria would be for marking students' essays.

APPENDIX 2 : A RESOURCE BANK OF TITLES

Language teachers can, in favourable circumstances, help their students to read more widely by setting up a class library of suitable, unabridged literary works. A catalogue of titles might indicate approximate difficulty and include synopses designed to whet the reader's appetite. Occasional visual displays of particular authors and their works - including perhaps photographs, theatre programmes, critical reviews, film posters and so on could serve both to encourage interest and to become the basis of class projects. Where the possibility exists, film showings, poetry readings, radio plays and theatre visits will lend further encouragement to students exploring literature in the target language,

Within existing libraries outside the classroom, a list of suitable titles for language learners could be made available to students or displayed to guide their browsing.

When students are using a library independently, teachers might organise social evenings or classroom sessions during which learners would talk about books they had read and enjoyed and perhaps read out favourite extracts. Alternatively, students could write brief reviews of books read, for display.



মানুষের জ্ঞান ও ভাবকে বইয়ের মধ্যে সঞ্চিত করিবার যে একটা প্রচুর সুবিধা আছে, সে কথা কেহই অস্বীকার করিতে পারে না। কিন্তু সেই সুবিধার দ্বারা মনের স্বাভাবিক শক্তিকে একেবারে আচ্ছন্ন করিয়া ফেলিলে বুদ্ধিকে বাবু করিয়া তোলা হয়।

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

ভারতের একটা mission আছে, একটা গৌরবময় ভবিষ্যৎ আছে, সেই ভবিষ্যৎ ভারতের উত্তরাধিকারী আমরাই। নূতন ভারতের মুক্তির ইতিহাস আমরাই রচনা করছি এবং করব। এই বিশ্বাস আছে বলেই আমরা সব দুঃখ কষ্ট সহ্য করতে পারি, অন্ধকারময় বর্তমানকে অগ্রাহ্য করতে পারি, বাস্তবের নিষ্ঠুর সত্যগুলি আদর্শের কঠিন আঘাতে ধূলিসাৎ করতে পারি।

—সুভাষচন্দ্র বসু

Any system of education which ignores Indian conditions, requirements, history and sociology is too unscientific to commend itself to any rational support.

—Subhas Chandra Bose

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