

METHODOLOGY OF LITERATURE

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STUDY MATERIAL

**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT
V SEM B.A. ENGLISH CORE COURSE**

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MODULE 2

TEXTUAL APPROACHES

RUSSIAN FORMALISM

Russian Formalism, which emerged around 1915 and flourished in the 1920s, was associated with the OPOJAZ (Society for the Study of Poetic Language) and with the Moscow Linguistic Society (one of the leading figures of which was Roman Jakobson) and Prague Linguistic Circle (established in 1926, with major figures as Boris Eichenbaum and Viktor Shklovsky). The school derives its name from “form”, as these critics studied the form of literary work rather than its content, emphasizing on the ‘formal devices’ such as rhythm, metre, rhyme, metaphor, syntax or narrative technique.

Formalism views literature as a special mode of language and proposes a fundamental opposition between poetic/literary language and the practical/ordinary language. While ordinary language serves the purpose of communication, literary language is self-reflexive, in that it offers readers a special experience by drawing attention to its “formal devices”, which Roman Jakobson calls ‘literariness’ — that which makes a given work a literary work. Jan Mukarovsky described literariness as consisting in the “maximum of foregrounding of the utterance”, and the primary aim of such foregrounding, as Shklovsky described in his *Art as Technique*, is to “estrangle or “**defamiliarize**”. Thus literary language is ordinary language deformed and made strange. Literature, by forcing us into a dramatic awareness of language, refreshes our habitual perceptions and renders objects more perceptible.

Though Formalism focused primarily on poetry, later Shklovsky, Todorov and Propp analysed the language of fiction, and the way in which it produced the effect of defamiliarization. They looked at the structure of a narrative and explored how elements like plot and characterization contributed to the narrative’s effect. Propp studied folk narratives () and Shklovsky treated Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, as a novel that parodied earlier conventions of writing.

Jakobson and Todorov were influential in introducing Formalist concepts and methods into French Structuralism. Formalism was strongly opposed by some Marxist critics, proponents of Reader Response theory, Speech Act theory and New Historicism – all reject the view that there is a sharp and definable distinction between ordinary language and literary language.

DEFAMILIARIZATION

The Russian Formalists’ concept of “Defamiliarization”, proposed by Viktor Shklovsky in his *Art as Technique*, refers to the literary device whereby language is used in such a way that ordinary and familiar objects are made to look different. It is a process of transformation where language asserts its power to affect our perception. It is that aspect which differentiates between ordinary usage and poetic usage of language, and imparts a uniqueness to a literary work. While Roman Jakobson described the object of study in literary science as the

“literariness” of a work, Jan Mukarovsky emphasized that literariness consists in foregrounding of the linguistic medium, as Viktor Shklovsky described, is to estrange or defamiliarize, by medium. The primary aim of literature, in thus foregrounding its linguistics disrupting the modes of ordinary linguistic discourse, literature strange” the world of everyday perception, and renews the readers’ lost capacity for fresh sensation. A similar technique deployed in drama was “alienation effect” introduced by Bertolt in his *Epic Theatre* to disrupt the passive complacency of the audience and force them into a critical analysis of art as well as the world.

Although the concept of defamiliarization was earlier advocated by the Romantic critic Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), it was conceived in terms of subject matter and in novelty of expression. The formalists, however, endorse defamiliarization effected by novelty in the usage of formal linguistic devices in poetry, such as rhyme, metre, metaphor, image and symbol. Thus literary language is ordinary language deformed and made strange. Literature, by forcing us into a dramatic awareness of language, refreshes our habitual perceptions and renders objects more perceptible.

NEW CRITICISM

At a time when literary artists were turning away from society into an introspective preoccupation with ‘art for art’s sake’, a similar movement was initiated in criticism, parallel to the Modernist ethos, by Cambridge professors IA Richards, FR Leavis and William Empson , and by the American Fugitives and Southern Agrarians Allan Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Cleanth Brooks and JC Ransom, which came to be known as New Criticism (which is also the name of a book by JC Ransom, 1941).

New Critics attempted to systematize the study of literature, and develop an approach that was centred on the rigorous study of the text itself. Thus it was distinctively formalist in character, focusing on the textual aspects of the text such as rhythm, metre, imagery and metaphor, by the method of close reading, as against reading that on the basis of external evidences such as the history, author’s biography or the socio-political/cultural conditions of the text’s production. Although the New Critics were against Coleridge’s Impressionistic Criticism, they seem to have inherited his concept of the poem as a unified organic whole which reconciles its internal conflicts and achieves a fine balance.

Like the liberal humanists, the New Critics believed in the primacy of the text as an autotelic artefact, complete within itself, written for its own sake, unified in form, and not dependent on its relation to the author’s intent/history etc. Such a text is to be read by the technique of close reading, which would reveal that its formal aspects serve to support the structure of meaning within the text. They believed that the critic’s job is to help readers appreciate the form and technique of the art and the mastery of the artist. Like Arnold and TS Eliot, New Critics also believed that “Western Tradition” is an unbroken continuum of internally consistent set of artistic conventions, going back to ancient Greece and continuing up to the present, and that good art participates in and extends the tradition, and that a critic’s job is to

uphold the tradition and protect it from encroachments from commercialism, political posturing and vulgarity. As they believed in the canon, so also, they believed that literature/criticism is an internally edifying process that hones the sensibilities of “good” readers and sets them apart from the “unreflective masses” Like the Modernists, they also made a firm distinction between “high” art and popular art, and held that “good” literature reflects universal values and is of timeless significance.

While I A Richards proposed close reading in his *Principles of Literary Criticism* and *Practical Criticism*, Wimsatt and Beardsley in their *The Verbal Icon*, eschewed the reading of a text based on the author’s intention (**Intentional Fallacy**) and on the impression on the reader (**Affective Fallacy**). Cleanth Brooks in his *The Well Wrought Urn* conceptualised the “heresy of paraphrase” and proposed that through the use of irony, paradox and ambiguity, a poet works constantly to resist any attempt at reducing the poem to a paraphrasable core. FR Leavis upheld austerity and moral seriousness in *The Great Tradition* while Empson explicated the multiple semantic possibilities of individual words in *The Seven Types of Ambiguity*.

In their emphasis on the “formal” aspects of a text, the New Critics were closely associated with the Russian Formalist school of Jakobson, Eichenbaum, Shklovsky and others. The New Critics’ attention to language and form was extended to the schools of contextual criticism, Structuralism and Poststructuralism. However, its principal notions were opposed by the Chicago school, New Historicism, Reader Response theory and Culture Studies.

CLOSE READING

A technique advocated by the New Critics in interpreting a literary work, Close Reading derived from (I A Richards’s *Practical Criticism* (1929) and William Empson’s *The Seven Types of Ambiguity*(1930). Endorsing the concept of “autotelic text”, that a text is a unified entity, complete in itself, and containing meaning without any reference to external evidence such as the author’s intention/history, biography or the socio-cultural conditions of its production, the New Critics, Wimsatt and Beardsley cautioned against the fallacies of judging a literary work based on the author’s intention or its impression on the reader, what they called “intentional Fallacy” and “Affective Fallacy”. Instead, close reading focuses on the formal aspects or the verbal/linguistic elements of a text such as figures of speech, images, symbols, interaction between words, rhythm and metaphor. The form of the work is said to be a “structure of meanings”, in which an organic unity is achieved by the play and counterplay of “thematic imagery” and “symbolic action”. In a successful work of literature, the linguistic elements manifest tension, irony, ambiguity and paradox, to achieve a “reconciliation of diverse impulses” and “an equilibrium of opposed forces” to protect the work, according to Cleanth Brooks, from the “heresy of paraphrase”. While the New Critics proposed close reading to highlight the unity of a work, poststructuralists endorsed a deconstructive close reading to reveal the fissures and disunities within a work.

ARCHETYPAL CRITICISM/ MYTH CRITICISM

Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) introduced the archetypal approach called Myth Criticism, combining the typological interpretation of the Bible and the conception of imagination prevalent in the writings of William Blake. Frye continued the formalist emphasis of New Criticism and its insistence on criticism as a scientific, objective and systematic discipline. The book testifies that literary history is a repetitive and self-contained cycle where basic symbolic myths (for instance the deluge, trickster) recur.

Myth criticism drew upon the anthropological and psychological bases of myths; rituals and folktales to restore the spiritual content to the alienated, fragmented world ruled by scientism, empiricism and technology. Myth criticism regarded the creation of myth (with its association with magic, imagination, dreams etc.) as integral to human thought; and myth as the collective attempt of cultures to establish a meaningful context to human existence. Literature is viewed as emerging out of a core of myth, and as a "system" based on "recurrent patterns". These parameters were also reflected in other contemporary movements such as Structuralism and Jungian concept of the "collective unconscious" Frye argued that literature drew upon transcendental genres such as romance (summer), tragedy (autumn), irony/satire (winter) and comedy (spring). These four genres constitute a 'central unifying myth'. He further codified these genres and uncovered their basic archetypal structures. The romance is characterised by a quest theme where the hero descends into subterranean depths and danger and then rises. This descent and ascent, Frye argued, constituted the 'mythopoeic' equivalent of Jung's archetype.

Summer stands for the culmination of the year's seasons, just as romance and marriage culminates a life. Comedy is about fantasy and wish-fulfillment and, therefore, suited to spring, while satire's disillusioned mockery suits the coldness of winter. Thus archetypal criticism lined supposed 'universal' psychological states with literary symbols identified as 'universal'.

DECONSTRUCTION

Deconstruction involves the close reading of texts in order to demonstrate that any given text has irreconcilably contradictory meanings, rather than being a unified, logical whole. As J. Hillis Miller, the preeminent American deconstructionist, has explained in an essay entitled *Stevens' Rock and Criticism as Cure* (1976), "Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text, but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. Its apparently solid ground is no rock but thin air."

Deconstruction was both created and has been profoundly influenced by the French philosopher **Jacques Derrida**. Derrida, who coined the term deconstruction, argues that in Western culture, people tend to think and express their thoughts in terms of binary oppositions (white / black, masculine / feminine, cause /effect, conscious /unconscious, presence / absence, speech writing). Derrida suggests these oppositions are hierarchies in

miniature, containing one term that Western culture views as positive or superior and another considered negative or inferior, even if only slightly so. Through deconstruction, Derrida aims to erase the boundary between binary oppositions—and to do so in such a way that the hierarchy implied by the oppositions is thrown into question.

Although its ultimate aim may be to criticize Western logic, deconstruction arose as a response to structuralism and formalism. Structuralists believed that all elements of human culture, including literature, may be understood as parts of a system of signs. Derrida did not believe that structuralists could explain the laws governing human signification and thus provide the key to understanding the form and meaning of everything from an African village to Greek myth to a literary text. He also rejected the structuralist belief that texts have identifiable “centres” of meaning—a belief structuralists shared with formalists.

Formalist critics, such as the New Critics, assume that a work of literature is a freestanding, self-contained object whose meaning can be found in the complex network of relations between its parts (allusions, images, rhythms, sounds, etc.). Deconstructionists, by contrast, see works in terms of their undecidability. They reject the formalist view that a work of literature is demonstrably unified from beginning to end, in one certain way, or that it is organized around a single centre that ultimately can be identified. As a result, deconstructionists see texts as more radically heterogeneous than do formalists. Formalists ultimately make sense of the ambiguities they find in a given text, arguing that every ambiguity serves a definite, meaningful, and demonstrable literary function. Undecidability, by contrast, is never reduced, let alone mastered in deconstruction. Though a deconstructive reading can reveal the incompatible possibilities generated by the text, it is impossible for the reader to settle on any permanent meanings.

Deconstruction is a poststructuralist theory, based largely but not exclusively on the writings of Derrida. It is in the first instance a philosophical theory and a theory directed towards the (re)reading of philosophical writings. Its impact on literature, mediated in North America largely through the influences of theorists at Yale University, is based 1) on the fact that deconstruction sees all writing as a complex historical, cultural process rooted in the relations of texts to each other and in the institutions and conventions of writing, and 2) on the sophistication and intensity of its sense that human knowledge is not as controllable or as convincing as Western thought would have it and that language operates in subtle and often contradictory ways, so that certainty will always elude us.

POSTSTRUCTURALISM

The second half of the twentieth century, with its torturous experiences of the World Wars, Holocaust and the advent of new technologies, witnessed revolutionary developments in literary theory that were to undermine several of the established notions of Western literary and cultural thought. The most prominent of them was Poststructuralism, with its watchword of “deconstructive reading” endorsed by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida. The theory, launched in Derrida’s paper *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences* (1966), which he presented at Johns Hopkins University, had its roots in philosophy, especially in Martin Heidegger’s concept of “Destruktion”. Derrida was also influenced by Nietzsche, Freud and Marx, each of whom brought about revolutionary ways of thinking in their respective disciplines.

Derrida attacked the systematic and quasi-scientific pretensions of structuralism — derived from Saussurean Structural Linguistics and Levi-Strauss’ **Structural Anthropology** — which presupposes a centre that organises and regulates the structure and yet “escapes structurality”. Contemporary thinkers like Foucault, Barthes and Lacan undertook in diverse ways to decentre/ undermine the traditional claims for the existence of a self-evident foundation that guarantees the validity of knowledge and truth. This anti-foundationalism and scepticism about the traditional concepts of meaning, knowledge, truth and subjectivity also found radical expression in Marxism (Althusser), Feminisms (Butler, Cixous, Kristeva), New Historicism (Greenblatt) and Reader Response theory (Iser, Bloom and others).

Poststructuralism emphasised the indeterminate and polysemic nature of semiotic codes and the arbitrary and constructed nature of the foundations of knowledge. Having originated in a politically volatile climate, the theory laid greater stress on the operations of ideology and power on human subjectivity. In deconstructionist thought, the connection between thought / reality, subject /object, self /other are viewed as primarily linguistic terms, and not as pre-existent to language. With the famous statement “there is nothing outside the text”, Derrida established the provisionality and constructedness of reality, identity and human subjectivity. Undermining “logocentricism” as the “metaphysics of presence” that has ever pervaded Western philosophy and cultural thought, Derrida proposed the concept of “écriture”, which is beyond logos, and characterised by absence and difference, where there is free play of signifiers, without ever arriving at the “transcendental signified”, where meanings are locked in aporias and can be located only in traces.

Paul de Man in his *Allegories of Reading* explores the theory of figurative language, affirming that linguistic texts are self-deconstructing. Barbara Johnson in *A World of Difference* illustrated deconstruction in the context of race and gender. Spivak in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* used deconstruction to problematise the privileged, academic, post colonial critics’ unknowing participation in the exploitation of the third world.

READER RESPONSE CRITICISM

Reader Response, primarily a German and American offshoot of literary theory, emerged (prominent since 1960s) in the West mainly as a reaction to the textual emphasis of New Criticism of the 1940s. New Criticism, the culmination of liberal humanist ideals, had stressed that only that which is within a text is part of the meaning of the text; that the text is “autotelic” entity (complete within itself). Hence, it neglected authorial biography, social conditions during the composition of a work of art and the reader’s psychology. Reader Response Criticism wholly repudiated all these notions; instead, it focuses on the systematic examination of the aspects of the text that arouse, shape, and guide a reader’s response (for instance, Aristotelian Catharsis/ Brechtian alienation effect“. It designates multiple critical approaches to reading a text. According to Reader Response criticism, the reader is a producer rather than a consumer of meanings (parallel to Barthes’s Birth of the Reader). In this sense, a reader is a hypothetical construct of norms and expectations that can be derived or projected or extrapolated from the work. Because expectations may be violated or fulfilled, satisfied or frustrated, and because reading is a temporal process involving memory, perception, and anticipation, the charting of reader-response is extremely difficult and perpetually subject to construction and reconstruction, vision and revision.

The philosophical origins of Reader Response criticism can be traced back to the doctrine of **Phenomenology**, whose foundations were laid by the German philosopher, **Edmund Husserl** (1859-1938), The term “phenomenon” means appearance, and Phenomenology shifts our attention of the external world to the ways in which these objects appear to the human subject, and the subjective contribution to this process of appearing. He proposed that consciousness is a unified “intentional” act; by ‘Intentional’ he does not mean that it is deliberately willed, but that it is always directed to an “object.”“

The hermeneutic conceptions of **Martin Heidegger** (1889-1976) have also been pivotal to the development of Reader Response theory, especially his explanation of Dasein as constituting a temporal structure of interpretative understanding, which is already engaged in the activity of interpretation. The Polish theorist Roman Ingarden (1893-1970), views that a literary work originates in the intentional acts of the consciousness of its author.

Reader Response criticism does not denote any specific theory. It can range from the phenomenological theories of Wolfgang Iser and Roman Ingarden (both were faculty members at the University of Constance, Germany) to the relativistic analysis of Stanley Fish, who argues that the interpretive strategy of the reader creates the text, there being no text except that which a reader or an interpretive community of readers creates. Being both a reception aesthetic and a reception history, Reader Response criticism examines how readers realize the potentials of a text and how readings change over the course of history; it believes that although the the reader fills in the gaps, the author’s intentional acts impose restrictions and conditions

One can sort Reader Response theorists into three groups: those who focus upon the individual reader's experience ("individualists"); those who conduct psychological experiments on a defined set of readers ("experimenters"); and those, who assume a fairly uniform response by all readers ("uniformists"). In a more general sense, one can break down Reader Response theorists into those who concern with the reader's experience and psychology, those who concentrate on the linguistic/rhetorical dynamic of audience, and those who deal with readers as cultural and historical ciphers.

Hans Robert Jauss (1921-97), the German theorist, inspired by the phenomenological method of Husserl and Heidegger's Hermeneutics, gave a historical dimension to reader-oriented criticism by developing a version of Reader Response Criticism known as Reception Theory in his book, *New Literary History*. In this book, Jauss eschewed objectivist views of both literary texts and literary history and endeavoured to attain an agreement between Russian Formalism (which ignores historical and social contexts) and social theories as Marxism (which neglects the text). To him, a text is not simply and passively imbibed by the audience, but on the contrary, the reader makes out the meanings of the text based on his/her cultural background and experience. He exhorted that literature is a "dialogic" entity, a sort of dialogue between the text and the reader; a dialectic process of production and reception; he added that there is always "negotiation" and "opposition" on the part of the reader. "Horizons of expectations", a term developed by Jauss to explain how a reader's "expectations" or frame of reference, is based on the reader's past experience of literature and what preconceived notions about literature the reader possesses (i.e., a reader's aesthetic experience is bound by time and historical determinants). Reader Response Criticism tries to establish these "horizons" by analyzing the literary works of the age in question. Jauss also contended that for a work to be considered a classic it needed to exceed a reader's horizons of expectations. The renowned cultural theorist, Stuart Hall, is one of the main proponents of reception theory; he developed it for media and communication studies from the literary- and history-oriented approaches.

Another leading exponent of German reception theory, **Wolfgang Iser** (1926-2007), drew heavily on the phenomenological aesthetics of Roman Ingarden and the writings of Hans-Georg Gadamer. To him, the literary work is not an object in itself, but an effect to be expounded; the text is the result of the author's intentional acts and it controls reader's responses. In his work, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1976, trans. 1978), Iser posits that all literary texts have "Leerstellen" (blanks/gaps/ lacunae), which have to be filled in or "concretized" by the creative reader to interpret the text. "Implied Reader" is a term used by Wolfgang Iser to describe a hypothetical reader of a text. Such a reader is a "model" or a "role". **The implied reader** "embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect – predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has his roots firmly planted in the structures of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader". The Implied Reader is established by the text itself, who is expected to respond in specific ways to the "response-inviting structures" of the text. While the "**Actual Reader**" is the one whose responses are coloured by his/ her accumulated personal

experiences; one, who receives mental images during the process of reading through the knowledge and experience of one's own. However the implied and actual readers co-exist, and are truly one and the same person, responding to a text in two different ways and levels of consciousness.

Iser also describes the process of first reading, the subsequent development of the text into a 'whole', and how the dialogue between the reader and text takes place. In his study of Shakespeare's histories, in particular *Richard II*, Iser interprets Richard's continually changing legal policy as the expression of his desire for self-assertion. Here, he follows Hans Blumenberg, and attempts to apply his theory of modernity to Shakespeare. He also maintained that there are two poles in a literary work – "the artistic pole" (the text created by the author), and the "aesthetic pole" (the realization accomplished by the reader).

In the 1960s, **David Bleich** began collecting statements from students of their feelings and associations. He based his analysis on classroom teaching of literature, and hold that reading is not determined by the text; instead, reading is a subjective process designed by the distinctive personality of the individual reader. He also claimed that his classes "generated" knowledge, the knowledge of how particular persons recreate texts.

Norman Holland makes use of psychoanalytic analysis of the process of reading. He viewed the subject matter of a work as the projection of the fantasies that constitute the identity of its author. To him, reading is the encounter between the author's and the reader's fantasies; the reader transforms the fantasy content, that constitutes the process of interpretation. He also declared that there is no universally determinate meaning of a particular text.

Harold Bloom, the prominent Yale critic, has been noteworthy for his incorporation of Freudian conceptions of defense mechanisms into the realm of Reader Response Theory. He came up with the idea of "Anxiety of Influence" which defied the hitherto notion of influence that it is direct borrowing or assimilation of materials from earlier writers. Bloom calls a poet a 'belated' one or "ephebe", who is motivated to compose a poem when his imagination is seized upon by a precursor's poem. The "ephebe" has an Oedipal relationship with his/her precursor, a relationship ambivalent, mixed with admiration, hate, envy and fear of the precursor's encroachment into the belated's imaginative space. While reading the precursor's poem, the ephebe distorts it drastically, due to Anxiety of Influence. The struggle of Wordsworth with Milton, Shelley with Wordsworth, and Wallace Stevens with Whitman, are some of the instances given by Bloom. This concept could be related to T.S. Eliot's idea of "Tradition." Bloom Points out six revisionary ratios by which one read precursor's poem (clinamen, tessera, kenosis, daemonization, askesis and apophrades); he also holds that even the best belated poets can only create a "strong" poem that forms an illusion of originality; all readings are, hence, misreadings or misprisions. Antithetical criticism means criticism in terms of misreadings that are contrary to what the poet thought.

Transactional analysis, a significant concept in Reader Response Theory, developed by **Louise Rosenblatt**, asserts that meaning is produced in transaction of a reader with a text. As an approach, then, the critic would consider “how the reader interprets the text as well as how the text produces a response in him/ her.” Michael Riffaterre, Jonathan Culler and Terence Hawkes proposed the idea of “literary competence”, which maintains that mere linguistic competence is inadequate to understand literary meaning, and that “literary competence’ is necessary to go beyond the surface meaning of a text.

There are really two kinds of Reader-Response Criticism that could be found in the writings of the American literary theorist, **Stanley Fish**; one is a phenomenological approach and the other is an epistemological theory characteristic of Fish’s later works. The Phenomenological method has much to commend itself to us as it focuses on what happens in the reader’s mind as he or she reads.

Fish applies this method in his early work *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (1967). His thesis in this work is that Milton used a number of literary techniques intentionally to lead the reader into a false sense of security whereupon he would effect a turn from the reader’s expectations in order to surprise the reader with his own prideful self-sufficiency. The supposed intent of Milton was to force the reader to see his own sinfulness in a new light and be forced back to God’s grace, Fish’s thesis is a rather ingenious approach to *Paradise Lost* and to Milton’s (mis)leading of the reader. Fish’s concern at this point in his career was with what “is really happening in the act of reading,” and this is reflected in his compilations of essays entitled *Is There a Text in This Class?*, which explains that members share a particular “reading strategy.”

Each communal strategy creates the “objective” features of a text; hence, no universal “right”/“valid” reading (based on the theory of Social construction of reality or knowledge). Fish defines his own phenomenological approach as “an analysis of the developing responses of the reader in relation to the words as they succeed one another in time.” He deals with what the text does as opposed to what it means. As JF Worthen suggests, much of his work can be seen as a reaction against the Formalism that characterized the age of New Critical theory which held that meaning was embedded in the textual artifact or, as Wimsatt and Beardsley referred to it, “the object”. He suggests that, “the context for the discussion is the question of whether formal features exist prior to and independently of interpretive strategies.”

In the later phase of Fish’s career, his theories evolve into a form of criticism that rejects the author’s intentionality and place meaning solely within the arena of those receiving the text. Thus his theory is sometimes called “reception aesthetics” or “affective stylistics” — the necessary reliance of the critic upon his/her affective responses to the stylistic components of the text; the work and its effect are the same; a text is what it does. Fish claims that it is the interpretive community that creates its own reality. It is the community that invests a text, or for that matter life itself, with meaning. Those who claim that meaning is to be found in some eternal superstructure or substructure of reality, he labels “foundationalists.” Naturally,

because foundationalists comprise their own interpretive communities and interpret through such a grid, they will be opposed to theories such as his own. His theory is epistemological in that it deals not so much with literary criticism (although the implications for such are tremendous) as with how one comes to know.

Reader-response critics hold that, to understand the literary experience or the meaning of a text, one must look to the processes readers use to create that meaning and experience. Traditional, text-oriented critics often think of reader-response criticism as an anarchic subjectivism, allowing readers to interpret a text any way they want. They accuse reader-response critics of observing that the text doesn't exist. Another objection to reader-response criticism is that it fails to account for the text being able to expand the reader's understanding. While readers can, and do put their own ideas and experiences into a work, they are at the same time gaining new understanding through the text. This is something that is generally overlooked in Reader Response Criticism.

PSYCHOANALYSIS

FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS

Psychoanalytic criticism (emerged in the 1960s), the most influential interpretative theory among the series of waves in the post war period is based on the specific premises of the workings of the mind, the instincts and sexuality, developed by the 19th century intellect, Austrian Sigmund Freud (who along with Marx, Darwin and Nietzsche, subverted the centres of Western society by boiling down the human individuality into an animalistic sex drive).

Freud, greatly influenced by the psychiatrists Jean-Martin Charcot (an exponent in hypnosis) and Josef Breuer (pioneer of "talking cure") proposed his theoretical opus, the notion of the unconscious mind (disseminated in his significant works like *The Ego and the Id*, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *Totem and Taboo* etc.), which proved fatal to the Enlightenment ideals, Auguste Comte's Positivism etc., the pivots of Western rationalism. This stream of criticism has become one of the most exciting and challenging areas of literary and cultural studies today.

The relationship between psychoanalysis and literary criticism which spans much of the 20th century is fundamentally concerned with the articulation of sexuality in language. It has moved through three main emphases in its pursuit of the "literary unconscious" — on the author (and its corollary character), on the reader and on the text. It started with Freud's analysis of the literary text as a "symptom of the artist", where the relationship between the author and the text is analogous to dreamers and their dreams.

Later it was remoulded by post-Freudian psychoanalytical Reader Response criticism where the psychological experience of the reader in relation to the text is foregrounded, but contested by CG Jung's "contra-Freud" archetypal criticism which states that the literary'

work is not a focus for the writer's or the reader's personal psychology, but a representation of the relationship between the personal and the collective unconscious, the images, myths, symbols and archetypes of past cultures.

More recently, this theoretical delineation has been reworked in Poststructuralist context by Jacques Lacan, who coupled the dynamic notion of desire with Structuralist Linguistics; this has been influentially innovative as echoed in the Feminist psychoanalytic criticism. The psychoanalytic impetus which is compatible with contemporary concerns of uncertainties of time, subjectivity and meaning gained a new critical currency in Postcolonial studies, where the interest in destabilized borders and identities is very much evident.

Classical/ Freudian Psychoanalysis

The uniqueness of Freud's explorations lies in his attributing to the unconscious a decisive role in the lives of human beings. The unconscious is the repository of traumatic experiences, emotions, unadmitted desires, fears, libidinal drives, unresolved conflicts etc. This unconscious comes into being at an early age, through the expunging of these unhappy psychic events from the consciousness, a process which Freud terms "repression". Repression is crucial to the operations of the unconscious (an idea later developed by Herbert Marcuse). There has been a consistent interest in contemporary literary studies in the unconscious (eg. Frankfurt School's synthesis of Freud and Marx) and the notion and effects of repression linked often with debates on sexuality (eg. Foucault's rejection of Western belief that history of sexuality has been the history of repression).

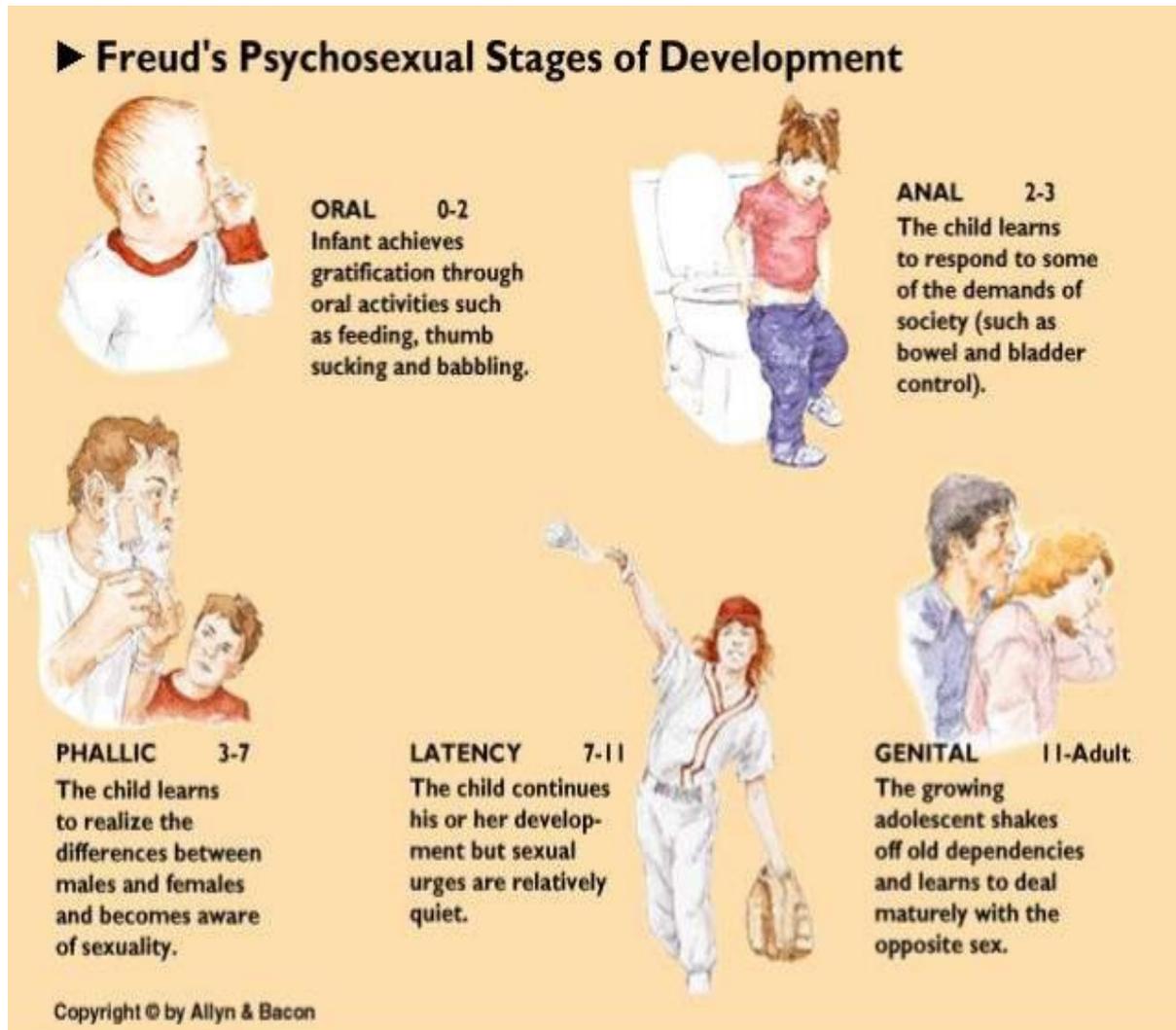
However, Repression does not eliminate our fears, agonies and drives, but it gives them force by making them the organizers of our current experience. Through a similar process called Sublimation the repressed material is promoted into something more grander or is disguised as something noble. For instance, sexual urges may be given sublimated expression in the form of intense religious longings. A related neologism is defence mechanism which is a psychic procedure for avoiding painful admission or, recognition.

A well-known example of this is the Freudian slip, which Freud himself called the "parapraxis" whereby repressed material in the unconscious finds an outlet through such everyday phenomena as slips of the tongue, pen or unintended actions. Thus, for psychoanalysis, the unconscious is not passive reservoir of neutral data, rather it is a dynamic entity that engages us at the deepest level of our being.

Id, Ego, Superego

Later in his career, Freud suggested a tripartite model of the psyche, dividing it into id, ego and superego. The id, being entirely in the unconscious is the most inaccessible and obscure part of our personality. It is the receptacle of our libido, the primary source of our psychic energy. Its function is to fulfill the primordial life principle, which is the pleasure principle. It is entirely without rationality and has a tremendous amorphous kind of vitality. Ego, governed by the reality principle, is defined as the rational governing force of the psyche. It is mostly conscious and protects the individual from the id. It is the site of reason and

introspection. It is the intermediary between the world within (id) and the world outside (superego). The superego, which is another regulatory agent, protects the society from id. It is partly conscious and in moral parlance, can be called as the conscience of the individual. It is governed by the “morality principle” and represses the incestual, sexual passions, aggressiveness etc. Being a repository of pride, self esteem etc., it compels the individual to move towards perfection.



Psychosexual development

Many of Freud’s ideas are concerned with aspects of libido, human sexual drive, which he calls eros and places in opposition to thanatos, the death drive. This is exemplified in his postulate of infantile sexuality. Freud believes that sexuality arrives not at puberty with physical maturing, but in infancy, especially with the infant’s relationship with mother. Drawing from mythology and contemporary ethnography, Freud proposes his theory of psychosexual development (critiqued for its explicit phallogocentrism) in which the infant passes through a series of stages, each defined by an erogenous zone of the body. If the infant is reluctant or unable to move from one stage to another, s/he is said to be fixated at that stage of development. The stages of psychosexual development include:

1) **Oral Stage:** The first stage of Psychosexual development lasts approximately from birth to 2 years. During this stage, the principle source of pleasure for the infant is the mouth and the pleasure is derived through sucking, biting, swallowing etc. A person fixated at this stage will be prone to obsession with oral activities (like eating, drinking, smoking, kissing etc.) and or excessive pessimism, hostility etc. Oral stage ends at the time of weaning and the infant's focus is shifted

2) **Anal Stage:** Here, anus is the prime source of pleasure. Elimination of faeces gives pleasure to the child, but with the onset of toilet training, s/he is forced to postpone or delay this pleasure. a fixation at this stage is identified as the reason for the development of an "anal retentive" personality e described as being stubborn and stingy

3) **Phallic Stage:** Children aged from 4-5 years, seem to spend a good deal of time exploring and manipulating the genitals — their own and others. Pleasure is derived from the phallic region, through behaviours such as masturbation and through fantasies. The basic conflict of the phallic stage centres around the unconscious incestuous desire of the child for the parent of the opposite sex, which is corollary with the child's desire to replace or annihilate the parent of the same sex Out of this conflict, arises one of Freud's theoretical pivots, the Oedipus complex, where the male child conceives the incestuous longing for the mother, and the desire to eliminate the father, his rival. Through both fantasy and overt behaviour, he exhibits his sexual longings for the mother.

The male child's desire to replace his father is accompanied by the fear of his father, which Freud explains in genital terms — Castration anxiety. As his castration fear supersedes his sexual desire for his mother, the latter is repressed, a concept which the psychoanalyst dubs as the "resolution of Oedipal conflict." This resolution incorporates in it, the replacement of the sexual desire for the mother with a more acceptable affection and duping a strong identification with the father, through which he can access a degree of vicarious sexual satisfaction. One of the significant offshoots of Oedipus complex is the formation of the superego ("the heir of the Oedipus complex", in Freud's terminology). Many forms of inter-generational conflict are seen by Freudians as having oedipal overtones, such as professional rivalries, often viewed in Freudian terms as reproducing the competition between siblings for parental favour.

Electra complex, the female version of the phallic conflict (about which Freud was less clear) is more complicated. The girl's first object of love, like the boy, is her mother, for she is the primary source of food, security and affection in infancy (relates to Queer theorists' fascination with the idea that, the first sexual experience of the female is the homosexual). During phallic stage, the father becomes the object of her desire, as she identifies that both her mother and herself are castrated and powerless (a severe critique of this Freudian concept is one of the concerns of Feminist psychoanalysts).

The girl child loves her father for his possession of penis and blames the mother, for the “lack” (a concept theorized further by Lacan) of this organ. The daughter’s love for the father is coupled with a feeling of envy, which Freud calls “penis envy“, the counterpart of boy-child’s castration anxiety.

Freud, though not specific about the resolution of electra complex (as the resolution of girl’s phallic conflict is not so urgent as she is not threatened by castration) suggests that the girl identifies with her mother thus represses her desire for the father. Freud further states that the female heteronormative relationships are tinged with a certain degree of penis-envy as she seeks a surrogate father for such bondings.

If a child is fixated at the phallic stage, or if s/he has an unresolved Eedipal/ Electra complex, such a condition will lead to neurosis, and in turn to a more adverse psychosis.

4) Genital Stage: The final stage of psychosexual development begins at the time of puberty. Even though there are social conflicts, they are minimalised through the use of sublimation.

Dream Work

Freud described dreams as the royal road to the unconscious, as they provide a better understanding of the repressed desires in the unconscious. They are considered as the symbolic fulfillment of the wishes of the unconscious. According to him, dreams are symbolic texts which need to be deciphered, since the watchful ego is at work, even when we are dreaming, The ego scrambles and censors the messages as the unconscious itself adds to this obscurity by its peculiar modes of functioning. Thus the latent dream content is not vividly displayed within the manifest one, but is concealed within complex structures and codes, which is called dreamwork in Freudian neologism.

The dream work includes displacement, whereby one person or event is represented by another which is somehow associated with it (perhaps by a similar sounding word or by some form of symbolic substitutions and condensation whereby, a number of people, events and meanings are combined and represented by a single image in the dream.

For instance, the Roman soldier in the dream might represent the father by a process of association (displacement), as the father is associated with ideas of strictness, authority and power in the domestic sphere, and likewise the soldier is linked to these same ideas in the political sphere.

Several meanings may also be condensed into this symbol. If the dreamer is tempted to rebel against the father by entering into a sexual liaison of which the father would certainly disapprove, then the soldier may represent the envisaged lover. Thus both the feared father and the desired lover are condensed into the single dream figure of the Roman soldier.

The purpose of devices like condensation and displacement are two-fold: primarily they disguise the repressed fears and desires contained in the dream, so that they can get passed

the censor which normally prevents their surfacing into the conscious mind, and secondly, they fashion this material into something which can be represented in a dream, i.e., images, symbols, metaphors. Freudian interpretation, then, has always been of considerable interest to literary critics as the unconscious, like a poem/ novel/play, cannot speak explicitly but does so through images, symbols, metaphors, emblems.

The Freudian critics' analysis of Shakespeare's Hamlet is a commendable attempt. Hamlet's procrastination is attributed to his Oedipus complex, i.e., Hamlet is reluctant to avenge his father's murder as he is guilty of wishing to commit the same crime himself. (The critics also make notice of the death of Shakespeare's father in 1601 and of his son Hamnet, a name identical with Hamlet). Another illustration is MW. Rowe's Freudian reading of Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming* (which is considered a Surrealist farce) given in her article *Pinter's Freudian Hoemcoming*, in which she places Oedipal complex, at the centre of the action.

LACANIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS

The aura created by the Freudian interpretations reached its zenith when the French Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (propelled into this arena by his reading of Freud and Salvador Dali) achieved a place in the literary critical canon. The linguistic, philosophical and political scope of his discourse stirred the Western intelligentsia. His oeuvre reveals a great influence of Parisian figures like the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss and the linguists Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson.

He suggested a new back- to-Freudianism (Return to Freud) with a novel emphasis on the unconscious, as the nucleus of our being, which is the opus of his *Ecrits*. Lacan's Freudian reading primarily involves the realization that the unconscious is to be understood as intimately tied to the functions and dynamics of language. The central pillar of Lacan's psychoanalytic theory is that "the unconscious is structured like a language", which he substantiates in the essay *The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious*.

Lacan draws on Saussure and emphasizes that meaning is a network of differences. As there is a perpetual barrier between the signifier and the signified which is demonstrated with a diagram showing two identical lavatory rooms, one headed "Ladies" and "Gentlemen." This purports to show that same signifier may have different signifieds, so that the correlation between signifiers determine the meanings. Thus Lacan suggests an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier.

Further he argues that the two dreamwork mechanisms identified by Freud, condensation and displacement correspond to the basic poles of language identified by the linguist Roman Jakobson, i.e, metaphor and metonymy. In metonymy one thing represents another by means of the part standing for the whole (For eg. Twenty sail would mean twenty ships). In Freudian dream interpretation, an element in a dream might stand for something else by displacement (For eg. A lover who is Italian might be represented by an Alfa Romeo car).

Lacan says that this is the same as metonymy, the part standing for the whole. In condensation, several things might be compressed into one symbol, just as a metaphor like, “the ship ploughed the waves” condenses onto a single item, two different images, the ship cutting through the sea, and the plough cutting through the soil. The use of these linguistic means of self-expression by the unconscious, is part of Lacan’s evidence for the claim that the unconscious is structured like a language.

The transition section of the essay moves attention, again from the conscious self, which has always been regarded as the primary self, to the unconscious, as the “kernel of our being.” Lacan reverses the Cartesian statement, “I think, therefore, I am,” as “I am, where I think not” (i.e. true selfhood is in the unconscious), thereby challenging the Western philosophical consciousness.

He insists that the Freudian discovery of the unconscious should be followed to its logical conclusion which is the self’s radical ex-centricity to itself. Thus he deconstructs the liberal humanist notion of unique, individual selfhood and the idea of the subject as a stable amalgamation of consciousness. Lacan’s take on self would reject the conventional view on characterization (as the idea of the character rests on the notion of a unique separate self) and the novelistic characters are seen as “assemblages of signifiers clustering round a proper name.”)

Further, Lacan’s view of language (language as fundamentally detached from any referent in the world) defies literary realism since in realist novels, is that the text figures forth the real world for us. Thus a poststructuralist Lacan would suggest a fragmented, allusive text, where it plays with itself, alludes to other texts etc.

Lacan’s foregrounding of the unconscious lends to his speculation of the mechanism whereby an individual emerges into consciousness. Before the sense of self emerges, the young child exists in a realm, which Lacan calls the imaginary (pre-Oedipal), in which there is no distinction between the self and the other and there is an idealized identification with the mother. The child experiences both itself and its environment as a random, fragmented and formless mass.

At some point between six and eight months occurs Mirror Stage (at the formulation of which Lacan was strongly influenced by Heidegger’s notions of ex-sistence and “nothingness” and Sartre’s distinction between subject and ego (as given in his Transcendence of Ego), when the child sees its own reflection in the mirror and begins to conceive itself as being, separate from the rest of the world. Lacan’s mirror stage correspond with Freud’s stage of primary narcissism, when the subject is in love with its own image and its own body, which precedes the love of others. The infant at the same time identifies with and alienates itself from the mirror image. Thus the sense of a unified self is acquired at the price of this self being other, i.e. the mirror image.

For Lacan, the ego emerges at this moment of alienation and fascination with one's own image. The ego is both formed by and takes its form from the organizing and constituting properties of the image. Lacan insists that the ego is based on an illusory image of the wholeness and mastery (as the child in the mirror stage cannot wholly gain mastery and control over its body, in spite of its sense of bodily anatomy and in that sense still fragmented) and it is the function of the ego to maintain this illusion of coherence and mastery. The function of the ego is, in other words, one of mis-recognition (*meconnaissance*) of refusing to accept the truth of fragmentation and alienation.

As the sense of original unity and coherence in the mirror phase is an illusion, there is a fundamental disharmony regarding the ego. The ego is essentially a terrain of conflict and discord, a site of continual struggle. What Lacan refers to as a "lack of being" (which is considered as a cause of desire and is manipulated well by consumer capitalism) is the ontological gap (a notion critiqued by Deleuze and Guattari in their *Anti Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*) or the primary loss at the very core of our subjectivity.

The mirror stage played a crucial role in the dissemination of Lacanian ideas in film and cultural studies (formations proposed by Jean Louis Baudry, Christian Metz, Laura Mulvey's concept of male gaze etc.).

At the "symbolic stage" (based, on which, Kristeva formulated her concept of the "semiotic"), the child enters the language system, concerned with lack and separation, since language names what is not present and substitutes a linguistic sign for it. Within the language, the "subject" (employed by Louis Althusser, in *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* and developed later by Pierre Macherey and Slavoj Zizek) vainly tries to represent itself. The subject is an effect of the signifier put into language. This stage also marks the beginning of socialization, with its prohibitions and restraints, associated with the figure of the father (patriarchy), who disrupts the narcissistic balance between the child and the mother.

Thus the phallus in Lacanian theory is not merely the male genital organ, but a privileged signifier (displaced by Judith Butler by the coinage lesbian phallus in *Bodies That Matter*) as it inaugurates the process of signification. The phallus operates in all the three Lacanian registers –the imaginary, the symbolic and the real.

Lacan's distinction between the symbolic and the imaginary is in corollary with the distinction between the small "other" and the big "Other". The little or the semblable other, inscribed in the imaginary order is a reflection and projection of the ego. The mirror stage sets up the image of the ego as an ideal "I" for the subject, and this ideal "I" becomes the "other" within the subject's experience. This other is both the counterpart or the other people in which the subject perceives a visual likeness and the specular image or the reflection of one's body in the mirror.

The big “Other” inscribed in the symbolic order designates a radical alterity, an otherness transcending the illusory otherness of the imaginary as it cannot be assimilated through identification. Lacan equates this radical alterity with language and law. The other is then, another subject and also the symbolic order which mediates the relationship with that other subject.

In terms of the literary polarization between the realist and the anti-realist symbolic realm would have to be seen as the one found in realist literature, a world of patriarchal order and logic. By contrast, the anti-realist gestures represents the realm of the imaginary, a world in which language gestures beyond itself, beyond logic and text, rather in the way that language often does. The contrast between the imaginary and the symbolic can be seen as analogous to that between poetry and prose. The Lacanian outlook will involve a preference for the kind of literary text in which there are constant eruptions of the imaginary into the symbolic, as in the kind of ‘metafiction’ or ‘magic realism’ in which the novel undercuts and queries its own realism.

A fine example of this kind of work can be seen in the novels of BS. Johnson, a British writer, whose constant textual inventiveness takes the form, of moments when the characters cross-question the author.

The last stage in the formation of psychic structure according to Lacan is the “real”. It is the world as it exists before the mediation of language. The real there can never be truly grasped or engaged with. It is continually mediated through the imaginary and the symbolic.

Though by the late 1970s, psychoanalytic theory had fallen into disrepute owing to its reductionism (reducing all social and cultural phenomena into psycho-sexual explanations), the force of Lacan’s “Return to Freud proved to be a fresh impetus to a broad spectrum of critical orientations like social theory, queer, cultural and film studies. The continuing relevance of Lacanian psychoanalysis rests in its potential to refuse the ideological closure of a unified, harmonious, conflict-free subject or society as well as to analyse the ways in which desire manifests itself through cultural texts.

MODULE 3

MARGINALIZATION: GENDER, ETHNICITY AND THE SUBALTERN

FEMINISM

Feminism as a movement gained potential in the twentieth century, marking the culmination of two centuries' struggle for cultural roles and socio-political rights — a struggle which first found its expression in Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). The movement gained increasing prominence across three phases/waves — the first wave (political), the second wave (cultural) and the third wave (academic). Incidentally Toril Moi also classifies the feminist movement into three phases — the female (biological), the feminist (political) and the feminine (cultural).

The **first wave of feminism**, in the 19th and 20th centuries, began in the US and the UK as a struggle for equality and property rights for women, by suffrage groups and activist organisations. These feminists fought against chattel marriages and for political and economic equality. An important text of the first wave is Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), which asserted the importance of woman's independence, and through the character Judith (Shakespeare's fictional sister), explicated how the patriarchal society prevented women from realising their creative potential. Woolf also inaugurated the debate of language being gendered — an issue which was later dealt by Dale Spender who wrote *Man Made Language* (1981), Helene Cixous, who introduced *écriture féminine* (in *The Laugh of the Medusa*) and Julia Kristeva, who distinguished between the symbolic and the semiotic language.

The **second wave of feminism** in the 1960s and '70s, was characterized by a critique of patriarchy in constructing the cultural identity of woman. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) famously stated, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" – a statement that highlights the fact that women have always been defined as the "Other", the lacking, the negative, on whom Freud attributed "penis-envy." A prominent motto of this phase, "The Personal is the political" was the result of the awareness .of the false distinction between women's domestic and men's public spheres. Transcending their domestic and personal spaces, women began to venture into the hitherto male dominated terrains of career and public life. Marking its entry into the academic realm, the presence of feminism was reflected in journals, publishing houses and academic disciplines.

Mary Ellmann's *Thinking about Women* (1968), Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1969), Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and so on mark the major works of the phase. Millett's work specifically depicts how western social institutions work as covert ways of manipulating power, and how this permeates into literature, philosophy etc. She undertakes a thorough critical understanding of the portrayal of women in the works of male authors like DH Lawrence, Norman Mailer, Henry Miller and Jean Genet.

In the **third wave** (post 1980), Feminism has been actively involved in academics with its interdisciplinary associations with Marxism, Psychoanalysis and Poststructuralism, dealing with issues such as language, writing, sexuality, representation etc. It also has associations with alternate sexualities, postcolonialism (Linda Hutcheon and Spivak) and Ecological Studies (Vandana Shiva)

Elaine Showalter, in her *Towards a Feminist Poetics* introduces the concept of **gynocriticism**, a criticism of gynotexts, by women who are not passive consumers but active producers of meaning. The gynocritics construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, and focus on female subjectivity, language and literary career. Patricia Spacks' *The Female Imagination*, Showalter's *A Literature of their Own*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Mad Woman in the Attic* are major gynocritical texts.

The present day feminism in its diverse and various forms, such as liberal feminism, cultural/radical feminism, black feminism/womanism, materialist/neo-marxist feminism, continues its struggle for a better world for women. Beyond literature and literary theory, Feminism also found radical expression in arts, painting (Kiki Smith, Barbara Kruger), architecture (Sophia Hayden the architect of Woman's Building) and sculpture (Kate Millett's *Naked Lady*).

QUEER THEORY

Queer theory's origin is hard to clearly define, since it came from multiple critical and cultural contexts, including feminism, post-structuralist theory, radical movements of people of color, the gay and lesbian movements, AIDS activism, many sexual subcultural practices such as sadomasochism, and postcolonialism.

Although queer theory had its beginnings in the educational sphere, the cultural events surrounding its origin also had a huge impact. Activist groups pushed back in the 1980's against the lack of government intervention after the outbreak of the AIDS epidemic. Gay activist groups like ACT-UP and Queer Nation took the lead to force attention to both the AIDS epidemic and the gay and lesbian community as a whole. These groups helped define the field with the work they did by highlighting a non-normative option to the more traditional identity politics and marginal group creations.

Queer theory as an academic tool came about in part from gender and sexuality studies that in turn had their origins from lesbians and gay studies and feminist theory. It is a much newer theory, in that it was established in the 1990s, and contests many of the set ideas of the more established fields it comes from by challenging the notion of defined and finite identity categories, as well as the norms that create a binary of good versus bad sexualities. Queer theorists contention is that there is no set normal, only changing norms that people may or may not fit into, making queer theorists' main challenge to disrupt binaries in hopes that this will destroy difference as well as inequality.

The term “queer theory” itself came from Teresa de Lauretis’ 1991 work in the feminist cultural studies journal *differences* titled “Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities.” She explains her term to signify that there are at least three interrelated projects at play within this theory: refusing heterosexuality as the benchmark for sexual formations, a challenge to the belief that lesbian and gay studies is one single entity, and a strong focus on the multiple ways that race shapes sexual bias. De Lauretis proposes that queer theory could represent all of these critiques together and make it possible to rethink everything about sexuality.

One of the key concepts in queer theory is the idea of “heteronormativity,” which pertains to “the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent—that is, organized as a sexuality—but also privileged” (Berlant). Heteronormativity is a worldview that promotes heterosexuality as the normal and/or preferred sexual orientation, and is reinforced in society through the institutions of marriage, taxes, employment, and adoption rights, among many others. Heteronormativity is a form of power and control that applies pressure to both straight and gay individuals, through institutional arrangements and accepted social norms.

Some of the core theorists in the development of queer theory include Michael Foucault, Gayle Rubin, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Judith Butler. Michael Foucault’s work on sexuality said that it was a discursive production rather than an essential part of a human, which came from his larger idea of power not being repressive and negative as productive and generative. In other words, power acts to make sexuality seem like a hidden truth that must be dug out and be made specific. Foucault refuses to accept that sexuality can be clearly defined, and instead focuses on the expansive production of sexuality within governments of power and knowledge.

Gayle Rubin’s essay “Thinking Sex” is often identified as one of the fundamental texts, and it continues Foucault’s rejection of biological explanations of sexuality by thinking about the way that sexual identities as well as behaviors are hierarchically organized through systems of sexual classifications. She demonstrates in her essay the way that certain sexual expressions are made more valuable than others, and by doing that, allowing those who are outside of these parameters to be oppressed. Rubin also argued against the feminist belief that through gender, sexuality was obtained or the belief that gender and sexuality are the same.

Rubin laying the groundwork to start discussion about making a distinction between gender and sexuality led the way for **Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s** pioneering book *Epistemology of the Closet*. In this book, she argues that the homo-hetero difference in the modern sexual definition is vitally disjointed for two reasons: that homosexuality is thought to be part of a minority group, and how homosexuality is gendered to be either masculine or feminine. She points out that the definitions of sexuality depend a lot on the gender of the romantic partner one makes, making the assumption that the gender one has and the gender of the person one is attracted to make up the most important element of sexuality. Sedgwick’s examples of sexual variations that cannot be put into the discrete locations created by the binary set

between heterosexuality and homosexuality give room to further analyze the way sex-gender identities are shaped and thought about.

The theorist most commonly identified with studying the prevailing understandings of gender and sex is **Judith Butler**, who draws much from Foucault's ideas but with a focus on gender. She argues in her book *Gender Trouble* that gender, like sexuality, is not an essential truth obtained from one's body but something that is acted out and portrayed as "reality". She argues that the strict belief that there is a "truth" of sex makes heterosexuality as the only proper outcome because of the coherent binary created of "feminine" and "masculine" and thus creating the only logical outcome of either being a "male" or "female." Butler makes the case that **genderperformativity** could be a strategy of resistance with examples such as drag, cross-dressing, and the sexual nonrealistic depiction of butch and femme identities that poke fun at the laid out gender norms in society. In her later book, *Undoing Gender*, Butler makes it clear that performativity is not the same as performance. She explains that gender performativity is a repeated process that ultimately creates the subject as a subject. Butler's work brings to light the creation of gender contesting the rigidity of the hierarchical binaries that exist and is what makes her work invaluable in queer theory.

Implications of Queer Theory:

Analyzing with a queer perspective has the potential to undermine the base structure on which any identity relies on (although it does this without completely destroying or forsaking categories of identity), the theory has been understood to be just about questions of sexuality. This perception that queer theory is solely about sexuality has been opposed by having an intersectional approach that starts off with the hypothesis that sexuality cannot be disconnected from the other categories of social status and identity. This allows queer theory to become interdisciplinary and thus create new ways of thinking in how sexuality shapes and is shaped by other factors.

A subfield of LGBT studies, **Transgender Studies** provides an interdisciplinary approach to gender studies, gay and lesbian studies, and sexology by studying the intersections of sex and gender as related to cultural representations, lived experience, and political movements. Interdisciplinary subfields of transgender studies include transgender history, transgender literature and film, transgender anthropology and archaeology, transgender psychology, and transgender health. The researches theories within transgender studies focus on cultural presentations, political movements, social organizations and the lived experience of various forms of gender nonconformity. The discipline emerged in the early 90s in close connection to queer theory. Other non-transgender-identified peoples are often also included under the "trans" umbrella for transgender studies, such as intersex people, crossdressers, drag artists, third gender individuals and genderqueer people.

The transgender studies provide responses to negative points of views about transgender people. Those negatives misconceptions could be the narrow and inaccurate transgender state in psychology and medicine, etc. The ultimate goal of transgender studies is to provide knowledge that will benefit the transgender people and communities

THE SUBALTERN

In the last two decades of the 20th century, Subaltern Studies, postcolonial theory and criticism gained momentum, especially, as a corollary to globalisation in the Third World countries. If postcolonial criticism is taken as an offshoot of postmodernism, subaltern studies derives its force from Marxism, poststructuralism and becomes a part of the postcolonial criticism.

“Subaltern”, meaning “of inferior rank”, is a term adopted by **Antonio Gramsci** to refer to those working class people in Soviet Union who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include peasants, workers and other groups denied access to hegemonic power. Gramsci was interested in the historiography of the subaltern ‘classes’.

In *Notes on Italian History*, he outlined a six-point plan for studying the history of the subaltern classes which include: 1) their objective formation; 2) their active and passive affiliation to the dominant political formations; 3) the birth of new parties and dominant groups; 4) the formations that the subaltern groups produce to press their claims; and 5) new formations within the old framework that assert the autonomy of the subaltern classes; and other points referring to trade unions and political parties.

Gramsci claimed that the history of the subaltern classes was just as complex as the history of the dominant classes, although the history of the latter is that which is accepted as the “official” history. For him, the history of the subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic, since they are always subject to the activity of the ruling groups, even when they rebel.

The term has been adopted to postcolonial studies from the work of the Subaltern Studies Group, a team of historians, who aimed to promote systematic discussion of subaltern themes in South Asian studies. It is used in Subaltern Studies as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society, whether this is expressed in terms of class, gender race etc. The group was formed by Ranajit Guha and included Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Gyanendra Pandey. The group has produced 5 volumes of Subaltern Studies – essays relating to the history, politics, economics and sociology of subalternity as well as the attitudes, ideologies and belief systems. In other words, Subaltern Studies defined itself as an attempt to allow the people to speak within the pages of elitist historiography, and in so doing, to speak for, or to sound the muted voices of the truly oppressed. The group’s seminal essays *Selected Subaltern Studies* (1988) was edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak, with a foreword by Edward Said.

The concept of the “subaltern” gained increased prominence and currency with Gayatri Spivak’s *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1985) which was a commentary on the work of the Subaltern Studies Group, questioning and exposing their patronizing attitude. Contradictory to the stereotyping tendencies found in Said’s *Orientalism* and other similar texts, which presume the colonial oppression as monolithic, Spivak adapts Derridean deconstructive techniques to point out the different forms of subject formations and “othering.” Much of Spivak’s ideas are informed by her interactions with ‘the Subaltern Studies Group, including Ranajit Guha and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Spivak suggests that it is impossible to recover the voice of the subaltern, hinting at the unimaginable extent of colonial repression and its historical intersection with patriarchy — which she illustrates with particular reference to colonial debates on widow immolation in India. As observed by scholars like Lata Mani, in the colonial discussions on the practice of Sati, the Indian widow is absent as a subject and that the subject is denied a space to speak from. She suggests that elite native men have found a way to “speak”, but for those, further down the hierarchy, self representation is almost impossible.

Spivak challenges the intellectuals’ and the postcolonial historians’ assumption that the voices and perspectives of the oppressed can be recovered. She therefore suggests that such intellectuals adapt the Gramscian maxim — “pessimism, of the intellect, optimism of the will” — by combining the philosophical skepticism about recovering the subaltern agency, with a political commitment of representing the marginalized. She effectively warns the postcolonial critics against homogenizing and romanticizing the subaltern subject.

However, Spivak’s insistence on subaltern “silence” has been attacked by Benita Parry, in her critique of Spivak’s reading of Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* as ‘deliberate deafness to the native voice, where it can be heard.’ Parry suggests that such deafness arises out of Spivak’s theory of subaltern silence which attributes “absolute power to the hegemonic discourse. Parry goes along with Homi Bhabha in asserting that the colonists’ text contains a native voice, though an ambivalent one. The colonial text’s hybridity in the words of Bhabha means that the subaltern has spoken.

The historian of modern India, Gyan Prakash, points out that the subaltern studies project derives its force as postcolonial criticism from a combination of Marxism, post-structuralism, postmodernism, Gramsci and Foucault, the modern West and India, archival research and textual criticism. Subaltern Studies borrows postmodernist ideas and methods for textual analysis. Postmodernism cannot be understood without a reference to capitalism. Therefore, postcolonial criticism must also be explained in terms of capitalism and neo-colonialism.

Members of the Subaltern Studies group felt that although Marxist historians produced impressive and pioneering studies, their claim to represent the history of the masses remained debatable. Their main thesis is that colonialist, nationalist and Marxist interpretations of Indian history had robbed the common people of their agency. The subaltern studies

collective thus announced a new approach to restore agency to the subordinated, in order to rectify the elitist bias characteristic of much academic work in South Asian studies. The subaltern's agency was restored by theorizing that the elite in India played a dominant role and not simply a hegemonic one. Thus, with the logic of this theory, the subaltern were made into autonomous historical actors, who then seemingly acted on their own, since , they were not seen to be led by the elite.

At the same time, Subaltern Studies differed from Western historian's attempts to write "history from below." British workers left their diaries behind for British historians to find their voice in, but Indian workers and peasants did not leave behind any "original, authentic" voices. Therefore, to find Indian subaltern voices, subaltern studies had to use different methods, of reading the available documents, i.e, read them "against their grain." In the process of pursuing this goal, subaltern studies concentrated more and more on how subalternity was constituted rather than finding their voices.

Other subalternist writings on elite/colonial discourse includes David Arnold's work on the Indian body, disease and medicine; Gyanendra Pandey 's critique of the "construction of communalism in colonial North India" and Bernard Cohn's essay on language and colonial command. Subaltern theorists of the nation and modernity such as Partha Chatterjee, Sudipta Kaviraj and Dipesh Chakrabarty maintain that "the Indian nation is not an object of discovery but an invention." Narratives of the nation conceal inconsistencies, ideological contradictions, fissures and ruptures in the national fabric, and present the picture of a unified nation. This homogenizing of the narratives of the nation coincide with the grand narratives of the triumph of modernity.

Spivak points out that, by such a practice, the oppressed are being more silenced, in that, s/he cannot/does not speak, but is spoken for. The subaltern consciousness is a construction of the elite discourse and it is due to this discourse that their marginality is sustained. Robert J.C. Young, in his commentary on Spivak, observes that subaltern woman has her identity only within the patriarchal and imperialist discourse. Spivak, in a later work, *French Feminism in an International Frame* (1987) discusses the irony of the French Feminists, in their investigation of issues faced by the Third World women.

DALIT LITERATURE

Dalit literature has established itself as a separate category of writing in many of the Indian languages. Several writings under this category have emerged as a strong voice of Dalit communities in different literatures over the last five decades. The impact of Dalit writers and writings has also compelled the literary associations and academics to recognize as a separate category of literature and reward it through several means. All major universities in India have given place to Dalit literature in its curriculum and research agenda of literature departments. It is, therefore, pertinent to explore the concept, features and origin of Dalit literature in India.

However, in order to understand the nature and contributions of Dalit literature, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the term “Dalit”. The word Dalit is derived from Sanskrit language and, etymologically, it means “ground”, “suppressed”, “crushed” or “broken to pieces”. Hence, by connotation, the term Dalit is used as an adjective or noun to describe the people or communities that have remained down-trodden or at the margins of society throughout India’s long social history. The famous 19th century social reformer and protagonist of the interests of Dalits in Maharashtra Jyotiba Phule first used this term in the context of the exploitation of the people who were conventionally called “shudra” and “outcaste” Hindus. Even as the term Dalit refers mainly to such caste groups; essentially, it is not a caste-indicative term. It only refers to such people and communities that are historically and structurally suppressed and excluded from the mainstream of society. Dalit is not a caste but a socio-economic category of discriminated people belonging to many castes and social groups speaking many languages.

The word Dalit was also used later as a Hindi and Marathi translation of the official term “depressed classes” that the British government used to describe what is now called the Scheduled Castes. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar used the term to give a new, respectful and empowering identity to the so-called “untouchable” castes in preference to the term 'Harijan' (children of God - a word borrowed from the Bhajans of the medieval Gujarati poet Narsinh Mehta) suggested by Gandhi and which was found to be a patronizing word. However, the term Dalit came into widespread use only in the 1970’s with reference to the political mobilization by parties representing interests of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and all other such groups that were discriminated and exploited on the basis of birth-based identity or economic reasons. A more expanded idea of Dalit also includes classes like landless labour, minorities and all others who are poor. However, such wide definition of the word Dalit is likely to make it irrelevant for social analysis.

Literature written by the members of the Dalit communities or the literature that is specifically written to represent the typical social, historical and cultural aspects of the Dalit communities is described as Dalit literature. It is the literature of explicit social commitment aimed at promoting ideas of social equality, justice and resistance to suffering, discrimination and economic exploitation.

History of Dalit Literature: Though there have been several Dalit writers and poets during the medieval times (11th century Kannad poet Madara Chennaih, Dalit saint Kalavee, Sant Kabir and others), the modern movement for Dalit literature in India began from Maharashtra and in Marathi language in the 1960s when the Maharashtra Dalit Sahitya Sangh was established as an alternative platform to the mainstream Marathi literature. It was inspired by the ideology of Jyotiba Phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar. The movement of the African Americans led by Martin Luther King and activities of black panthers as also the “Little Magazine” movement as the voice of the marginalised proved to be a background trigger for resistance literature of Dalits in India.

Even prior to the 1960s, writers like Baburao Bagul, Bandhu Madhav, Shankarao Kharat, Narayan Surve, Anna Bhau Sathe were expressing Dalit concerns and issues in their literature. Baburao Bagul (1930–2008) is considered as a pioneer of Marathi Dalit writings in Marathi. His collection of short stories titled *Jevha MiJat Chorali (When I Concealed My Caste)* published in 1963 shook the traditional foundations of Marathi literature with its radical depiction of social exploitation. Subsequently, Namdeo Dhasal (who founded an organization called Dalit Panther) further consolidated and expanded the Dalit literature movement in India. Litterateurs like Laxman Gaekwad, Laxman Pawar, Daya Pawar, Waman Nimbalkar, Tryambak Sapkale, Arun Dangle, Umakant Randhir, J. V. Pawar, Tarachandra Khandekar, Yogiraj Waghmare, Avinash Dolas, Kishore Shantabai Kale, Narendra Jadhav, Yogendra Meshram, Bhimrao Shirvale etc. became prominent voices of Dalit writing in Marathi. Many of the Dalit writings have also been translated into English and published as part of the anthologies of Dalit writings.

The movement for Dalit literature has later spread to other languages like Gujarati, Kannad, Punjabi, Hindi, Malayalam and Bengali. Dalit literature has used all literary forms – poetry, short stories, novels, plays and autobiographies in various languages. Nirav Patel, Joseph Makwan, Dalat Chauhan, Harish Mangalam, Mohan Parmar, B. N. Vankar, Yashwant Vaghela, Chandu Maheria etc. in Gujarati, Bama in Tamil, Omprakash Valmiki in Hindi and many more have contributed to the Dalit literature.

Features of Dalit Literature: Dalit literature is characterized by its fundamental criticism of the caste system and all kinds of discrimination and by its call for destroying social hierarchies. It is the literature of social and political commitment that challenges the status quo. It is the literature of questioning the exclusion from the mainstream of society and culture. It is the literature that promotes equality and human dignity. Most Dalit writers also believe that the principal purpose of writing literature is to bring about social change rather than recreation or mere intellectual sophistry. As Baburao Bagul wrote, “Dalit Sahitya is not a literature of vengeance. Dalit Sahitya is not a literature which spreads hatred. Dalit Sahitya first promotes man’s greatness and man’s freedom and for that reason it is an historic necessity... Anguish, waiting, pronouncements of sorrow alone do not define Dalit Sahitya. We need literature heroically full of life to create a new society.”

By its very nature, Dalit literature remains at the margin as it challenges mainstream. This literature is more realistic than romantic and is unified in by the portrayal of discrimination and exploitation. Dalit writers are severely critical of the silence of the mainstream literature about surrounding social realities and their romanticisation of Indian society and its hierarchies. Even when higher caste writers have voiced concerns about Dalit communities, they are seen as condescending in nature and aimed at blunting Dalit resistance and amalgamating Dalits in mainstream society. Hence, writers like Mulkraj Anand, Sane Guruji, or Sivshankar Pillai who wrote works dominantly highlighting Dalit anguish were not considered representative of genuine Dalit consciousness and purpose. Dalit writers have used such language and slang expressions that are generally considered unacceptable and colloquial by the mainstream

writers. Dalit writers have also begun to theorise and evolve ideas of criticism of literature from Dalit perspectives.ⁱⁱⁱ Dalit literature reflects both Marxist and Ambedkarite ideological influences in its content.

Overall, one can say that Dalit literature in India has grown both in quantity and quality and made sufficient impact to shake up the mainstream literature. The realities and experiences that have not been reflected in other literatures find a central place in Dalit literature. It has effectively challenged the Brahmanical hegemony in society and literature and empowered the Dalit masses for asserting their rights and for expressing their anguish. In this sense, it has contributed not just to literature but also to identify formation at societal level. Dalit literature has also begun to give space for separate sub-category of women writers from Dalit communities. However, at the same time, the critics believe that in asserting the realities of society Dalit literature has become stereotypical and predictable. Also, it is seen as excluding itself from some of the valuable trends and aesthetic aspects of mainstream literature that deals with more universal human emotions and their creative expression.

MODULE 4

THE CULTURAL APPROACHES

POSTCOLONIALISM

A critical analysis of the history, culture, literature and modes of discourse on the Third World countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean Islands and South America, postcolonialism concerns itself with the study of the colonization (which began as early as the Renaissance), the decolonization (which involves winning back and reconstituting the native cultures), and the neocolonising process (an aftermath of postmodernism and late capitalism, when multinational corporations control the world). Focussing on the omnipresent power struggles between cultures and the intersection of cultures which results in multiculturalism and polyvalency of culture, Postcolonialism analyses the metaphysical, ethical and political concerns about cultural identity, gender, nationality, race, ethnicity, subjectivity, language and power.

Influenced by the poststructuralist and postmodern idea of decentering, postcolonial literary criticism undermines the universalist claims of literature, identifies colonial sympathies in the canon, and replaces the colonial metanarratives with counter-narratives of resistance, by rewriting history and asserting cultural identities through strategies such as separatism, nativism, cultural syncretism, hybridity, mimicry, active participation and assimilation. Backed by an anti-essentialist notion of identity and culture, it critiques cultural hierarchies and the Eurocentrism of modernity. The major theoretical works in postcolonial theory include *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) by Franz Fanon, *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said, *In Other Worlds* (1987) by Gayatri Spivak, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) by Bill Ashcroft et al, *Nation and Narration* (1990) by Homi K Bhabha, and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) by Edward Said. In literature, indigenous people from previously colonised and marginalised countries have increasingly found their voices, attempting to assert their own visions, tell their own stories and reclaim their experiences and histories.

With the objective of locating the modes of representation where Europeans constructed natives in politically prejudiced ways, postcolonial criticism intends to unveil such literary figures, themes and representatives that have enforced imperial ideology, colonial domination and continuing Western hegemony. It endeavours to probe beneath the obvious and apparently universal/aesthetic/humanist themes in order to reveal their racial, gendered, imperial assumptions. Postcolonial critics reinterpret and examine the values of literary texts, by focussing on the contexts in which they were produced, and reveal the colonial ideologies that are concealed within. Such approaches are exemplified in Chinua Achebe's rereading, of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Edward Said's rereading of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Sara Suleri's rereading of Kipling's *Kim*, Homi K Bhabha's rereading of Forster's *A Passage to India*. They seek to identify the gaps and fissures within the discourse that provide the native with means of resistance and subversion, and the dissenting colonial with means of articulating opposition.

Key Concepts in Postcolonialism

Othering: Othering involves two concepts — the “Exotic Other” and the “Demonic Other.” The Exotic Other represents a fascination with the inherent dignity and beauty of the primitive/undeveloped other, as delineated in Yeats’ Byzantium poems; while the Demonic Other is represented as inferior, negative, savage and evil as is described in novels like *Heart of Darkness* and *A Passage to India*.

Diaspora: Diaspora refers to people who have been displaced or dispersed from their homelands, and who possess and share a collective memory and myth, and the nostalgic reminiscence of “home” (“imaginary homelands,” to use Rushdie’s term) or an inherited ideology of “home” becomes a personal identity as well as a collective identity of members of a particular community. They are not rooted in one location, and live in the memories of their “Imagined homelands.” In the new geographical location, they negotiate their culture and that of the host nation. Indian diasporic experience, for instance, has been extensively documented by authors like Bharati Mukherjee, Meena Alexander, Menon Marath, Dom Moraes, Farrukh Dhondy, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, and many others. Diasporic theorists such as Avtar Brah and Robin Cohen propose the idea of a home as a mythic one, a place of desire in the diasporic imagination, a place to which there can be no return, despite the possibilities of visiting the place that is seen as the place of origin.

Hybridity/ Syncretism: The Schizophrenic state of the migrant as s/he attempts to combine the culture of origin with that of the host country, without abandoning either is called ‘Hybridity’ or ‘Syncretism’. The central theme in postcolonial diasporic literature is the negotiation of two identities — the split consciousness of being both, yet neither completely; the multiple identities or solidarities; or in extreme cases, reassertion of native cultural identity as manifest in cultural fundamentalism. Hybridity in postcolonial studies has been influenced by the work of political theorists like Will Kymlicka who posits a “multicultural citizenship” in the globalised world. This leads to the emergence of new identities where the original identity, historical experiences and memories are not abandoned but is constructively merged with the host culture, to move beyond the “constructed” limits of both, forging solidarities against essential racial oppression. Cultural theorists such as Stuart Hall have argued for “new ethnicities” that deny ideas of essential black or essential white identity, proposing a “real heterogeneity of interests and identities.”

Double Consciousness: A major concept formulated by W.E.B. Du Bois, double consciousness echoes Frantz Fanon’s contention of the divided self in *Black Skin, White Masks* that the black always sees himself through the eyes of the white. Du Bois described double consciousness as “two souls, two thoughts... in one dark body”, which Meena Alexander later altered as “many souls, many thoughts... in one dark body”— pointing to the migrant’s experience in multiple subject positions — a recurrent theme in the writings of Ben Okri, Amitav Ghosh, Derek Walcott, Salman Rushdie, Caryl Phillips and others.

Subaltern: Subaltern is a term introduced by Antonio Gramsci to refer to the working class, and used and popularized by Gayatri Spivak in the postcolonial context, in *Can the Subaltern Speak?*. In this essay, Spivak raises issues about the voice of the subaltern in rebellion against the colonizer, and the authenticity of the voice of the subaltern — whether s/he speaks or is spoken for? Thus Spivak ridicules the hypocrisy of postcolonial discourses that claim to raise the voices of hitherto unheard, while they inadvertently serve to perpetuate the marginality and the subalternity of the oppressed. Spivak's essay was a critique of the work of the Subaltern Studies group including Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Shahid Amin and others.

Mimicry: Mimicry demonstrates an ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The colonized subject mimics the colonizer by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, language, attire, values etc. In doing so, he mocks and parodies the colonizer. Mimicry therefore locates a crack in the certainty of colonial dominance, an uncertainty in its control of the behaviour of the colonized. Homi Bhabha notes that mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced “as almost the same, but not quite” — it contains both mockery and a menace; it reveals the limitations in the authority of the colonial discourse, almost as though the colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction.

History: Writing in the wake of decolonization, after long years of imperial suppression and effacement of identity, the writers of the Third World nations are increasingly interested and keen on writing about their native histories, problems of colonization; they have written case studies of cultural colonization, native identity and anti-colonial resistance. Anti-colonial writing of the first phase is thus of the culturalist nationalist variety — embodied in movements like Negritude, Africanite, and African Aesthetic. These struggles were aimed at liberating themselves at the individual as well as the colonial level, from colonial attitudes and forms of thinking. The postcolonial obsession with history, closely linked with the overarching goal of decolonization, addresses issues such as 1) interrogating the effects of colonialism, especially in terms of cultural alienation; 2) the anti-colonial struggles of the Third World and the rise of nationalism; 3) the creation of mimic men in the colonial culture; 4) the appropriation of history by the colonial master; 5) attempts to retrieve and re-write their own histories by the formerly colonized cultures; and 6) modes of representations. Retrieving history for a postcolonial culture invariably includes an intense awareness that native history without colonial contamination is not possible. The Subaltern Studies project seeks to discover, beneath the layers of colonial historiography, the local resistance to colonialism. It is a history from below, utilizing resources in native languages and non-colonial forms of history-recording such as folksongs, ballads etc.

Nation: The postcolonial writers are conscious of their role in nation-building. In postcolonial literature, the nation-building project seeks to erase the colonial past by rejecting and resisting the Western constructions of the “other” as primitive, savage, demonic etc. and by seeking to retrieve a pre-colonial past that would help them redefine a nation and project a destiny and future. However, the postcolonial methodologies and epistemologies are almost always mediated and manipulated by Western ones, and the native realizes that the destiny of

the postcolony is not as ideal as had been dreamt of earlier. Postcolonialism brings with it a new process of exclusion, marginalization and “subalternisation”, as Gyanendra Pandey argues, “minorities. are constituted along with the nation”, and a continuation of colonialism through the formation of elites. Literature of postcoloniality that constitutes nationhood emphasizes the modes of constructing, imagining and representing the nation, the role of locality, space, community, religion, Oiritality, cultural identity and the politics of nativism in the making of a national identity.

Race: According to Michael Banton, race is a concept that has been the basis of discrimination and disempowerment. Race has become a central category in social, political and cultural theory. Critical race studies, which includes studies of race in literature and culture, ethnicity studies, studies of minority literatures, and specific traditions in literature and philosophy, explicitly addresses questions of race and racial discrimination. Issues of race and ethnicity lead to collective, communal identities and have a larger political and social significance. The political reading/ critical practice of racial studies has had significant impact within Cultural Studies, Media Studies, Black British Studies, Asian American Studies etc. The race turn has also been instrumental in the development of cultural movements like Black Arts and Harlem Renaissance. W.E.B, Du Bois in his writings like *The Souls of Black Folk* criticizes the scientific racism — Eugenics, Social Darwinism and Nazism — which gives rise to “biological discrimination!” He also argued that racism was socially constructed, that it emerged through social discourses and practices and was not scientifically demonstrable.

Gender: Postcolonial gender discourse discusses the double colonization of women by both imperialism and patriarchy. In postcolonial literature, gender and sexuality have become prominent themes in the last decades of the 20th century. Gender and the role of women in the postcolonial countries have been the focus in the writings of Anita Desai, Ama Ata Aidoo., Suniti Namjoshi, Buchi Emecheta, and Nawal El Saadawi. The linkage between gender and the racial/ethnic identities has been the subject of numerous autobiographical writings by native Canadian and African-American women like Gloria Anzaldua and Maria Campbell. Postcolonial gender studies examine how class, caste, economy, political empowerment and literacy have contributed to the condition of women in the Third World countries, Another interesting area of study is the impact of “First World Feminism” on Third World writers while exploring the possibilities of Third World Feminism.

Black Feminism: The domination of the black male in the civil rights movement and the white woman in the feminist propaganda necessitated the emergence of Black Feminism detailing the inextricable connection between sexism and racism. Alice Walker’s *Womanism*, Angela Davis’ *Women, Race and Class* and Kimberle Crenshaw’s *Identity Politics* discusses the marginalized, intersectional plight of the Black women. The Black feminist lesbian organisation, Combahee River Collective, started by activists like Barbara Smith, is ideologically separated from “white feminism.” The CRC questions conventional social hierarchy with the white man at the centre and began creating

theory which spoke of the combination of problems, sexism, racism etc. that they had been battling.

Neocolonialism: Neocolonialism refers to the continuing economic dominance and exploitation of the “politically-free” Third World countries by the European imperial powers. Neocolonialism is most often achieved not merely through state control by Euro-American powers, but by a nexus between politicians, bankers, generals, and the Chief Executive officers. International aid and developmental initiatives are very often aligned with economic policy diktats that disable Third World economies. Neocolonialism, therefore, is a more dangerous form of colonialism.

MARXISM, LITERATURE AND CULTURE

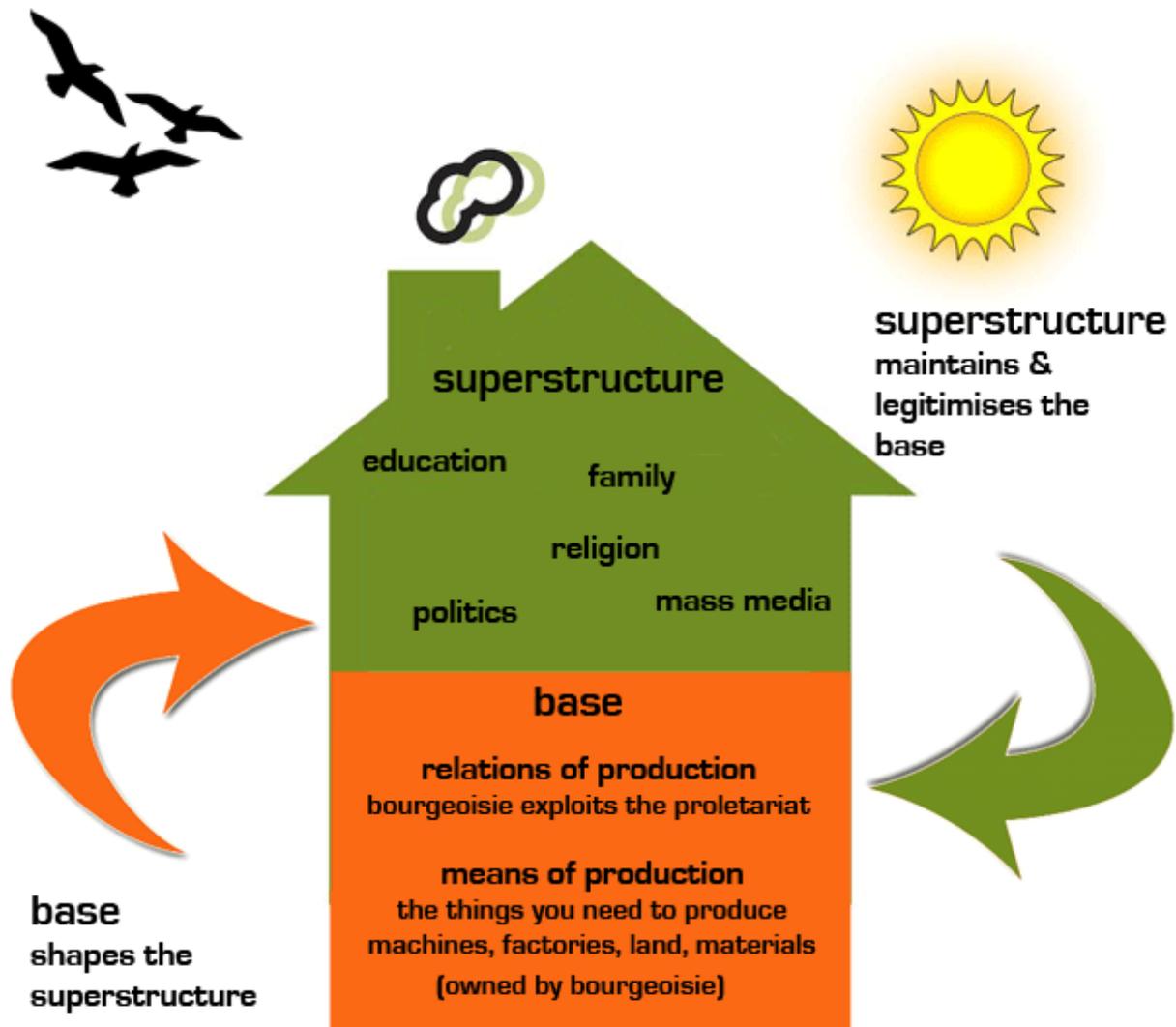
Marxism is a materialist philosophy which tried to interpret the world based on the concrete, natural world around us and the society we live in. It is opposed to idealist philosophy which conceptualizes a spiritual world elsewhere that influences and controls the material world. In one sense it tried to put people’s thought into reverse gear as it was a total deviation from the philosophies that came before it. Karl Marx himself has commented on this revolutionary nature of Marxism, “The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.” It is true that while other philosophies tried to understand the world, Marxism tried to change it.

Classical Marxism: Basic Principles

According to Marxism, society progresses through the struggle between opposing forces. It is this struggle between opposing classes that result in social transformation. History progresses through this class struggle. Class struggle originates out of the exploitation of one class by another throughout history. During the feudal period the tension was between the feudal lords and the peasants, and in the Industrial age the struggle was between the capitalist class (the bourgeoisie) and the industrial working class (the proletariat). Classes have common interests. In a capitalist system the proletariat is always in conflict with the capitalist class. This confrontation, according to Marx, will finally result in replacing the system by socialism.

Another important concept used by Marx was the dialectic which was originally developed by the 18th century German philosopher Hegel. Hegel was an idealist philosopher who used this term to refer to the process of emergence of new ideas through the confrontation of opposing ideas. He believed that the world is governed by thought and material existence is the expression of an immaterial spiritual essence. But Marx used the Same concept to interpret the progress of the material world. According to him Hegel put the world upside down by giving primacy to ideas whereas Marx’s attempt was to reverse it. So Marx’s dialectic is known as dialectical materialism. Marx argued that all mental(ideological) systems are products of real social and economic existence. For example, the legal system reflects the interests of the dominant class in particular historical periods rather than the

manifestation of divine reason. Marxist dialectic can be understood as the science of the general and abstract laws of development of nature, society and thoughts. It considers the universe as an integral whole in which things are interdependent, rather than a mixture of things isolated from each other. All things contain within themselves internal dialectical contradictions, which are the primary cause of motion, change and development in the world. Dialectical materialism was an effective tool in the hands of Marxists, in revealing the secrets behind the social processes and their future course of development.



One of the fundamental concepts of classical Marxist thought is the concept of base and superstructure which refers to the relationship between the material means of production and the cultural world of art and ideas. It is essentially a symbolic concept which employed the structure of a building to explain this relationship. The foundation or the base stands for the socio-economic relations and the mode of production and the superstructure stands for art, law, politics, religion and, above all, ideology. Broadly speaking it refers to the idea that culture is governed by historical conditions and the relations of dominance and subordination prevalent in a particular society. Morality, religion, art and philosophy are seen as echoes of

real life processes. In Marx's own words, they are "phantoms formed in the brains of men." From this point of view all cultural products are directly related to the economic base in a given society.

Take the case of the novels of Mulk Raj Anand which address the life of the untouchables, coolies and ordinary workers struggling for their rights and self esteem. It is true that they can be traced back to the class conflict prevalent in the Indian society. M.T. Vasudevan Nair, a noted Malayalam novelist wrote about the breaking up of the feudal tharavads in Kerala. But in the final analysis his stories reveal the filtering of the bourgeois modernity in Kerala society and how it enters into a conflictual relationship with the values of feudalism. Thus traces of this connection can be identified in various forms of cultural production.

Socialist Realism

Socialist Realism took shape as the official aesthetic principle of the new communist society. It was mainly informed by the 19th century aesthetics and revolutionary politics. Raymond Williams identifies three principles as the founding principles of Socialist realism. They are Partinost or commitment to the working class cause of the party, Narodnost of popularity and Klassovost or writer's commitment to the class interests. The idea of Partinost is based on Vladimir Lenin's essay, *Party Organisation and Party Literature* (1905) which reiterates the commitment of the writer to the aim of the party to liberate the working class from exploitation. Narodnost refers to the popular simplicity of the work of art. Marx, in *Paris Manuscripts*, refers to the alienation that originates out of the separation of the mental and manual in the capitalist society. Earlier under feudalism the workers engaged in cottage industries produced various items on their own, all activities related to the production happening at the same place under the supervision of the same people. But under capitalism the workers lost control over their products they were engaged in the production of various parts and were alienated from their own work. So, only folk art survived as people's art. The concept Narodnost reiterates this quality of popular art which is accessible to the masses and wanted to restore their lost wholeness of being. Klassovost refers to the commitment of the writer to the interests of the working class. It is not related to the explicit allegiance of a writer to a particular class but the writer's inherent ability to portray the social transformation.

For example, Balzac, a supporter of Bourbon dynasty, provides a penetrating account of the French society than all the historians. Though Tolstoy, the Russian novelist, was an aristocrat by birth and had no affiliation to the revolutionary movements in Russia, Lenin called Tolstoy the "mirror of Russian revolution" as he was successful in revealing the transformation in Russian society that led to the revolution through his novels. Lenin's position regarding art and literature was harder than that of Marx and Friedrich Engels. He argued that literature must become an instrument of the party. In the 1934 congress of Soviet Writers, Socialist Realism was accepted as the official aesthetic principle of Soviet Union. It was accepted as a dogma by communists all over the world.

Thus with the declaration of official literary policy by Soviet Union the “Moscow Line” was popularized and got international acceptance among communists. As a result, a direct cause-effect relationship between literature and economics was assumed, with all writers seen as trapped within the intellectual limit of their class position. One of the examples of this rigid Marxist literary criticism is *Illusion and Reality* by Christopher Caudwell. However establishing a one to one relationship between base and superstructure as some “vulgar Marxists” may attempt, is opposed by the Marxist critic, Terry Eagleton. According to him, “each element of a society’s superstructure, art, law, politics, and religion has its own tempo of development, its own internal evolution, which is not reducible to a mere expression of the class struggle or the state of the economy.” Yet classical Marxists claim that in the last analysis the superstructure is determined by that mode of production. The Hungarian Marxist critic Georg Lukacs represented this type of political orthodoxy. Lukacs considered the 19th century realist fiction as a model and believed that a realist work must reveal the underlying pattern of contradictions in a social order. His debate with Bertolt Brecht on the whole questions of realism and expressionism discussed in detail the importance of form and the concept of form in Marxist criticism. The debate was handed over to the Formalists who developed new directions in the development of Marxist criticism.

Further developments in Marxist Aesthetics

Marxist criticism flourished outside the official line in various European countries. Russian Formalism emerged as a new perspective informed by Marxism in the 1920s. It was disbanded by the Communist party as it did not conform to the official theoretical perspective of the party. The prominent members of this group were Victor Shklovsky, Boris Tomashevsky and Boris Eichenbaum, who published their ideas originally in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, edited by Lee T. Lemon and Marion J Reis.

Though suppressed in Soviet Union, the Formalists emerged in various forms in the USA, Germany and Prague. One of the members of this group, Mikhail Bakhtin remained in Soviet Union and continued his critical practice. His concept of Dialogism affirmed plurality and variety. It was an argument against the hegemony of absolute authorial control. He affirmed the need to take others and otherness into account. In one sense, it was an argument against the increasing homogenization of cultural and political life in Soviet Union.

Many others belonging to the same perspective went into exile and continued their work abroad. It was the beginning of a new form of Marxist criticism. Roman Jakobson founded the Prague Linguistic Circle along with Rene Wellek and a few others. In Germany the Frankfurt School of Marxist aesthetics was founded in 1923 as a political research institute attached to the University of Frankfurt. Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse were some of the important figures attached with this school. They tried to combine aspects of Formalism with the theories of Marx and Freud. They produced for the first time studies on mass culture and communication and their role in social reproduction and domination. The Frankfurt School also generated one of the first models of a critical cultural studies that analyzes the processes of cultural production and political economy, the politics of cultural texts, and audience reception and use of cultural artifacts.

Marxist scholars like Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht considered art as a social production. Walter Benjamin's essay, *The Author as Producer* (1934) addresses the question, "What is the literary work's position within the relations of production of its time?" Benjamin tries to argue that artistic production depends upon certain techniques of production which are part of the productive forces of art like the publishing, theatrical presentation and so on. A revolutionary artist should not uncritically accept the existing forces of artistic production, but should develop and revolutionize those forces. It helps in the creation of new social relations between artist and audience. In this process, authors, readers and spectators become collaborators. The experimental theatre developed by Brecht is a realization of Benjamin's concept.

Bertolt Brecht, a close friend of Benjamin, developed the concept of Epic Theatre which dismantled the traditional naturalistic theatre and produced a new kind of theatre altering the functional relations between stage and audience, text and producer, and producer and actor. Bourgeois theatre is based on illusionism. The audience is the passive consumer. The play does not stimulate them to think constructively. According to Brecht this is based on the assumption that the world is fixed, given and unchangeable and the duty of art is to provide escapist entertainment. Brecht's famous contribution is alienation effect. The technique is to alienate the spectators from the performance and to prevent them from emotionally identifying with the play. It presents the familiar experience in unfamiliar light forcing the audience to question the attitudes which was considered to be natural and unchanging. He employed techniques like back projection, song choreography cutting and disrupting the action rather than blending it smoothly.

The French Marxist thinker, **Louis Althusser** further developed the Marxist approach through the introduction of various concepts like **overdetermination**, Ideology etc. Overdetermination refers to an effect which arises from various causes rather than from a single factor. This concept undercuts simplistic notions of one to one correspondence between base and superstructure. Ideology is another term modified by Althusser. According to him "ideology is a system of representations endowed with an existence and an historical role at the heart of a given society." It obscures social reality by naturalizing beliefs and by promoting values that support it. The civil society spreads ideology through the law, textbooks, religious rituals and norms so that the people imbibe them even without their knowledge. Ideology is instituted by the state through two apparatuses, Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA). The RSA includes law courts, prison, police, army etc and the ISA include political parties, schools, media, churches, family, art etc. Althusser imported structuralism to Marxism. In his view, society is a structural whole which consists of relatively autonomous levels: legal, political and cultural whose mode of articulation is only determined by the economy.

The founder of Italian communist Party, Antonio Gramsci was a politician, political theorist, linguist and philosopher. Known as an original thinker among Marxist scholars, Gramsci introduced the concepts like Hegemony and the Subaltern. Hegemony is the domination of

particular section of the society by the powerful classes. Most often it works through consent rather than by power. It is the moral and intellectual leadership of the upper class in a particular society. The term subaltern was originally used by Gramsci as a collective description for a variety of different and exploited groups who lack class consciousness. But now it is being used to represent all marginalized sections like Dalits, women, minorities etc.

An influential figure among the New Left was **Raymond Williams**. His writings on politics, culture, the mass media and literature are a significant contribution to the Marxist critique of culture and the arts. Williams was interested in the relationship between language, literature and society. He coined the critical method, Cultural Materialism which has four characteristics, Historical context, Theoretical method, Political /commitment and Textual analysis. Cultural materialism gives us different perspectives based on what we choose to suppress or reveal in reading from the past.

Cultural Materialism argues that culture is a constitutive social progress which actively creates different ways of life. Similarly creation of meaning is viewed as a practical material activity which cannot be consigned to a secondary level. Another important concept in Williams thought is Structures of feeling. They are values that are changing and being formed as we live and react to the material world around us. They subject to change. Williams contributed much for the development of Marxist aesthetics through his studies on culture. His most important works include *The Country and the City* (1973), in which chapters about literature alternate with chapters on social history. His tightly written *Marxism and Literature* (1977) is mainly for specialists, but it also sets out his own approach to cultural studies which he called cultural materialism.

Fredric Jameson, an American Marxist intellectual focused on critical theory and was influence by Kenneth Burke, Gyorgy Lukacs, Ernst Bloch, Theodor Adorno, Frankfurt School, Louis Althusser and Sartre. He viewed cultural criticism as an integral feature of Marxist theory. This position represented a break with more orthodox Marxism, which held a narrow view of historical materialism. In some ways Jameson has been concerned, along with other Marxist cultural critics such as Terry Eagleton to articulate Marxism's relevance in respect to current philosophical and literary trends. In 1969, Jameson co-founded the Marxist Literary Group with a number of his graduate students at the University of California. His major works include *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* (1971) and *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (1972). History came to play an increasingly central role in Jameson's interpretation of both the reading (consumption) and writing (production) of literary texts. Jameson marked his full-fledged commitment to Hegelian-Marxist philosophy with the publication of *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981), the opening slogan of which is "always historicize".

Apart from Jameson, contemporary Marxist critics like Terry Eagleton, Professor of English Literature at the University of Lancaster, England and Aijaz Ahmad, a well-known Marxist thinker and political commentator from India have significant contributions in the field of Marxist theory and aesthetics. Aijaz Ahmad's famous work, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (1992) contained Marxist analysis of the concepts like Third World Literature and Orientalism. Eagleton on the other hand published more than 40 books which include *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983), *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990), and *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (1996). Marxist thought have undergone huge transformation over the years befitting to the claim of Marx that change is the only unchanging phenomena in this world. It has been the backbone of almost all modern theories of culture and criticism. It may be a paradox that while Marxist practices have received set backs in recent years Marxist theory has been widely accepted all over the world.

Post-Marxism

Post-Marxism refers to the development of radical reworkings of Marxism from the late 1970s, arising in reaction to classical Marxist materialism, economism, historical determinism, anti-humanism, and class reductionism and influenced by poststructuralism and postmodernism, notably in the rejection of grand narratives (including classical Marxism itself). These emerged in the late 1970s, associated with theorists such as Lyotard, Baudrillard, Foucault, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe and Stuart Hall. From the 1980s, post-Marxism was increasingly inflected by such cross-currents as feminism and postcolonialism. It is an anti-essentialist approach in which class, society, and history are no longer treated as unitary, universal, pre-discursive categories. Multiple subject positions are constituted dynamically in discourse in relation to class, gender, race, and nationality. Consequently, there is no uniform class consciousness. Post-Marxist theory has also been influenced by the Gramscian concept of hegemony. Ideology and culture are seen as relatively autonomous of the economic base.

CULTURAL STUDIES

Arising from the social turmoil of the 1960-s, Cultural Studies is an academic discipline which combines political economy, communication, sociology, social theory, literary theory, media theory, film studies, cultural anthropology, philosophy, art history/ criticism etc. to study cultural phenomena in various societies. Cultural Studies researches often focus on how a particular phenomenon relates matters of ideology, nationality, ethnicity, social class and gender.

Discussion on Cultural Studies have gained currency with the publication of Richard Hoggart's *Use of Literacy* (1957) and Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society* (1958), and with the establishment of Birmingham Centre for is Contemporary Cultural Studies in England in 1968.

Since culture is now considered as the source of art and literature, cultural criticism has gained ground, and therefore, Raymond Williams' term "cultural materialism", Stephen Greenblatt's "cultural poetics" and Bakhtin's term "cultural prosaic", have become significant in the field of Cultural Studies and cultural criticism.

The works of Stuart Hall and Richard Hoggart with the Birmingham Centre, later expanded through the writings of David Morley, Tony Bennett and others. Cultural Studies is interested in the process by which power relations organize cultural artefacts (food habits, music, cinema, sport events etc.). It looks at popular culture and everyday life, which had hitherto been dismissed as "inferior" and unworthy of academic study. Cultural Studies' approaches 1) transcend the confines of a particular discipline such as literary criticism or history 2) are politically engaged 3) reject the distinction between "high" and "low" art or "elite" and "popular" culture 4) analyse not only the cultural works but also the means of production.

In order to understand the changing political circumstances of class, politics and culture in the UK, scholars at the CCCS turned to the work of Antonio Gramsci who modified classical Marxism in seeing culture as a key instrument of political and social control. In his view, capitalists are not only brute force (police, prison, military) to maintain control, but also penetrate the everyday culture of working people. Thus the key rubric for Gramsci and for cultural studies is that of cultural hegemony. Edgar and Sedgwick point out that the theory of hegemony was pivotal to the development of British Cultural Studies. It facilitated analysis of the ways in which subaltern groups actively resist and respond to political and economic domination.

The approach of Raymond Williams and CCCS was clearly marxist and poststructuralist, and held subject identities and relationships as textual, constructed out of discourse. Cultural Studies believes that we cannot "read" cultural artefacts only within the aesthetic realm, rather they must be studied within the social and material perspectives; i.e., a novel must be read not only within the generic conventions and history of the novel, but also in terms of the publishing industry and its profit, its reviewers, its academic field of criticism, the politics of awards and the hype of publicity machinery that sells the book. Cultural Studies regards the cultural artefact like the tricolour or Gandhi Jayanti as a political sign, that is part of the "discourse" of India, as reinforcing certain ideological values, and concealing oppressive conditions of patriarchal ideas of the nation, nationalism and national identity.

In Cultural Studies, representation is a key concept and denotes a language in which all objects and relationships get defined, a language related to issues of class, power and ideology, and situated within the context of "discourse". The cultural practice of giving dolls to girls can be read within the patriarchal discourse of femininity that girls are weaker and delicate and need to be given soft things, and that grooming, care etc. are feminine duties which dolls will help them learn. This discourse of femininity is itself related to the discourse of masculinity and the larger context of power relations in culture. Identity, for Culture Studies, is constituted through experience, which involves representation – the consumption of signs, the making of meaning from signs and the knowledge of meaning.

Cultural Studies views everyday life as fragmented, multiple, where meanings are hybridized and contested; i.e., identities that were more or less homogeneous in terms of ethnicities and patterns of consumption, are now completely hybrid, especially in the metropolis. With the globalization of urban spaces, local cultures are linked to global economies, markets and needs, and hence any study of contemporary culture has to examine the role of a non-local market/ money which requires a postcolonial awareness of the exploitative relationship between the First World and the Third World even today.

Cultural Studies is interested in lifestyle because lifestyle 1) is about everyday life 2) defines identity 3) influences social relations 4) bestows meaning and value to artefacts in a culture. In India, after economic liberalization, consumption has been seen as a marker of identity. Commodities are signs of identity and lifestyle and consumption begins before the actual act of shopping; it begins with the consumption of the signs of the commodity.

Mall Culture

Mall is a space of display where goods are displayed for maximum visual display in such a fashion that they are attractive enough to instill desire. Spectacle, attention- holding and desire are central elements of shopping experience in the mall. Hence mall emerges primarily as a site of gazing and secondarily as a site of shopping. The mall presents a spectacle of a fantasy world created by the presence of models and posters, compounded by the experience of being surrounded by attractive men and women, cosy families and vibrant youth — which altogether entice us to unleash the possibilities of donning a better identity, by trying out / consuming global brands and cosmopolitan fashion.

The mall invites for participating in the fantasy of future possibilities. Thus, the spectacle turns into a performance that the customer/ consumer imitates and participates in. It is also a theatrical performance that is interactive, in which the spectacle comes alive with the potential consumer. The encircling vistas, long-spread balconies and viewing points at every floor add to the spectacle, by providing a “prospect” of shopping.

Eclecticism is yet another feature of the mall, where, “the world is under one roof”- where a “Kalanjali” or “Mann Mantra” share space with “Shoppers Stop” or “Life Style” and “Madras Mail” shares space with “McDonald’s” and multiplexes, imparting a cosmopolitan experience. Thus eclecticism and a mixing of products, styles and traditions are a central feature of the mall and consumer experience.

Further, “the mall is a hyperreal, ahistorical, secure, postmodern-secular, uniform space of escape that takes the streets of the city into itself in a tightly controlled environment where time, weather, season do not matter where the “natural” is made through artificial lighting and horticulture, and ensuring that this public space resembles the city but offers more security and choice”

Media Culture

Media studies and its role in the construction of cultural values, circulation of symbolic values, and its production of desire are central to Cultural Studies today. Cultural Studies of the media begins with the assumption that media culture is political and ideological, and it reproduces existing social values, oppression and inequalities. Media culture clearly reflects the multiple sides of contemporary debates and problems. Media culture helps to reinforce the hegemony and power of specific economic, cultural and political groups by suggesting ideologies that the audience, if not alert, imbibes. Media culture is also provocative because it sometimes asks us to rethink what we know or believe in. In Cultural Studies, media culture is studied through an analysis of popular media culture like films, TV serials, advertisements etc.- as Cultural Studies believes in the power of the popular cultural forms as tools of ideological and political power.

Cultural Studies of popular media culture involves an analysis of the forms of representation, such as film; the political ideology of these representations; an examination of the financial sources/sponsors of these representations (propaganda advertisements by Coke after the report on pesticides in Coca Cola); an examination of the roles played by other objects / people in the propagating ideology (Amir Khan in the Coca Cola ad, after patriotic films like Lagaan, Mangal Pandey and Rang de Basanti). Cultural Studies also analyses whether the medium (say, film), presents an oppressive/unequal nature of institutions, like family; education etc. or glorify them; the possible resistance to such oppressive ideologies; the audience's response to such representation and the economic benefits and the beneficiaries of such representations.

Contemporary Culture Studies of media culture explores what is called “media ecologies“, the environment of human culture created by the intersection of information and communications technologies, organizational behaviour and human interaction.

NEW HISTORICISM

A critical approach developed in the 1980s in the writings of Stephen Greenblatt, New Historicism is characterised by a parallel reading of a text with its socio-cultural and historical conditions, which form the co-text. New Historians rejected the fundamental tenets of New Criticism (that the text is an autotelic artefact), and Liberal Humanism (that the text has timeless significance and universal value) . On the contrary, New Historicism, as Louis Montrose suggested, deals with the “textuality of history and the historicity of texts.” Textuality of history refers to the idea that history is constructed and fictionalised, and the historicity of text refers to its inevitable embedment within the socio-political conditions of its production and interpretation. Though it rejects many of the assumptions of poststructuralism, New Historicism is in a way poststructuralist in that it rejects the essential idea of a common human nature that is shared by the author, characters and readers; instead it believes that identity is plural and hybrid.

A New Historicist interpretation of a text begins with identifying the literary and non-literary texts available and accessible to the public, at the time of its production, followed by reading and interpreting the text in the light of its co-text. Such an interpretative analysis would ideally begin with a powerful and dramatic explication of the “anecdote”, which is the historical context or the co-text. Thus the text and the context are perceived as expressions of the same historical moment. Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (1980) does a New Historicist reading of Renaissance plays, revealing how ‘self-fashioning was an episteme of the era, as depicted in the portraits and literature of the time.

The discipline of New Historicism has been influenced by Althusserian concept of ideology; the Derridian deconstructionist idea that a text is at war with itself; Bakhtinian dialogism which posits that a text contains a multiplicity of conflicting voices; and most prominently by Foucauldian Power/Knowledge and discourse. Analysing the nature of power, Foucault expounds that Power (for instance, in the form of the panoptic surveillant state), defines what is truth, knowledge, normalcy. New Historicism believes in the Foucauldian idea of the “capillary modes of power” which like Althusser’s Ideology interpellates the lives and actions of the citizens.

Foucault’s archeological concept of history as archive, informs yet another tendency of the New Historicists, in that they consider history as fictionalised and as a “co-text” while traditional historians consider history as facts and as the background to the text, which is the foreground. Foucault observes that history is characterised by gaps and fissures contemporary historicists highlight the discontinuities and conflicts of history, rather than write in a coherent manner. He does not, like traditional historians, write history as a unified, continuous story.

Thus New Historicism applies the poststructuralist idea that reality is constructed and multiple, and the Foucauldian idea of the role of power in creating knowledge.

Stephen Greenblatt’s introduction to *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance* (1982) spurred the growth of the New Historicism . In this introduction, Greenblatt differentiated what he called the “New Historicism” from both the New Criticism, which views the text as a self-contained structure, and the earlier historicism which was monological and attempted to discover a unitary political vision. Both of these earlier modes of analysis, according to Greenblatt, engaged in a project of uniting disparate and contradictory elements into an organic whole, whether in the text itself or in its historical background. The earlier historicism, moreover, viewed the resulting totality or unity as a historical fact rather than the product of interpretation or of the ideological leanings of certain groups. Such a homogenizing procedure allows the unified vision of historical context to serve as a fixed point of reference which could form the background of literary interpretation.

CULTURAL MATERIALISM

A term coined by Raymond Williams and popularised by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (in their collection of essays *Political Shakespeare*), Cultural Materialism refers to a Marxist orientation of New Historicism, characterised by the analysis of any historical material within a politicized framework, in a radical and subversive manner. Cultural Materialism emphasises studying the historical context, looking at those historical aspects that have been discarded or silenced in other narratives of history, through an eclectic theoretical approach, backed by the political commitment arising from the influence of Marxist and Feminist perspective and thus executing a textual analysis—close reading that critiques traditional approaches, especially on canonical texts.

Like the New Historicists, Cultural Materialists also believe in the textuality of history and the historicity of texts; they are aware of the political agendas of the text and hence are alert to the ways in which power exerts itself through implicit workings of ideology within the text. While they believe that New Historicists generate apolitical readings, in which there is no question of agency on the part of the marginalised, Cultural Materialists are consciously political, and aim at transforming the social order; as they seek readings that focus on the marginalised and the exploited, and also look at the possibilities of subversion and resistance in both the text and the interpretive act. They are conscious of the subversive potential of literature for subcultural resistance and hence propose ‘dissident reading’, which interrogates the hidden political agenda and power struggles within a text

POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism broadly refers to a socio-cultural and literary theory, and a shift in perspective that has manifested in a variety of disciplines including the social sciences, art, architecture, literature, fashion, communications, and technology. It is generally agreed that the postmodern shift in perception began sometime back in the late 1950s, and is probably still continuing. Postmodernism can be associated with the power shifts and dehumanization of the post-Second World War era and the onslaught of consumer capitalism.

The very term Postmodernism implies a relation to Modernism. Modernism was an earlier aesthetic movement which was in vogue in the early decades of the twentieth century. It has often been said that Postmodernism is at once a continuation of and a break away from the Modernist stance.

Postmodernism shares many of the features of Modernism. Both schools reject the rigid boundaries between high and low art. Postmodernism even goes a step further and deliberately mixes low art with high art, the past with the future, or one genre with another. Such mixing of different, incongruous elements illustrates Postmodernism’s use of lighthearted parody, which was also used by Modernism. Both these schools also employed pastiche, which is the imitation of another’s style. Parody and pastiche serve to highlight the self-reflexivity of Modernist and Postmodernist works, which means that parody and pastiche serve to remind the reader that the work is not “real” but fictional, constructed.

Modernist and Postmodernist works are also fragmented and do not easily, directly convey a solid meaning. That is, these works are consciously ambiguous and give way to multiple interpretations. The individual or subject depicted in these works is often decentred, without a central meaning or goal in life, and dehumanized, often losing individual characteristics and becoming merely the representative of an age or civilization, like Tiresias in *The Waste Land*. In short, Modernism and Postmodernism give voice to the insecurities, disorientation and fragmentation of the 20th century western world. The western world, in the 20th century, began to experience this deep sense of security because it progressively lost its colonies in the Third World, worn apart by two major World Wars and found its intellectual and social foundations shaking under the impact of new social theories and developments such as Marxism and Postcolonial global migrations, new technologies and the power shift from Europe to the United States. Though both Modernism and Postmodernism employ fragmentation, discontinuity and decentredness in theme and technique, the basic dissimilarity between the two schools is hidden in this very aspect.

Modernism projects the fragmentation and decentredness of contemporary world as tragic. It laments the loss of the unity and centre of life and suggests that works of art can provide the unity, coherence, continuity and meaning that is lost in modern life. Thus Eliot laments that the modern world is an infertile wasteland, and the fragmentation, incoherence, of this world is effected in the structure of the poem. However, *The Waste Land* tries to recapture the lost meaning and organic unity by turning to Eastern cultures, and in the use of Tiresias as protagonist

In Postmodernism, fragmentation and disorientation is no longer tragic. Postmodernism on the other hand celebrates fragmentation. It considers fragmentation and decentredness as the only possible way of existence, and does not try to escape from these conditions.

This is where Postmodernism meets Poststructuralism—both Postmodernism and Poststructuralism recognize and accept that it is not possible to have a coherent centre. In Derridean terms, the centre is constantly moving towards the periphery and the periphery constantly moving towards the centre. In other words, the centre, which is the seat of power, is never entirely powerful. It is continually becoming powerless, while the powerless periphery continually tries to acquire power. As a result, it can be argued that there is never a centre, or that there are always multiple centres. This postponement of the centre acquiring power or retaining its position is what Derrida called *differance*. In Postmodernism's celebration of fragmentation, there is thus an underlying belief in *differance*, a belief that unity, meaning, coherence is continually postponed.

The Postmodernist disbelief in coherence and unity points to another basic distinction between Modernism and Postmodernism. Modernism believes that coherence and unity is possible, thus emphasizing the importance of rationality and order. The basic assumption of Modernism seems to be that more rationality leads to more order, which leads a society to function better. To establish the primacy of Order, Modernism constantly creates the concept of Disorder in its depiction of the Other—which includes the non-white, non-male, non-

heterosexual, non-adult, non-rational and so on. In other words, to establish the superiority of Order, Modernism creates the impression- that all marginal, peripheral, communities such as the non-white, non-male etc. are contaminated by Disorder. Postmodernism, however, goes to the other extreme. It does not say that some parts of the society illustrate Order, and that other parts illustrate Disorder. Postmodernism, in its criticism of the binary opposition, cynically even suggests that everything is Disorder.

The Modernist belief in order, stability and unity is what the Postmodernist thinker Lyotard calls a metanarrative. Modernism works through metanarratives or grand narratives, while Postmodernism questions and deconstructs metanarratives. A metanarrative is a story a culture tells itself about its beliefs and practices. For example, India tells itself that it is a democratic and secular country, though there are numerous anti-democratic, anti-secular factions and practices in India. In other words, India makes itself believe the falsehood that it is a democratic, secular country. Democracy and secularism are thus metanarratives. In short, metanarratives create and propagate grand but untrue conceptions of a society and culture. These include a society's dependence on such concepts as objective truth, progress, order and unity.

Postmodernism understands that grand narratives hide, silence and negate contradictions, instabilities and differences inherent in any social system. Postmodernism favours "mini-narratives," stories that explain small practices and local events, without pretending universality and finality. Postmodernism realizes that history, politics and culture are grand narratives of the power-wielders, which comprise falsehoods and incomplete truths.

Having deconstructed the possibility of a stable, permanent reality, Postmodernism has revolutionized the concept of language. Modernism considered language a rational, transparent tool to represent reality and the activities of the rational mind. In the Modernist view, language is representative of thoughts and things. Here, signifiers always point to signifieds. In Postmodernism, however, there are only surfaces, no depths. A signifier has no signified here, because there is no reality to signify.

The French philosopher **Baudrillard** has conceptualized the Postmodern surface culture as a simulacrum. A simulacrum is a virtual or fake reality simulated or induced by the media or other ideological apparatuses. A simulacrum is not merely an imitation or duplication—it is the substitution of the original by a simulated, fake image. Contemporary world is a simulacrum, where reality has been thus replaced by false images. This would mean, for instance, that the Gulf war that we know from newspapers and television reports has no connection whatsoever to what can be called the "real" Iraq war. The simulated image of Gulf war has become so much more popular and real than the real war, that Baudrillard argues that the Gulf War did not take place. In other words, in the Postmodern world, there are no originals, only copies; no territories, only maps; no reality, only simulations. Here Baudrillard is not merely suggesting that the postmodern world is artificial; he is also implying that we have lost the capacity to discriminate between the real and the artificial. Just as we have lost touch with the reality of our life, we have also moved away from the reality

of the goods we consume. If the media form one driving force of the Postmodern condition, multinational capitalism and globalization is another.

Fredric Jameson has related Modernism and Postmodernism to the second and third phases of capitalism. The first phase of capitalism of the 18th -19th centuries, called Market Capitalism, witnessed the early technological development such as that of the steam-driven motor, and corresponded to the Realist phase. The early 20th century, with the development of electrical and internal combustion motors, witnessed the onset of Monopoly Capitalism and Modernism. The Postmodern era corresponds to the age of nuclear and electronic technologies and Consumer Capitalism, where the emphasis is on marketing, selling and consumption rather than production. The dehumanized, globalized world, wipes out individual and national identities, in favour of multinational marketing.

It is thus clear from this exposition that there are at least three different directions taken by Postmodernism, relating to the theories of Lyotard, Baudrillard and Jameson. Postmodernism also has its roots in the theories Habermas and Foucault. Furthermore, Postmodernism can be examined from Feminist and Post-colonial angles. Therefore, one cannot pinpoint the principles of Postmodernism with finality, because there is a plurality in the very constitution of this theory.

Postmodernism, in its denial of an objective truth or reality, forcefully advocates the theory of constructivism—the anti-essentialist argument that everything is ideologically constructed. Postmodernism finds the media to be a great deal responsible for “constructing” our identities and everyday realities. Indeed, Postmodernism developed as a response to the contemporary boom in electronics and communications technologies and its revolutionizing of our old world order.

Constructivism invariably leads to relativism. Our identities are constructed and transformed every moment in relation to our social environment. Therefore there is scope for multiple and diverse identities, multiple truths, moral codes and views of reality.

The understanding that an objective truth does not exist has invariably led the accent of Postmodernism to fall on subjectivity. Subjectivity itself is of course plural and provisional. A stress on subjectivity will naturally lead to a renewed interest in the local and specific experiences, rather than the and universal and abstract; that is on mini-narratives rather than grand narratives.

Finally, all versions of Postmodernism rely on the method of Deconstruction to analyze socio-cultural situations. Postmodernism has often been vehemently criticized. The fundamental characteristic of Postmodernism is disbelief, which negates social and personal realities and experiences. It is easy to claim that the Gulf War or Iraq War does not exist; but then how does one account for the deaths, the loss and pain of millions of people victimized by these wars? Also, Postmodernism fosters a deep cynicism about the one sustaining force

of social life—culture. By entirely washing away the ground beneath our feet, the ideological presumptions upon which human civilization is built, Postmodernism generates a feeling of lack and insecurity in contemporary societies, which is essential for the sustenance of a capitalistic world order. Finally, when the Third World began to assert itself over Eurocentric hegemonic power, Postmodernism had rushed in with the warning, that the empowerment of the periphery is but transient and temporary; and that just as Europe could not retain its imperialistic power for long, the new-found power of the erstwhile colonies is also under erasure.

In literature, postmodernism (relying heavily on fragmentation, deconstruction, playfulness, questionable narrators etc.) reacted against the Enlightenment ideas implicit in modernist literature – informed by Lyotard’s concept of the “metanarrative”, Derrida’s concept of “play”, and Baudrillard’s “simulacra.” Deviating from the modernist quest for meaning in a chaotic world, the postmodern writers eschew, often playfully, the possibility of meaning, and the postmodern novel is often a parody of this quest. Marked by a distrust of totalizing mechanisms and self-awareness, postmodern writers often celebrate chance over craft and employ metafiction to undermine the author’s “univocation”. The distinction between high and low culture is also attacked with the employment of pastiche, the combination of multiple cultural elements including subjects and genres not previously deemed fit for literature. Postmodern literature can be considered as an umbrella term for the post-war developments in literature such as Theatre of the Absurd, Beat Generation and Magical Realism.

Postmodern literature, as expressed in the writings of Beckett, Robbe Grillet, Borges, Marquez, Naguib Mahfouz and Angela Carter rests on a recognition of the complex nature of reality and experience, the role of time and memory in human perception, of the self and the world as historical constructions, and the problematic nature of language.

Postmodern literature reached its peak in the '60s and '70s with the publication of *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller, *Lost in the Funhouse* and *Sot-Weed Factor* by John Barth, *Gravity’s Rainbow, V.*, and *Crying of Lot 49* by Thomas Pynchon, “factions” like *Armies in the Night* and *In Cold Blood* by Norman Mailer and Truman Capote, postmodern science fiction novels like *Neuromancer* by William Gibson, *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut and many others. Some declared the death of postmodernism in the '80’s with a new surge of realism represented and inspired by Raymond Carver. Tom Wolfe in his 1989 article *Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast* called for a new emphasis on realism in fiction to replace postmodernism. With this new emphasis on realism in mind, some declared *White Noise* in (1985) or *The Satanic Verses* (1988) to be the last great novels of the postmodern era.

Postmodern film describes the articulation of ideas of postmodernism through the cinematic medium – by upsetting the mainstream conventions of narrative structure and characterization and destroying (or playing with) the audience’s “suspension of disbelief,” to create a work that express through less-recognizable internal logic. Two such examples are Jane Campion’s *Two Friends*, in which the story of two school girls is shown in episodic

segments arranged in reverse order; and Karel Reisz's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, in which the story being played out on the screen is mirrored in the private lives of the actors playing it, which the audience also sees. However, Baudrillard dubbed Sergio Leone's epic 1968 spaghetti western *Once Upon a Time in the West* as the first postmodern film. Other examples include Michael Winterbottom's *24 Hour Party People*, Federico Fellini's *Satyricon* and *Amarcord*, David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive*, Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*.

In spite of the rather stretched, cynical arguments of Postmodernism, the theory has exerted a fundamental influence on late 20th century thought. It has indeed revolutionized all realms of intellectual inquiry in varying degrees.

ECOCRITICISM

Ecocriticism is the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyze the environment and brainstorm possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental situation. Ecocriticism was officially heralded by the publication of two seminal works, both published in the mid-1990s: *The Ecocriticism Reader*, edited by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, and *The Environmental Imagination*, by Lawrence Buell.

Ecocriticism investigates the relation between humans and the natural world in literature. It deals with how environmental issues, cultural issues concerning the environment and attitudes towards nature are presented and analyzed. One of the main goals in ecocriticism is to study how individuals in society behave and react in relation to nature and ecological aspects. This form of criticism has gained a lot of attention during recent years due to higher social emphasis on environmental destruction and increased technology. It is hence a fresh way of analyzing and interpreting literary texts, which brings new dimensions to the field of literary and theoretical studies. Ecocriticism is an intentionally broad approach that is known by a number of other designations, including "green (cultural) studies", "ecopoetics", and "environmental literary criticism."

Western thought has often held a more or less utilitarian attitude to nature —nature is for serving human needs. However, after the eighteenth century, there emerged many voices that demanded a reevaluation of the relationship between man and environment, and man's view of nature. Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher, developed the notion of "Deep Ecology" which emphasizes the basic interconnectedness of all life forms and natural features, and presents a symbiotic and holistic world-view rather than an anthropocentric one.

Earlier theories in literary and cultural studies focussed on issue of class, race, gender, region are criteria and "subjects" of critical analysis. The late twentieth century has woken up to a new threat: ecological disaster. The most important environmental problems that humankind faces *as a whole* are: nuclear war, depletion of valuable natural resources, population

explosion, proliferation of exploitative technologies, conquest of space preliminary to using it as a garbage dump, pollution, extinction of species (though not a human problem) among others. In such a context, literary and cultural theory has begun to address the issue as a part of academic discourse. Numerous green movements have sprung up all over the world, and some have even gained representations in the governments.

Large scale debates over “dumping,” North versus South environmentalism (the necessary differences between the environmentalism of the developed and technologically advanced richer nations—the North, and the poorer, subsistence environmentalism of the developing or “Third World”—the South). Donald Worster’s *Nature’s Economy* (1977) became a textbook for the study of ecological thought down the ages. The historian Arnold Toynbee recorded the effect of human civilisation upon the land and nature in his monumental, *Mankind and Mother Earth* (1976). Environmental issues and landscape use were also the concern of the Annales School of historians, especially Braudel and Febvre. The work of environmental historians has been pathbreaking too. Richard Grove et al’s massive *Nature and the Orient* (1998), David Arnold and Ramachandra Guha’s *Nature, Culture, Imperialism* (1995) have been significant work in the environmental history of India and Southeast Asia. Ramachandra Guha is of course the most important environmental historian writing from India today.

Various versions of environmentalism developed. **Deep ecology** and ecofeminism were two important developments. These new ideas questioned the notion of “development” and “modernity,” and argued that all Western notions in science, philosophy, politics were “anthropocentric” (human-centred) and “androcentric”(Man/male-centred). Technology, medical science with its animal testing, the cosmetic and fashion industry all came in for scrutiny from environmentalists. Deep ecology, for instance, stressed on a “biocentric” view (as seen in the name of the environmentalist group, “Earth First!!”).

Ecocriticism is the result of this new consciousness: that very soon, there will be nothing beautiful (or safe) in nature to discourse about, unless we are very careful.

Ecocritics ask questions such as:

- (1) How is nature represented in the novel/poem/play ?
- (2) What role does the physical-geographical setting play in the structure of the novel?
- (3) How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it? That is, what is the link between pedagogic or creative practice and actual political, sociocultural and ethical behaviour towards the land and other non-human life forms?
- (4) How is science—in the form of genetic engineering, technologies of reproduction, sexualities—open to critical scrutiny terms of the effects of science upon the land?

The essential assumptions, ideas and methods of ecocritics may be summed up as follows.

- (1) Ecocritics believe that human culture is related to the physical world.
 - (2) Ecocriticism assumes that all life forms are interlinked. Ecocriticism expands the notion of “the world” to include the entire ecosphere.
 - (3) Moreover, there is a definite link between nature and culture, where the *literary* treatment, representation and “thematisation” of land and nature influence *actions* on the land.
 - (4) Joseph Meeker in an early work, *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* (1972) used the term “literary ecology” to refer to “the study of biological themes and relationships which appear in literary works. It is simultaneously an attempt to discover what roles have been played by literature in the ecology of the human species.”
 - (5) William Rueckert is believed to have coined the term “ecocriticism” in 1978, which he defines as “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature.”
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ECOFEMINISM

Ecofeminism has become an increasingly important field in both contemporary feminist and environmental studies. Although, as Diamond and Orenstein note, ecofeminism is really ‘a new term for an ancient wisdom’, it first came to prominence in the early 1980s, its bases in feminist philosophy, environmental activism and the European and American peace movements of the late 1970s. The term itself was first used by Françoise d’Eaubonne in 1980 and was increasingly adopted by both scholars and environmental activists. Organised in response to the Three Mile Island nuclear disaster, the 1980 ‘Women and Life on Earth: A Conference on Eco-Feminism’ focused on ‘the connections between feminism, militarization, healing and ecology’. The adoption of the term had also been preceded by much women’s poetry and fiction in the 1960s and 70s, and has gained increasing prominence through the work of philosophers Val Plumwood and Karen Warren. It has also been adopted by other disciplines through the writing and activism of Arundhati Roy and Vandana Shiva.

Ecofeminism stresses the indissoluble connectedness – both physical and conceptual – of the earth itself, and all life on it. Humans, as a part of this community depend on earth and sea, and the life this generates for survival; but they are even more fundamentally of it, one component part of the living whole. As Val Plumwood notes, the basic interconnectedness of all matter and psyche is such a ‘truism’ that it is puzzling that it should need to be remarked at all. ‘But the reason why this message of continuity and dependency is so revolutionary in the context of the modern world is that the dominant strands of Western culture have for so long denied it, and have given us a model of human identity as only minimally and accidentally connected to the earth’. Even though we all have a ‘formal knowledge of evolutionary biology’, this disconnection ‘remains deeply and fatally entrenched in modern conceptions of the human and of nature,’ continuing to ‘naturalize domination in both human and non-human spheres’.

Ecofeminists, however, reject the notion that ‘man’s freedom and happiness depend on an ongoing process of emancipation from nature, and an independence from and dominance over natural processes by the power of reason and rationality’. The tenets of Enlightenment reason rely for their continuing power on a number of linked and hierarchized binarisms: nature and culture; black and white; civilization and savagery; the human and the animal. As Mies and Shiva argue, ‘wherever women acted against ecological destruction or/and the threat of atomic annihilation, they immediately became aware of the connection between patriarchal violence against women, other people and nature’. The ‘corporate and military warriors’ aggression against the environment was perceived almost physically as an aggression against our female body’.

To stop the exploitation and despoliation of, in Plumwood’s phrase, the ‘more than human’ world, radical changes in Western and Western-derived capitalist thinking are required. Central to such rethinking is the dismantling of those dangerous and divisive dualisms of patriarchal economies whose modern roots in Western cultures are traceable to the dictates of reason. Reason is interrogated not, as Plumwood stresses, to instantiate the unreasonable, but to understand the historically and philosophically contingent bases of the subjugation of women, nonwestern people and the natural world.

Western rationality, which still assumes that the basis of human civilization consists in a progressive detachment from ‘nature’, also dominated the colonial period. The more closely associated with nature non-European peoples and women were considered to be, the more ‘inherently’ inferior they were; inferiority ensured and justified patriarchal/Western civilization’s destruction and domination of other lands and peoples. Land itself, cast as a female and ‘new’ to Europeans, was ‘ripe’ for conquering and taming.

The legacy of the dominant discourse, as ecofeminists recognize, is environmental devastation and on-going destruction of plants, animals and other subject peoples in the name of capitalist ‘progress’ identified as ‘civilization.’ Ecofeminism thus seeks to establish – or in the case of some colonized cultures, to re-establish, a sense of interconnectedness of being, through ontological change and political activism replicating the philosophy of connectedness in an amalgam of theory and practice. As its affirmation of the shared ground of all being suggests, ecofeminism (especially in the United States) has strong spiritual as well as political and scholarly dimensions; modern retrieval of the traditional confluence of material and spiritual being intimately connected to place and the earth in many pre-colonized cultures.

MODEL QUESTION PAPER

Core Course

EN5BO3- Methodology of Literature

(2015 Admissions onwards)

Time: 3 Hours

Maximum Marks: 80

I. Answer the following questions:

A. Choose the right answer from the following:

1. Who among the following was not a Yale critic?

- a. Geoffrey Hartman
- b. Roland Barthes
- c. J. Hillis Miller
- d. Paul de Man

2. The term 'culture industry' is associated with

- a. Georg Lukacz
- b. Raymond Williams
- c. Louis Althusser
- d. Theodor Adorno

3. Who, among the New Critics, proposes the concept of tension?

- a. Allen Tate
- b. R. P Blackmur
- c. Cleanth Brooks
- d. J. C. Ransom

4. Who proposed the concept of "*écriture féminine*"?

- a. Gayatri Spivak
- b. Virginia Woolf
- c. Judith Butler
- d. Helene Cixous

5. Who, among the following, proposed the concept of 'worlding'?

- a. Virginia Woolf
- b. Edward Said
- c. Gayatri Spivak
- d. None of these

B. Match the following (NB Answers Given)

6. Ernest Hemingway The Sun also Rises Ecrits

7. Chinua Achebe Things Fall Apart

8. Sally Morgan My Place

9. Michel Foucault The History of Sexuality

10. Jacques Lacan Ecritis

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B. Answer any ten of the following questions in two or three sentences:

11. Explain *chutnification*.

12. What are the subjects of 'queer studies'?

13. What is an interpretive community?

14. What is simulation?

15. What, according to Barthes, is the difference between readerly texts and writerly texts?
16. What is defamiliarization?
17. Name any four poets of the Modernist period of British literature.
18. Postmarxism.
19. What is Ecofeminism?
20. Oedipus Complex.
- 21, Gynocriticism.
22. How does Matthew Arnold define culture?

III. Answer any four of the following questions in not more than 100 words:

23. New Historicism.
24. Ecocriticism.
25. Archetypal Criticism.
26. African Literature
27. Marxist Feminism.
28. Lacanian psychoanalysis.

IV. Answer any two of the following questions in not more than 300 words:

29. Explain Postcolonialism with suitable examples
 30. Explain the key concepts of New Criticism.
 31. Describe briefly the evolution of Feminist Literary Criticism.
 32. Explain deconstruction as a reading strategy with examples.
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